

# **ESSAIR 2020: Panel Abstracts & Keywords**



## **Panel 1: Indian Foreign Policy – Conceptual Insights**

### **‘Institutionalization of Paradiplomacy in India’**

(Aayushi Liana Shah, Nomita Prithviraj, Vedant Mehra & Vishwesh Sundar,  
Leiden University, The Hague)

**Abstract:** In 2014, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) of India created a ‘States Division’ to facilitate greater involvement of Indian states in the external outreach of the country’s diplomatic efforts. This reflects a move towards greater federalisation of foreign policy in India. The phenomenon of rising involvement of non-central governments in external relations of a country is referred to as parallel diplomacy or paradiplomacy.

In the context of India’s federal arrangement, external affairs continue to be the exclusive domain of the central government. However, since the 1990s, the factors of globalisation and coalition politics have, perhaps unintentionally, paved the way for greater involvement of states in influencing Indian foreign policy. There have been initial efforts to cautiously institutionalise this process through changes in the rules and norms in the conduct of foreign policy, which was earlier sporadic and reactionary in nature. In this paper, the authors seek to explore the process of institutionalisation of paradiplomacy in the political, economic and social dimensions in India.

**Keywords:** paradiplomacy; India; federalism; foreign policy; South Asia

### **‘Climate Change, Security and the State: Perspectives from India’**

(Robert Mizo, Lund University)

**Abstract:** Climate change has become a pertinent part of security studies in the recent years. The study of climate change and security is a futurology and is at best speculative. While there is no empirical evidence yet to prove that climate change can cause conflict among and within states, there is an increasing and widespread agreement that it can aggravate existing security challenges. Like any other effects of climate change, with reference to security too, developing countries are seen to be most vulnerable due to relative lack of economic and socio-political stability.

India’s future security in a changed climate scenario is at best uncertain. Tangible alteration in its climatic variables relating to temperature, sea level, and extreme weather phenomena will have far reaching security implications. The paper seeks to analyse these challenges ranging from climate-induced mass migration, internal turmoil, compromised border security, the rise of fundamentalism, etc. The state has devised elaborate policies to deal with the challenge both at domestic and international fronts. The paper investigates into the state’s efforts of mainstreaming and factoring in climate change within India’s larger security narrative.

**Keywords:** climate change; security; India; state; environment

## **‘Indian Quest for Honor in the International Order: Indian Leadership Influenced by the Ramayana’** (Solène Soosaitasan, Lille Center for European Research on Administration)

The Indian State and the Indian Society have been influenced by ancient epics such as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata which are the two great epic poems in South Asia. It is not just about ancient mythology for academic reflexions. To many Indians, some of them genuinely believe in those Epics, and most of them have a sense of what should be honor. And when it comes to India’s quest for Recognition and Power in the International Order, the way Indian political leaders have been interacting with their counterparts on an International Level is striking. The Ramayana has influenced cognitive maps of the Indian decision-makers (the political and military elites). Their interactions with others appear to be based on some quest for honor. Therefore, various dimensions can be explored through International relations theories but also psychology, philosophy, sociology, culture, literature, technology, etc. This paper aims to fill the gap in IR literature about the role played by an epic poem on the construction and development of contemporary Indian leaders. By employing a narrative theory based on textual practice and discursive approach, the author will show how some precise metanarratives shape the Indian Leadership Mindset and their relationships with others.

### **Panel 2: Global South Asia – Interregional Interactions**

#### **‘The Evolution of India’s Security Doctrines vis-a-vis East Africa’** (Tobias Berger & Karoline Eickhoff, Freie Universität Berlin / Berghof Foundation)

**Abstract:** Security and development interventions in the Global South, and the doctrines that underpin them, have been analysed almost exclusively from a Northern perspective. In contrast, this paper moves scholarly research on alternative policy approaches to security and development from the Global South and investigates how India conceptualises the link between security and development in its policy engagements in East Africa. As an important proponent of principles of South-South solidarity, mutual partnerships for economic growth, non-interference and national sovereignty, Indian cooperation with Africa is often framed in demarcation to Western policy approaches. Indeed, India rejects basic principles associated with liberal interventionism, like democracy-promotion and aid conditionality. The paper focuses on India’s political vision and theories of change underpinning interventions in East Africa, exploring how Indian security and development doctrines are translated into practice. To this end, the paper draws on first insights of an empirical analysis of Indian policy frames and field level practices, which will be undertaken in the first half of 2020 in India and Tansania, in the context of a research project which compares European and Indian security doctrines vis-à-vis East Africa. To allow for comparison between different policy approaches, the paper works with theoretical concepts that originate from basic social science and anthropology. Ultimately, the research project aims to contribute to establishing in how far India’s policy approach can be classified as an ‘alternative model’ to the Western approach to security and development in East Africa.

