India-China Relations: Norms, Perceptions and Geopolitics

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Introduction

In recent years normative approaches been applied to the study of China's foreign policy (Womack, 2008; Xiao, 2011). Normative approaches have also been applied to the study of India's foreign policy (Latham, 1999: 146-150; Kumar, 2008; Ogden, 2009; Ogden, 2010; Hall 2015). This raises the issue of "normative interaction" (Tocci and Manners, 2008: 314-326) between these two increasingly significant powers. Such normative interaction is part of a wider interaction between these two Asian giants. Consequently, weaving in normative considerations, this chapter analyses the India-China relationship through a three-fold prism of historical origins, contemporary essence and future trajectory. It finds that some norm convergence at a global level comes up against geopolitical divergence at a regional level where there is widespread Indian perceptions of China as being ill-intentioned towards India, and of Chinese failure to live up to its declared norms.

How are norms seen as operating in general and with regard to India and China? Kowert and Legro's general study on the use but also the "limits" (1996)of norms are well illustrated by looking at China-India relations. Firstly, in entwining norms and the realism of geopolitics, this chapter sees both elements as "a

complementary relationship" (496). Secondly, this chapter sees a two way interaction between norms and national actor. On the one hand, the chapter accepts that "one of the most important effects of norms .... is their influence on the interests of political actors" (492) like India and China. On the other hand, it also accepts that national "agents may well be aware of the potential advantages accruing to those who control certain norms" (492). Thirdly, such an awareness indeed can lead to "instrumentalist manipulation of norms" (493) as "some actors are clearly able to use norms in an instrumental fashion to further their own interests rather than simply being held captive to various normative mandates" (492). This seems to be particularly evident in the case of China's public diplomacy rhetoric where "actors manipulate self-presentation (that is external norms) strategically precisely because in a world of perceptions "these manipulations would be pointless if norms did not matter" (493). Fourthly, with regard to the language of norms, while "an interpretative approach sees norms as communication devices", this leaves the problem to "distinguish manipulation and deception from more 'genuine' forms of communication" to which one answer is that "at the very least, then, it seems necessary to study *both* rhetoric *and* behaviour over time" (485). This general advice from Kowert and Legro is followed here which indeed looks at the particular rhetoric and behaviour of India and China towards each other over time. Accordingly we go back in time to look at the historical origins and then the contemporary essence of their relationship.

Historical Origins

For many centuries the Himalayas, and more widely Tibet, formed an effective barrier between India and China, only breached in 1950 when Chinese military forces

decisively reasserted direct Chinese control. Nevertheless certain pre-1940s episodes continue to be evoked. First there are cultural links in the form of Buddhism, which was the prompt for Tan Chung's evocation of *Chindia*. There is an irony with these earlier Buddhist links since India and China are now seeking to appropriate Buddhism "in a competition for soft power supremacy in Asia", in which there is "religion as geopolitics in play" (Bagchi, 2007; Lam, 2012). Tan's Chindia vision was striking but flawed. He argued that "it is time that the two countries detach themselves from the Western civilizational quest for great power status", and instead "as in the past, China and India can mutually benefit from another round of cultural interaction and vibrations", so that "the 'historical Chindian paradigm' can be transplanted to our present times, and a new world order established in the 'geocivilizational paradigm'" (C. Tan, 2009: 23-24). However, both India and China remain set on Great Power rise, which is bringing them up against each other around Asia and the Indian Ocean, and in which geo-political regional divergence cuts across wider claimed geo-cultural civilizational solidarity (V.W. Chang 2011).

Political solidarity was mooted in the 1950s on the grounds of similar historical misfortunes, whereby India had been incorporated into the British Empire, while China had suffered its "century of humiliation" (*bainian guochi)* which included territorial losses and restrictions on its legal state sovereignty. In response to this, "China's radical norms were therefore based on the critical rejection of imperialism and the presumed right of intrusion into weaker political communities", and "even today, many of the normative differences between China and the West stem from the *kto-kovo* [who-to whom] differences in the experience of imperialism" (Womack, 2008: 265). Such an experience left China with a jaundiced view of international laws and treaties, understandable given they had been shoved down its

throat by a Western political order from a position of military power. As China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi looked back:

> Colonialism and imperialism inflicted untold sufferings on China. For many years, China was unjustly deprived of the right by imperialist powers to equal application of international law. The Chinese people fought indomitably and tenaciously to uphold China's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and founded New China (Y. Wang, 2014).

The New China, represented by the People's Republic of China was admonished by Wang that "we must uphold international law and the universally recognized norms governing international relations, so as to shore up the foundation of international rule of law" but defined such norms as "such principles as respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity ... and non-interference in the internal affairs of others" (Y. Wang, 2014) which would seem shorthand for regime survival imperatives. The fact that international law and international society has been driven by the West from a position of imperial-colonial strength, perhaps explains Xiang Lanxin's comment that "there is no such thing as a normative Chinese model" for "a normative model would mean a value system that clamours for universal status, but China never believes in 'universalism' of any kind" (Xiang, 2008).