**Keywords:** India’s foreign and security policy; East Africa; external interventions; logics of appropriateness; alternative policy approaches

#### **‘The Politics of Space-Making in the Indian Ocean: Hindu Nationalism at the Turn of the Millennium’** (Sara Perlangeli, University of Oxford)

**Abstract:** This paper considers the ways in which individuals and organisations associated with the Hindu nationalist project have conceived of the Indian Ocean and India’s position in it

throughout the 1990s and 2000s, as Indian foreign policy acquired an increasingly seaward orientation. In analysing, as a preliminary step, the fraught relationship between Hindu nationalist groups and the state, I show that non-state actors do not reproduce anti-statist positions by mere virtue of their marginality to the state, but they might in fact seek to reinforce the hold of the state in foreign policy while looking outwards in order to do so.

In so doing, Hindu nationalists effectively conduct an exercise in identity construction, retrieving histories of past connections and tales of present threats that both define what it means to be a Hindu nationalist, and spell out a role for India as a leading power in its oceanic neighbourhood. This is indeed a peculiar space: as embodiment of the ‘foreign’ of foreign policy, engagement with the Indian Ocean appears dictated by matters of national interest that stand above ideology; yet as India’s ‘near abroad’, this is also a highly symbolic space that reveals a history of Hindu supremacy in the narratives that I unveil. As a result, this paper concludes, engagement with such a space enables Hindu nationalists to naturalise their ideology as expression of an antipolitical strand of activism that rejects profane politics for the self-evident truths of foreign policy, while also reinforcing the basic ideological coordinates of their project.

### **‘The “Pakistani Gulf”: Migration to the Gulf & the Development of Pakistan’s State Project’ (Antia Mato Bouzas, Leibnitz Zentrum Moderner Orient Berlin)**

**Abstract:** The term ‘Pakistani Gulf’ refers to a stable space, characterised by its continuity over time, which is constituted by the various actors, interventions, policies, symbols, and relations that connect Pakistan to the Gulf. Pakistani migration to the Gulf and its significance for Pakistan goes beyond the economic dimension. Between the need (of remittances) by Pakistan and the exclusion (policies) exercised by the Gulf states, there is a more complex relationship that deserves attention. Migration to the Gulf is often understood as exercising an influence within Pakistani society, but this influence is often considered as a sign of an unequal relationship for this sending country in relation to the oil-rich states of the Arab Peninsula.

This presentation challenges this assumption by paying attention to the existence of Pakistani settled communities in certain Gulf states. These communities are representative of the way the Pakistani state has sought to portray itself in the regional neighbourhood. Through the delineation of the main characteristics of Pakistani mobility to the region and its historical evolution, the paper discussed will show how the South Asian state is also exerting an influential role in the Gulf. The paper addresses whether this role can be termed as hegemonic or not, and the meaning of the Gulf for Pakistan. This approach contributes to understanding the dimensions of Pakistan’s foreign policy that resituate this state in the context of the international and the South Asian political scene.

### **Panel 3: Investigating Regional Connectivity**

#### **‘Can the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Help Beijing Win Pakistanis’ Hearts and Minds? Reviewing Chinese Soft Power Strategies Vis-à-Vis Pakistan’**

(Agnieszka Nitza, Collegium Civitas (Warsaw))

**Abstract:** Announced in 2013 and already dubbed a game-changer, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a multifaceted project that holds the potential to influence Pakistan's state and society along with the country's turbulent international environment. The economic, political, security-related, sociocultural and environmental aspects of the project in the context of Pakistan's

domestic situation, the Pakistan-China relationship, and regional and global dynamics should be deeply studied. This paper examines, in particular, the CPEC's potential for expanding Chinese soft power to win Pakistanis' hearts and minds. Along with the CPEC-related developments, Beijing is deploying soft power strategies in an attempt to further its interests in Pakistan by 'winning the story' and 'hearts and minds' of state elites and populations.

This paper will proceed by outlining what I identify as the core characteristics of China's soft power strategies before highlighting the manifestations of these strategies in the context of Pakistan and the CPEC. Crucially, the paper aims to contribute to the understanding of China's evolving role in South Asia and beyond through the conceptual prism of soft power. But perhaps even more fascinating are the theoretical and conceptual implications of viewing Chinese power as “soft” at all, given that the basic assumption behind existing research is that soft power is intimately tied to the promotion of democracy, liberalism and ultimately the spread of Western values.

**Keywords:** China-Pakistan Economic Corridor; soft power; China; Pakistan

## **‘Navigating the Strategic Challenges between Two Rising Powers - the Case of Nepal’** (Rohit Karkit, University of Fribourg Switzerland)

**Abstract:** Nepal’s geo-strategic location sandwiched between China and India had risen significantly in the 21st Century World. While both China and India are competing for global and regional influence, there is also an increasing strategic rivalry about securing their interests in their close neighbourhood. Both countries are vying for influence in Nepal as they fear that Nepalese territory can be used to harm their respective core interests. Moreover, the numerous projects related to the Chinese led Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI) in South Asian countries are having a significant bearing on India’s traditional role in its own backyard. To address this, India has also developed a ‘Neighbourhood First’ strategy. This has heightened the competition and further complicated the foreign policy processes of small states like Nepal.

In this context, the paper will look at Nepal as a case study and develop the research question on how do small states like Nepal navigate the strategic challenges of being sandwiched between two powerful rivals? Nepal’s increasing geo-strategic vulnerability vis-à-vis its powerful regional neighbours is having an implication on the conduction of its foreign and security policy. Nepal needs to devise the mechanism to maintain the strategic balance and cannot continue to suffer from the perennial security dilemma. The propose study will examine how different international relations theoretical traditions might approach the problem of understanding small states' foreign and security challenges and thus attempt to provides the various strategic options available to Nepal.

**Key Words:** Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI); neighbourhood first; small states; strategic balance, security dilemma

## **‘India’s Belt and Road Initiative Dilemma’**

(Christian Wagner, German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP), Berlin)

**Abstract:** India and China have a long & ambivalent relationship. The Doklam incident (2017) and the summits in Wuhan (2018) and Chennai (2019) represent the extremes of this relationship which oscillates between conflict, competition, and cooperation. In this context, China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) poses a special challenge for India. India is among the few countries in Asia which has refused to participate in the BRI from the beginning. The main reason is the violation

of India's national sovereignty by the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) passing through Kashmir which is claimed by New Delhi.

But India's relationship with the Belt and Road Initiative is more complex and includes a number of different dilemmas and challenges on the national, regional, and global level. The argument is, that even if India continues to reject the BRI, the risk is that New Delhi may be slowly drawn into its networks that are permeating the neighboring countries. The first part of the paper tries to identify some of these dilemmas and challenges on the national, the regional and the global level. The second part will look at India's new strategies and initiatives in order to cope with the BRI. The BRI is an interesting test case to see in how far the often quoted "Wuhan spirit" has really marked the beginning of a new phase of cooperation or was just an interlude in the long term strategic competition between the two Asian giants.

**Keywords:** India; China; Belt and Road Initiative (BRI); connectivity

#### **Panel 4: Reconsidering South Asia's International Relations through History**

##### **'The Transition from Intercultural Diplomacy to an Exclusive European International Law: European and Asian Intermediaries at the Court of Hyderabad'**

(Tanja Buehrer, University of Bern / University of Potsdam)

**Abstract:** The argument that the British Company did not impose a new order on Mughal collapse, but built on South Asian state structures and societies has become a truism. The bulk of scholarship, however, is preoccupied with colonial state-building in northeastern India. This paper argues that the inter-cultural diplomacy with independent Indian rulers that transformed from a diplomatic world defined by Indo-Persianate protocols to British dictated unequal treaties was just as corrosive a form of imperialism as outright conquest. Ideas of hybrid collaboration & legal regulations emerging from cross-cultural negotiations on the ground were also circulating back to the metropolis & provoked reflections on 'national' political cultures, which eventually shaped reforms of colonial governance, and also the exclusive European international law.