The politicised nature of international law was exemplified along the Himalayas. On the western flanks of the Himalayas, an expanding Britain had already made nebulous claims on the Aksai Chin plateau under the Johnson-Ardagh line of 1897. In turn, on the eastern flanks of the Hindukush, under the Simla Convention

(1914) Britain carved out "forward rights" for British India in Tibet, and a McMahon Line delineation. This was rejected by China, but initially maintained by the Republic of India on its independence in 1947 (Lamb, 1966). On the one hand, China's narrative was these British borderline demarcations and the Simla Convention were illegal and illegitimate, yet another "Unequal Treaty" (*bupingdeng tiaoyue*) thrust at China. On the other hand, the Republic of India accepted their ongoing validity on independence of these two British-drawn Himalayan lines and of the Simla Convention. Ironically then, Western imperialism left China and India with a common yet somewhat intangible global norm of emphasizing state sovereignty, yet left them in the 1950s with conflicting sovereignty claims over these all too tangible Himalayan reaches.

Pan-Asianism preached in the 1956 Bandung Conference by Nehru and Zhou En-lai had earlier antecedents. In 2013, the Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang evoked such a picture of colonial solidarity when visiting India; "our peoples sympathised with, supported and helped each other in their quest for national independence and liberation, leaving behind a trail of touching stories" (Li, 2013). Tan Chung's father Tan Yunshan had in the late 1940s pushed this Pan-Asianism message with regard to Sino-India relations (Y. Tan, 1949; also Tsui, 2010). A figure frequently noted in this early cultural norm identification was Rabindranath Tagore, whose trip to China in 1924, and his talk of a "new age dawn in the East" has been frequently re-invoked by figures like Tan Chung. In such a vein in 2006, Wang Yi, China's then ambassador to Japan, approvingly cited Tagore as a forerunner of a "New Asianism" (Y. Wang 2006: 371). Four years later, China's then Prime Minister Wen Jiabao praised Tagore as a paradigm for India and China "working together for new glories of the Oriental Civilization" (Wen, 2010). His successor, Li Keqiang

similarly extolled Tagore, "I was impressed by the memorable poetic lines and the deep philosophical insights of Rabindranath Tagore, the famed 'sage poet', and moved by his profound friendship with the leading Chinese authors of his day" (Li, 2013).

From India's side, there is a similar re-extolling of Tagore, for example by the vice-President Hamad Ansari in his 2014 trip to China (Ansari, 2014b). The profile in 2011 by India's then Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao represents norm idealisation and a recasting of Tagore's own irenic recasting of history. Rao was eloquent on "the inspirational words of Tagore and his belief in the geo-civilizational paradigm of India-China relations" (Rao, 2011). She considered that "he [Tagore] sought to promote the cause of China-India understanding, envisioning the ascent of India and China to a higher platform of civilizational leadership and fraternal partnership" (Rao, 2013; also Mohanty, 2010). She drew norm lessons for the present from Tagore; "the millennium-long cultural contacts between India and China, in which he [Tagore] found a worthy model for sustenance of the Asian way of harmony and coexistence" (Rao, 2013). However, Rao's Tagore-shaped scenario of geo-civilizational harmony remains bedevilled by contemporary geopolitics. Rao might have argued that it was "Tagore's vision of eternal partnership between India and China that inspired the vision of India-China friendship in the 50s" (Rao, 2013), but the 1960s witnessed this vision of partnership and friendship dramatically breaking down.

Jawaharlal Nehru's trip to China in 1939 represents a thread of continuity with Tagore's earlier trip in 1924, with Tagore welcoming Nehru's trip as showing "the historic forces of Asiatic unity" (Sanyal, 1998; also Guha, 2008). It was in this vein that on the eve of independence Nehru convened the Asian Relations Conference held at New Delhi in March-April 1947. Nehru was optimistic about future India-China

relations, "it seems obvious to me that in the future India and China will necessarily come nearer to each other" and he emphasized India-China norm convergence whereby "all aggression, all imperialist domination, all forced interference in other countries' affairs [must] end completely. This is the lesson which the East still has to teach the West, which China and India have to teach" (Nehru, 1945: 30). This was reiterated in his Pan-Asian speech in 1947 "strong winds are blowing all over Asia. Let us not be afraid of them, but rather welcome them for only with their help can we build the new Asia of our dreams" (Nehru, 1947: 253). It was also present in his talk of some sort of "Eastern Federation" (Tan INSERT) involving India and China

Independence for India in August 1947 witnessed Nehru, as Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs, hoping for and expecting warm relations with China. The proclamation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 did not dent these India expectations. Mao Zedong was greeted by Nehru as a kindred progressive force in Asia in a post-colonial world, as someone converging with Nehru's own socialist economics outlook, and with his own globalist norm expectations. The fact that Mao dismissed Nehru as a bourgeois capitalist seemed to be ignored by India, as was the question whether China also regarded India's espousal of Asianism as a vehicle for Indian leadership. In retrospect, it is clear that Nehru's socialism went hand in hand with a commitment to liberal democracy norms, whereas Mao's socialism did not.

The arrival of the PRC brought to the fore the challenge posed by a reassertion of Chinese strength on India's inherited borders. Nehru's Deputy Prime Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was doubtful over Chinese claims of peaceful intentions, and warned Nehru in November 1950 that China posed a serious geopolitical threat to India (Patel, 1950). However, Patel's unexpected death in December 1950 left Nehru

and his emphasis on ethical universal norms dominant in shaping Indian foreign policy throughout the 1950s. This was the decade of the *Hindi, Chini, bhai, bhai* ("Indians and Chinese are brothers") rhetoric, and there seemed no need to push through any conclusive border negotiations (Mehra, 2005; Shang, 2005). Moreover, Nehru appeared quite confident in March 1954, some might argue complacent, over the border issue; "the McMahon line constitutes India's border at the moment ... and as far as we are concerned there is no dispute with any other country and will continue to be so" (Nehru, 1954a; also Patil 2007). India-China harmony seemed evident with their signing of an *Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between the Tibet Region of China and India*, in April 1954. This recognized China's sovereignty over Tibet which was formally designated a "region" of China. The "forward rights" enjoyed in Tibet by India under the Simla Convention were dropped. Nehru was happy enough to discard these right; "all these things were done [by Britain] as a dominant power claiming hegemony over another country would do" (Nehru, 1954c). Nevertheless, he refused to apply such logic to the borders drawn up at the Simla Convention. The 1954 agreement avoided any delineation of the India-Tibet (China) border. Instead, wider India-China relations were wrapped up in the normative embrace of the *Panchsheel* "Five Principles of Coexistence", norms for general application in inter-state relations in Nehru's viewpoint, "if these principles were recognized in the mutual relations of all countries, then indeed there would hardly be any conflict and certainly no war" (Nehru, 1954b). These were listed as "mutual respect" for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, "mutual non-aggression", "non-interference" in each other's internal affairs, "equality" and "mutual benefit". Nehru and Zhou Enlai reiterated thier normative significance at teh Bandung Conference in

Such norms were to prove of no avail in 1962, and indeed one could argue now. Instead, rising friction between India and China, reflecting IR *realism* geopolitical power imperatives along the disputed Himalayas, became evident in the late 1950s (Hoffmann, 2006). Geopolitical imperatives brought Chinese occupation of the desolate Aksai Chin plateau, a vital communication link between Xinjiang and Tibet. As tension mounted and fruitless talks were finally initiated in 1960, the Chinese official media reinvoked the norms extolled by Tagore; "the great Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore once said in 1924 that the friendship and solidarity between China and India constituted the foundation-stone of a struggling Asia" and "today we still cherish these words of Tagore. We are deeply convinced that the difference between China and India concerning the boundary question will eventually be solved reasonably" (PD, 1960).

Images and legacies from British India were evident at the 1960 talks between Zhou Enlai and Nehru. Zhou's argument was that "[this] dispute was left to us by imperialism ... it shocked and distressed us that India should try to impose on us the provisions of the secret treaty of the Simla Convention which, moreover was never accepted evident by any of the Chinese government" (Miller, 2009: 232). Further normative divergence was evident with Nehru's refusal to negotiate over what he considered as an already settled valid border drawn up under a legitimate Simla Convention. In contrast, China considered it an unsettled invalid border drawn up under an illegitimate Simla Convention. Hence the comment by Yaacov Vertzberger that their confrontation was "a collision between two essentially different patterns of legal thought" (Vertzberger, 1982: 607).

With feelings of respective national dignities at stake, the outbreak of war in November 1962 saw decisive Chinese military victories. China maintained its grip on

the Aksai Chin plateau in the west, and pushed Indian forces out of the Northeast Frontier Agency (NEFA) in the east. In the NEFA, China then chose to withdraw to the high ridge of the Himalayas, while maintaining its claims to the NEFA area which Indian forces immediately moved back into.

A revealing analysis was made the following year in April 1963 by Nehru on this "wanton and massive invasion of last autumn" (1963: 457). First, he drew up norms of "tolerance, friendliness, the protection of the rights and dignity of the individual, peaceful settlement of disputes, the persistent effort to reach agreement through compromise and persuasion" and distinguished them as divides between the two countries; since "these are the values we have been trying to uphold, imperfectly no doubt, in the conduct of our internal affairs. They represent a way of life ... that is anathema to the ruling ideologists in Peking" (Nehru, 1963: 461). Nehru also attempted to wrap the norm of international law around India's position; "India's northern frontiers are not the result of any British imperialistic expansion, achieved in violation of China's rights or interests, but have their sanction in the facts of geography and history, and the generally accepted principles of international law" (1963: 458). In a realism-geopolitical frame of reference, he then went on to talk of building up India's military forces (*internal balancing*) and cooperating more closely with other countries in Southeast Asia and the West (*external balancing*).

India's own subsequent tilt to the Soviet Union in the 1970s and 1980s can be seen as such a balancing response to a geopolitically-charged perception of China; in which the war of 1962 left an image of a looming Chinese-directed military threat from the north, immediately, tangibly and literally overhanging India. These brooding associations and 'balance of threat' calculus relevance still remain strong for India over half a century on. In 2013, one Indian commentator remarked that the 1962 war

"left an indelible impression on the Indian psyche as we enter the 50th year of that war. Shattering a myriad myths and leaving room for nothing but guarded suspicion for the People's Republic of China" (Chansoria, 2013: 1).