This paper focuses on intercultural negotiations of British-Hyderabad interstate legal regulations by drawing on documented cross-cultural encounters at Indian courts. Since the compatibility of different political 'systems' was created through European and Asian diplomatic agents in everyday face-to-face encounters, special attention will be paid to the mobile professional lives and cross-cultural sociability of these intermediaries at the intersection of cross-cultural patronage-client networks. My argument is that the introduction of treaty making in South Asia did not mark a clear-cut shift to European legal regulations or the elimination of Indian rulers' sovereignty. Instead, it added another instrument to an existing variety of Mughal legal repertoires. In pragmatic approach, diplomatic intermediaries could agree to transcultural forms of transactions. The presumable essential difference between the 'Western' justice and the lawless despotic 'East' was a construct to justify metropolitan intervention and the exclusion of Indian rulers from the European family of nations.

##### **'Mediated Images: Tibet, and the Influence of China on Indian Foreign Policy (1950-1959)'**

(Deep Pal, National Bureau of Asian Research, Washington)

**Abstract:** As India and China emerge at the forefront of the unfolding realignment of alliances in Asia, insight into what drives the aspirations of a regional power beyond more obvious security

needs is critical. The contours of the Sino-Indian relationship have been defined by crucial moments in history over several decades. In an evidence-based approach, this project uses newly available archival material to examine such episodes. The motivating question for the research is – what role have acknowledgments of India’s foreign policy identities mediated through third party relationships played in determining Indian policy? This paper examines this question by looking at divergences in Indian behavior concerning Tibet in 1950-1959, especially Indian restraint during the invasion of Tibet in 1950, and proactiveness in granting asylum to the Dalai Lama in 1959. It investigates how components of India’s self-identity, as a civilizational state characterized by an inviolable territorial configuration and perceived cultural primacy, have impacted Indian foreign policy. It hypothesizes that the apparent abrupt reversals or sudden discrepancies in Indian policy become intelligible, when examined through the perspective of China’s acknowledgment of India’s self-identity as expressed in mediations through other actors in the region. As such, India’s non-action in 1950 was guided by the perception that the components of self-identity were recognized, whereas, in 1959, perceptions of non-recognition, motivated action.

**Keywords:** recognition; mediation; self-identity; India; China.

**‘Security Dilemma Sensibility, Status and Stigma: Analysing the Logic of  
Conciliatory Signalling in Nehru's Foreign Policy’**  
(Ameya Pratap Singh, University of Oxford)

**Abstract:** For the fields of Post-Colonial and Global IR, Jawaharlal Nehru’s alternative vision of the ‘international’ proffers the potential to “[redefine] existing IR theories and methods and [build] new ones from societies hitherto ignored as sources of IR knowledge” (Acharya, 2014). However, so far, attempts at excavating Nehru’s political thought for IR have fallen short. For instance, extant scholarship has not ably engaged with his exposition of political psychology and ‘critique of fear’, in particular in its challenge to hegemonic international political practices of the Cold War era such as Power Balancing, Coercive Diplomacy, and Containment.

This paper therefore, draws on theoretical work on Security Dilemma Sensibility, Status and Stigma in IR, as well as on Nehru’s political writings and other texts, to argue that Nehru’s foreign policy methods—which were formed through an interplay of exogenous socialisation pressures and a reflexive understanding of the ordering role of ‘fear’ in world politics—intended to conceive of innovative approaches to communicate ‘accommodation, cooperation and peaceful intent’ to enemy states, or, in other words, to facilitate ‘conciliatory signalling’. To substantiate these claims, the paper examines a relatively understudied case in India-Pakistan relations during the 1950s, namely the Nehru-Liaquat Agreement on Minority Rights. The central finding here is that the logic of conciliatory signalling in the Nehru era posed an important challenge to the epistemological commitments of Western-Realist IR, and consequently, contributed positively to the formation of certain ‘pockets of cooperation’ with India’s regional adversary, Pakistan.

**Keywords:** India-Pakistan; fear; status; stigma; Nehru

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