The India-China border has remained unresolved for over half a century since 1962. India continues to claim around 40,000 square kilometres of Chinese-controlled territory along the westerly Himalayan flanks of Tibet; namely Aksai Chin. In turn, China still claims around 92,000 square kilometres of Indian-controlled territory along the easterly Himalayan flanks of Tibet; namely the NEFA, which was granted statehood within India in 1987 under the name Arunachal Pradesh, but which China continues to call *Zang nan* "Southern Tibet" (Norbu, 1997).

This India-China territorial dispute has remained festering and unresolved since the 1960s. Their respective rises across much of Asia-Pacific/Indo-Pacific, and indeed globally within the international system, have brought further encounters in which various normative and geopolitical considerations are apparent. It is to the contemporary essence of their relationship that we can turn.

Contemporary Essence

The contemporary India-China relationship is a combination of some norm-generated global cooperation, growing but lop-sided economic links, acute sharpening geopolitically-generated regional competition.

Global cooperation

India's then Minister for External Affairs Salman Khurshid was ready to affirm in 2013 that "it is our firm belief that the Asian century dream will remain unfulfilled if India and China are not able to find concurrence on important ways in which we think on global issues" (Business Standard, 2013). Similarly China's President Xi held out a model whereby "China and India should become global partners for strategic coordination and work for a more just and equitable international order" (Xi, 2014b). This raises the question of what global issues are there for India and China to coordinate strategically over? The Xi-Modi *Joint Statement* in September 2014 pointed to this in their agreement that "common interests on several issues of global importance like climate change, Doha Development Round of WTO, energy and food security, reform of the international financial institutions and global governance" (India-China, 2014). Certainly the Chinese state media was happy to carry Indian comments about how India and China were "new voices in the normative debates on these subjects ... in what is today a one-way norm setting exercise in these new arenas of governance" (Saran and Iyer-Mitra, 2013) imposed by the West.

One global issue that India and China concur on is the desirability of general stability of the Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs), which have been threatened by piracy and Islamist destabilisation in both the Strait of Malacca and Gulf of Aden. Not only have India and China despatched parallel naval units to help keep open these sea lanes in the Gulf of Aden, but there has also been further trilateral cooperation between India and Japan with China in the Gulf of Aden, despite India and Japan soft balancing against China elsewhere in Asia.

Another global issue that India and China converge on is climate change. Both countries advocate a position of "differentiated responsibilities", a practical tangible and economic position under which Western countries should shoulder more of the

financial burden for redressing climate change problems, on the normative-moral grounds that they have been responsible for most earlier rising emissions, and that it would be immoral if non-Western countries were not able to adopt similar paths in their own economic rise. This norm of "differentiated responsibilities" brought India and China together at the Climate Change Summit in December 2009 where they worked together at Copenhagen to successfully put pressure on the United States. This climate change cooperation has been maintained in the subsequent BASIC grouping, made up of Brazil, South Africa, India and China.

A further more subtle area for cooperation has been with regard to the international system itself. There is some common interest for both India and China countries in restraining US global dominance. In such a vein, the Singh-Hu Joint Declaration *A Shared Vision for the 21st Century* made a point of noting in 2008 how "the two sides believe that the continuous democratisation of international relations ... [is] an important objective in the new century" (India-China, 2008). Six years later and their "joint efforts to democratize international relations" and "the promotion of a multi-polar world" was being asserted in the Xi-Modi *Joint Statement* in September 2014 (India-China, 2014). Such language is a veiled reference to restraining US hegemonic unipolar dominance. These concerns have also been raised at other non-Western forums where India and China appear together; namely the RIC (Russia, India, China), BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China) and BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) meetings. It is significant that "on Westphalian norms too, China more overtly and India more subtly subscribe to a similar conception of sovereignty and territoriality" (Z. Singh, 2014: 34), whereby borders are considered in general considered sacrosanct and intervention is generally rejected unless authorized and thereby legitimized by the UN Security Council. Both countries have reservations

over Western advocacy of intervention norms, the "responsibility to protect" (R2P) norm, and have sought to limit this to only UN-mandated operations (Liu and Zhang 2014; Mohan and Kutz, 2014), though it can be argued that this reflects greater realism power politics from China on account of its own Security Council veto powers, while India may have a greater normative acceptance of UN legitimacy to authorise.

Finally, there is the question of international frameworks, the institutional mechanisms that run the international system and the global economy. Here Jain argues that there is a "normative disconnect" between the West on one side, and India and China on the other side; "neither China nor India was present at the inception of this international architecture ... as a result, there is a basic contestation about the content, value and scope of norms" (Jain, 2012: 2) between India and China on the one hand, and the West on the other. In such a rule-making vein, both India and China have also called for greater representation in the international institutions like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, as a matter of fairness. The BRIC decision in July 2014 to set up an alterative New Development Bank (NDB), based at Shanghai but with an Indian as President represents development norm solidarity between China and India. Convergence at the World Trade Organization (WTO) is also noticeable (Chaisse and Chakraborty, 2005). However, fairness norms have their limits, as China remains reluctant to support India's candidacy for Permanent Member status alongside itself on the UN Security Council.

Growing but asymmetric economic links

Both India and China have embraced globalization and the international economy.

Their previous autarky and push for self-reliance has given way to an embrace of

private enterprise growth and globalization as desirable economic motors – China

from the 1980s onwards and India from the late 1990s onwards. Both sides have used

the rhetoric of *Chindia* in a geo-economic sense, with India and China envisaged as

motors for wider Asian and indeed global development (Sheth, 2011; Bykere, 2011)

This was all the more trumpeted as a norm in the aftermath of the global recession of

2008-2009.

There is however some competition between India and China over economic

norms (He, 2007; Adhikari, 2012). China presents a model of economic growth in a

politically heavily regulated, if not autocratic, system (the *Beijing Concensus*);

whereas India provides a model (a *Delhi Concensus?*) of economic growth in a liberal

democracy, if at times chaotic system. Some argue that India's model, though initially

more chaotic, is likely to provide longer term economic success for India in the future.

The argument goes that a deregulated private open market may better flourish in

India's more open political space, with democracies also perhaps able to provide more

flexibility and an ability to change than can the more heavy handed one party system

offered by China. As Shyam Saran argued, "India's open and liberal society is far

more likely to deliver technological innovation and creative entrepreneurship than

China's highly regulated and controlled political system" (2011, 8).

Certainly there is competition over respective growth rates, where India has

constantly sought to catch up to, and ultimately overtake China's economic growth

rate (Huang and Khanna, 2003; Panagariya, 2007; Kalyanaram, 2009). However,

although their economies were of similar sizes in the early 1970s, with modest growth

rates from previous decades, China's growth rate started dramatically increasing in

the late 1970s onwards; whereas it was almost two decades later in the mid-1990s that India's growth rate started similarly surging. Moreover, since the late 1990s, China's annual growth rates have generally been higher than India's by two to three percent. This general growth rate lag has been keenly noted in India (Sen, 2013). However, the gap has been narrow at times. Indeed, India's GDP growth nudged ahead of China's in 2003 and 2010. Commentators inside and outside India continue to argue that India's economic model and other social factors (political values, younger workforce, English language) will in the longer term translate into higher growth rates, with the Indian tortoise overtaking the Chinese hare (Lal, 2005; Bhagwati, 2010). Indian commentators and government ministers continue to watch out for India catching up and overtaking China's growth rate (Economic Times of India, 2009; Times of India, 2010; Hindustan Times, 2013).

Amid their respective economic growths, trade links have increased significantly between India and China in the last decade. Swaran Singh's sense in 2005, with bilateral trade around $18.7 billion, was to consider "China-India bilateral trade as a confidence-building measure" in which "their bilateral trade has ... come to be recognised as the most reliable as also the most agreeable instrument of China-India rapprochement ... it is the political impact of trade which remains the barometer of their economic engagement" (2005: 2,6). In 2009-2010, total trade between India and China was $42,442 million; growing in 2010-2011 to $58,962 million, and in 2011-2012 to $73,390 million, before dropping down a little to $65,878 million in 2013-2014 (India, 2014).

However, the economic relationship is asymmetric. Partly it is a matter of importance. For 2012-2013, China was currently India's second biggest trade partner, but India was lower down the ranks at thirteenth in terms of China's trading partners.

Partly it is a matter of balance of trade. Partly it is a matter of the nature of their trade in which a growing volume of trade has generated an equally growing trade surplus for China and a growing trade deficit for India. Official Indian figures showed a rising deficits in trade with China, from $19,206 million deficit in 2009-2010, $37,237 million in 2011-2012, $38,713 million in $2012-2013, and most recently a $36,220 million deficit in 2013-2014 (India, 2014). In short, this growing economic trade asymmetricity has become a confidence-draining negative issue for India in its relationship with China, and certainly undermines the *Chindia* rhetoric found elsewhere.

Regional Competition

Across Asia much of Sino-Indian relations are competitive, an "enduring power rivalry" (Panda 2013) that operates bilaterally and in multilateral-regional frameworks multilaterally. Indian commentators argue that "China has shown a disconcerting readiness to drop normative means for realpolitik ones" (Kumar 2008: 227) when it comes to security issues in India's neighbourhood. Here we can note Shyam Saran's comment, interestingly to a Chinese audience, that it was in "Asia, where the interests of both India and China intersect. The logic of geography is unrelenting and proximity is the most difficult and testing among diplomatic challenges a country faces" (Saran, 2006). We can also note Stephen Walt's (1990) criteria of "geographic proximity" in his *balance of threat* calculus.

The most immediate issue between India and China remains their border. Not only is the border disputed, it is also a border over which no sovereignty negotiations are taking place, and over there are disputes over where the actual Line of Control

(LoC) is in both the key eastern (Arunachal Pradesh) and western (Aksai Chin) sectors. Admittedly, some Confidence Building Measures were agreed in 1993 (*Agreement on Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control*) and 1996 (*Agreement on Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field along the Line of Actual Control*), but these were limited in nature. In 2005, *Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the Settlement of the India-China Boundary Question* were agreed, but no actual negotiations have started for these hypothetical parameters to be applied to. Instead, there has been an increasing numbers of "incursions" across their disputed and hazy frontier, a growing arms race conducted with regard to infrastructure and deployment of assets aimed at each other along the Himalayas, continuing full reiterations of maximal claims, and heated media treatment of the border issue in both countries. Control of water drainage from the Tibetan plateau is also of rising importance as a further divisive cross-border matter between India and China. The *Border Defence Cooperation Agreement* drawn up in October 2013 represents damage limitation of ongoing cross-border incursions and reiteration of basic confidence building measures rather than any resolution of the issues at stake, such as conclusive sovereignty-territorial negotiations or indeed settling interim Lines of Control (LoC) delineation.

China's long-running "all-weather friendship" with Pakistan is a further issue for India. This geopolitically disadvantages India. The strategic nexus between Pakistan and China provides India with the nightmare of a war on two fronts, a nuclear Pakistan armed by China, a growing Chinese presence in Pakistan-controlled Baltistan-Gilgit and at Pakistan's deep water port of Gwadar, and joint annual Pakistan-China naval exercises initiated in the Indian Ocean in 2013. China's links with Pakistan are the most overt sign of a growing Chinese presence in the region

around India, which is why Chinese further presence in Myanmar, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Maldives have fuelled further concerns in India. This widespread feeling of "encirclement" is a classic geopolitical perception, exacerbated for India by the appearance of the Chinese navy in the Indian Ocean, and China's wider diplomatic-economic forays around the Indian Ocean island states and African littoral. India's norm expectation has been to see the Indian Ocean as its own particular area, *India's Ocean* in other words, but China's presence challenges such a self-perceived sphere of regional pre-eminence and leadership, if not of hegemony. Admittedly China claims with some justification that its presence in the Indian Ocean is limited and is primarily concerned with fostering stable Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) for its energy imports. China may have presented its Maritime Silk Road initiative in normative win-win cooperative terms during 2013-2014, but India remains unconvinced of Chinese motives.

A degree of competition between India and China can certainly be seen in multilateral-regional forums like the East Asia Forum (EAS), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), and in arrangements each country has made with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). China's observer status at in the South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is matched by India's observer status in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). During 2014 China continued to push for full membership of SAARC against an increasingly isolated India, while India looks set to take up full membership of the SCO in 2015.

India's response to China's military infrastructure consolidation in Tibet, and growing presence in South Asia and the Indian Ocean has been multilevel. India has sought to build up its own military strength, "internal balancing" in other words, and to deploy forces in a China-centric fashion more effectively along the Himalayas.

Consequently, on the disputed eastern sector, facing Chinese positions on Aksai Chin, India continues to reactivate various high altitude airfields like Daulat Beg Oldi (2008) and Nyoma (2013), last used in the India-China war of 1962. On the western sector, from Arunachal Pradesh, a Himalayan strike corps was announced in 2013, alongside infrastructure projects, and China-centric long-range advanced Sukhoi-30 attack planes announced for stationing in Tezpur (2009) and Chabua (2013).

India has also sought to reduce China's impact in South Asia through re-strengthening India's own links with Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and adjacent Myanmar. Similarly, India has also sought to reduce China's impact in the Indian Ocean through re-strengthening relations with island micro-states like the Maldives and Mauritius.

Finally, India is taking the challenge into China's own strategic backyards, which India sees as its own *extended neighbourhood*. The Indian navy has been regularly deployed into the South China Sea since 2000. It is also significant there that Modi has argued that "for peace and stability in South China Sea, everyone should follow international norms and law" (Modi, 2014), in a veiled but understood reference to China. A web of military cooperation agreements have been established with states around China's maritime and land periphery like Mongolia, Tajikistan, Singapore, Indonesia, Vietnam and South Korea. Further defence cooperation has been witnessed with Asia-Pacific powers like Australia, Japan, and above all the United States. It is important to note that this is not a hard containment form of balancing. Instead, it is a softer balancing which is China-related in an implicit rather than explicit fashion. The norm of "strategic autonomy" continues to hold sway for India and with it avoidance of tight alliance formation, and a reluctance to be taken for granted by other power.

Nevertheless, from China's point of view this soft balancing represents a potential encirclement of itself by India and a degree of capitulation by India to American hegemonism. A fear of "anti-China encirclement" (*fan hua bao wei quan*) makes China invoke Indian norms of "strategic autonomy". In asking "will India join strategic containment of China?" the Chinese state media argued (or hoped) that "it is likely to be a false proposition" because "India has an independent foreign policy. It never thinks itself the client state of other countries. Instead, it [India] has always been proud of its independent foreign policy" (PD, 2013). China's own long running norm of "anti-hegemonism" (*fan ba*) come into play. The Chinese leadership continues to proclaim that "China opposes hegemonism" (Hu, 2012); be it explicitly with regard to the US in the Asia-Pacific, but also (countries like Pakistan would hope) implicitly with regard to India in South Asia and the Indian Ocean.

China can of course make appeals to India's own espousal of multipolarity as a desirable norm and process. This was indicated in Xi Jinping's first message to the new Indian administration of Narendra Modi that "as two important forces in the process of multi-polarization, China and India share far more common interests than differences" (FMPRC, 2014). However, even as Xi declares that "China and India, as two major players in the shaping of a multi-polar world" (2014b) share strategic interests, this cuts across widespread perception in India that at the regional level China aims at regional unipolarity centred on Chinese hegemony.

Faced with softer implicit balancing moves on India's part, China has sought to avoid identification by India, and others, of itself as a threat. China has deployed a battery of reassuring public diplomacy norm-laden terms, which represent soothing soft language with soft image potential (Scott, 2012). Such public diplomacy rhetoric has ranged from "peaceful rise" (*heping jueqi*), "peaceful development" (*heping*

fazhan), "democratization of international relations" (*guoji guanxi minzhuhua*), "harmonious world" (*hexie shijie*), "responsible Great Power" (*fuzeren da guo*). China has also sought to link its own norm concepts with those in India, whereby "the Chinese concepts of 'universal peace' and 'universal love' and the Indian concepts of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakum' (the world being one family) and ahimsa (causing no injury) are very much alike", and that "both China and India consider harmony as the way toward a better future for the world" (Xi, 2014b). Indian analysts are not necessarily convinced by such Chinese rhetoric language. Hence Swaran Singh's comment that "India tends to be more 'norm-based' in its multilateralism, while China's multilateralism ... remains more 'power-based'" (2010).

Pew Global Attitudes Survey (PGAS) findings indicate a systematic slide in Indian perceptions of China over the last decade. Continuing, indeed mounting, external distrust reflects general debate outside China over how far such public diplomacy language by China is tactical rather than normative for China. As one commentator argued; "taking the sincerity of these [Chinese public diplomacy formulations] at face value and in good faith, can mislead" precisely because they reflect China's recognition of the "the tactical utility of international norms" (Lee, 2011; also Brown, 2011). Such formulations are indeed, as Morton notes, a way for China "to project its own norms and values into the international arena" (2011a). However, they are also a way for the preservation of control by the ruling Chinese Communist Party, *regime survival* in other words.

In China's deployment of such diplomatic rhetoric Morton's caution remains valid that "international norms are also often at odds with actual state behaviour" (2011b). Perceptions of "normative dissonance generates mistrust among major

powers ... in these cases, the norms of others are often viewed as mere discursive palliatives concealing hypocrisy and the ruthless pursuit of realpolitik" (Tocci and Manners, 2008: 316). This raises the credibility issues of statement of intent discussed in Jervis's classic study on *Images in International Relations;* in which the image-influencing role could backfire if there was perceived "manipulation" (1970: 18,21,43) of such statements, and divergence between such norm assertions of future conduct and actual state behaviour. China may trumpet a norm and policy of "good neighbourhood" (*mulin*), but India sees China's actual operations in India's "immediate neighbourhood", especially China's alliance with Pakistan, as most often being against Indian interests.

Future Trajectory

India and China remain officially committed to norms-based progress. Both countries continue to re-invoke the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence/Panchsheel.

For China the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence/Panchsheel were "the norms guiding the relations between the two countries ... as principles guiding international relations" (FMPRC, 2000). The 60th anniversary of the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence/Panchsheel saw declarations by China of their continuing validity. However, Chinese statements about "the concept of sovereignty, which forms the foundation of the Five Principles" masked the actual disagreement over sovereignty in the disputed Himalayan zones of contention, while comments that "the concept of peace ... represents the supreme value of the Five Principles. To maintain peace, countries must refrain from invasion and oppose war, aggression, threat or use

of force" (Liu, 2014) cuts across China's readiness to go to war and use force to maintain and defend its position in Tibet and along the Himalayas.

For India, similarly, the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence/Panchsheel have been regarded as "a framework for a normative code of conduct between nations" (S.N. Singh, 2004). Such a normative code of conduct may have spectacularly broken down in 1962, but it is being re-stressed as never before; with Indian figures arguing that "if the 21st century is going to be the century of Asia, then India and China have a special role in promoting the concepts espoused by Panchsheel" (S.N. Singh, 2004). The Panchsheel 60th anniversary was the occasion in 2014 for Vice-President Hamid Ansari to go to China to jointly celebrate them, and tie them into Asian cultural solidarity, "Panchsheel emanated from the civilizational matrix of Asia and is Asia's contribution towards building a just and democratic international order" (Ansari 2014a). President Xi's own speech followed similar lines, stressing Asian cultural solidarity, and the assertion that the "Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence have become the basic norms governing international relations as well as basic principles of international law" (Xi, 2014a).

In 2008, the two leaderships jointly stressed in their *A Shared Vision for the 21st Century* that "in the new century, *Panchsheel*, the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, should continue to constitute the basic guiding principles for good relations between all countries and for creating the conditions for realizing peace and progress of humankind"; with the immediate claim being made that "an international system based on these principles will be fair, rational, equal and mutually beneficial, will promote durable peace and common prosperity, create equal opportunities and eliminate poverty and discrimination" (India-China, 2008). The importance of being "fair" was repeated at various times, with regard to the international system, the

multilateral trade system, an international energy order, and finally with regard to any future boundary settlement. Similarly their joint *Vision for Future Development of China-India Strategic and Cooperative Partnership* signed in October 2013 reiterated they would be "following the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence (Panchsheel)" as well as "pragmatic [economic] cooperation" (India-China, 2013).

Nevertheless, the 2008 *Shared Vision* claim that "drawing lines on the grounds of ideologies and values, or on geographical criteria, is not conducive to peaceful and harmonious coexistence" (India-China, 2008) is of little help in resolving their differences. It is a political fact that their disputed boundaries, where geographic lines remain to be settled, remain intractable. Morton's point that "China is not alone in being caught between its normative claims and geopolitical priorities" (2011b) is certainly true with regard to China as well as India in their bilateral relationship that includes swirls around the "razors edge" (Scott, 2011) of the disputed Himalayan borderlands and adjoining Hindu-kush/Pamir interfaces of Pakistan and Afghanistan. In terms of trajectory the situation is deteriorating rather than improving there, there is an increased arms race along and further militarization of that disputed border range, with both countries internally and externally balancing against each other in a decidedly geopolitical fashion.

Here while India is only faced with a China-Pakistan formation, China is not only faced with not only an equivalent India-Vietnam counterpart, but is also faced with a bigger and potential more threatening India-Japan-US trilateral formation. China's own norm of "anti-encirclement" (*fan bao wei quan*) continues to seek to use India's norm of *strategic autonomy*:

India, the 'giant elephant' of South Asia, operates an independent foreign

policy. No major powers - including Japan and the U.S. - will succeed in

imposing their will on India. India's prudent foreign policy is decided by

India's practical interests. Indian leaders often point out that you can

choose your friends, but you cannot choose your neighbours. It is of

indispensable strategic value for India to cooperate with China on a

friendly basis. (PD, 2014)

However, one could reply to such a Chinese rationale by counterposing that it is

precisely because of India's practical interests faced with a problematic neighbour

that a prudent measure of *balancing* (*internal* and *external*) by India towards China is

dictated by strategic logic?

Three pieces of international relations (IR) theory are of relevance to conclude

with. Firstly, Kenneth Waltz's *balance of power* logic feeds into convergent interests

in multipolarity as a norm, in which both countries have some common ground in

restraining US global unipolarity. Nevertheless, this is outweighed in practice by

Stephen Walt's four-fold *balance of threat* criteria of almost a quarter of a century

ago, in which China continues to represent a threat to India not just because of its

"aggregate power" and "offensive (i.e. military) power", but also crucially for India

because of China's "geographical proximity" and "perceived [as by India] offensive

intentions" towards India (Walt, 1990: 22-26). Prime Minister Narendra Modi's

denunciation during the 2014 election campaign of an "expansionist mindset" (Times

of India, 2014) was a perceptual/cognitive remark about China.

Secondly, China, and China's constrainment/counter-balancing of India, is

also entwined with some degree of engagement. Such a combination of *balancing* and

engagement representing *hedging*. Hedging is also appropriate because both countries are engaged in ongoing rise, economic modernisation programmes that are long term and will reach likely realisation by the mid-century. Consequently, both countries have important incentives not to derail their respective peaceful rises by direct military conflict. Growing economic links could generate economic cooperation and interdependence, buttressed by regional frameworks for cooperation, if IR *liberalism-institutionalism* theory has any credence. Alexander Wendt's IR *social constructivism* would also argue that such regional frameworks and engagement moves might in the longer-run normatively embed such engagement between India and China.

Thirdly, and finally, the nature of Chinese politics remains uncertain. The PRC has been ready to maintain a high degree of confrontation and reassertion of full claims to both Aksai Chin and Arunachal Pradesh; but a PRC regime downfall might of course resurrect Tibet's international presence and ability to negotiate borders, present from 1914 to 1949 but lost after 1950. A democratic China may prove a friendlier neighbour for India to work with. Admittedly it remains true that a liberal democratic India has not shown itself particularly ready to compromise its continuing full maximal claims. Nevertheless, in terms of normative political values, Indian and China remain on opposite sides of the democracy/autocracy divides" (Callahan, 2012). This normative debate on the merits of liberal democracy lay behind the rather dismissive but revealing aside in the Chinese state media in September 2013 that "'democracy' itself is no help to transform India to a great power" (Global Times, 2013). Conversely, with China in mind, Indian commentators point to "a clash of normative systems among states" in the Indo-Pacific, in which "power elites in a few select countries foster a false dichotomy between universal and Asian values. The [Chinese?] desire for hegemonic dominance suppresses the region's [and India's?]

inherent multipolarity" (Singh and Pulipaka 2014). Their democracy adherence proves a present normative divide, but remove that normative divide and their situation could be transformed? The peace-democracy linkage, that liberal democracies don't go to war with other liberal democracies, may come into play in such a setting. Negotiations between two democracies might foster easier pragmatic compromise and mutual accommodation, a logic of geography in which China retains Aksai Chin and India retains Arunachal Pradesh? This would represent a simple and tidy enough win-win *de jure* sovereignty solution based on reasonably equal shares, mutual compromise and the *de facto* effective control lines of the present. The logic of history shows neither side have historical certainty over their maximal claims.

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