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The Natural/Neglected Relationship: Liberalism, Identity and India-Australia Relations

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Abstract:

Recent commentary on India-Australia relations has defined the relationship as 'natural' and based on 'shared values' and 'shared history'. The relationship has simultaneously been considered 'neglected'. The paradoxical juxtaposition of a natural/neglected partnership is yet to be adequately explained. We consider the historical construction of liberalism in both states as a facet of state identity to argue that, far from creating a natural relationship, differing liberal identities have served to keep these two states apart. This is illustrated through case studies of divergent opinions over the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea and the rise of China.

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Introduction: the 'natural'/'neglected' relationship?

The vision of Australia-India relations as 'natural' has become a common facet of political discourse on the relationship. On his recent visit to Australia, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi (2014a) argued that 'This is a natural partnership arising from our shared values, interests and strategic maritime location'. Australia's Prime Minster, Tony Abbott (2014a), remarked also that there was a 'natural affinity' between India and Australia when introducing Modi's speech to the Australian parliament. Similarly, Australia's Foreign Minister, Julie Bishop (2013) for instance, has argued that 'Australia and India are natural partners to work together to resolve the issues facing the region'.

This natural partnership discourse has also been espoused by foreign policy commentators and academics. Ramesh Thakur (2013) has argued the two are 'natural allies'. Rory Medcalf (2010) has suggested that the coupling of India and Australia is a 'natural alliance'

and can lead regional architecture-building in the 'Indo-Pacific' region.[1] Similarly, Amitabh Mattoo (2014) describes them as 'two English-speaking, multicultural, federal democracies that believe in and respect the rule of law', meaning the relationship is 'an idea whose time has come'. For Raja Mohan (2011) India and Australia are 'trading nations' that have 'inherited the Anglo-Saxon tradition of common law'. The 'natural partnership' discourse rests on the idea that Australia and India share a common liberal identity with similar concerns with democracy, liberty and the rule of law which gives rise to similar foreign policy interests.

At the same time, however, there exists a parallel discourse, espoused by both politicians and academics, on the 'neglected' nature of this supposedly natural partnership (Gurry 1996, 2015). Percival Wood and Leach (2011), have noted the regularity with which Australian politicians have called for a 'redefinition' and 'reinvigoration' of India-Australia ties. This narrative of India-Australia relations was recently reprised in Tony Abbott's (2014b) opinion piece in the leading Indian newspaper, *The Hindu* in which he stated '[s]urprisingly, despite the deep ties that bind, we are not as close as we should be'.

Marika Vicziany (2000) has suggested that Australia's neglect led to a 'diplomatic vacuum'. In contrast, Peter Mayer and Purnendra Jain (2010) have suggested that, since the 1980s at least, India has neglected Australia far more than Australia neglects India. According to this literature, despite their 'natural' affinities, diverging foreign policy interests dating back to the Cold War have kept India and Australia apart. Hence Nihal Kurrupu's (2004) study of India-Australia relations explains the Cold War divergence as resulting from India's 'idealist' non-alignment and Australia's 'realist' association with the US and the UK. Likewise, Raja Mohan and Medcalf (2014: 16) point to a 'Cold War history of mistrust and mutual indifference'. This literature, however, does not account for the persistence of India and Australia's divergent foreign policy interests beyond the Cold War. The end of the Cold War and India's turn to market-led economic growth strategies since the 1990s could have created the context for greater economic and political convergence. Yet, two-way trade has recently been falling[2] and India and Australia continue to take divergent views on major issues in international politics such as the Transpacific Partnership, the nature of the global nuclear order, Iran's nuclear program and Russian actions in Ukraine.

We argue here that, contrary to the discourse of a 'natural partnership', Australian and Indian foreign policy interests diverged because their liberal identities diverge in significant ways. These liberal identities were initially formed through differing experiences of the colonial encounter which has given rise to different liberal agendas with distinct traditions, interests and values. In arguing this we draw on critical constructivist literature in IR. This literature argues against the false assumption that material facts, such as the economic, military and political characteristics of states, have objective meanings and singular interpretations. Rather, a state's economic, military and political interests and the dispositions of its leadership are an outcome of a process of interpretation shaped by domestic ideas and histories. This approach moreover, does not treat foreign policy discourse and political rhetoric as epiphenomenal. Instead, political rhetoric, such as that on the natural/neglected India-Australia relationship, is seen as a part of a process of constituting a world (Weldes, 1999: 117; Krebs & Jackson 2007). Hence, proponents of the idea that India and Australia are 'natural' allies are seeking to persuade the Indian and Australian leaderships and publics to accept and operationalise this idea, while at the same time constructing a particular shared liberal identity for the Indian and Australian states. These proponents have been unsuccessful due to India and Australia's different historical experiences, which have resulted in divergent and resilient liberal identities. This leads India and Australia to interpret international events, agents and structures very differently. We lay out our critical constructivist framework of analysis in the first part of the paper. Following this, we examine the historical construction of liberal identities in India and Australia, considering Australia's racialized liberalism and India's postcolonial liberalism. In the third part of the paper, we analyse three case studies: Russia's actions in Ukraine in 2014, nuclear non-proliferation and the rise of China to consider India and Australia's perception of and response to these issues. Specifically, the major difference between India and Australia, which can be traced back to their divergent liberal identities, is Australia's acceptance and defence of a US-led hierarchical order and India's consistent attempts to challenge this order.

Analysing India-Australia Relations: A Postcolonial Critical Constructivist Approach

Constructivist approaches have become influential in International Relations (IR) because they offer a way to take into account the role of ideas, culture and identity in the analysis of state behaviour. The particular approach adopted here draws on the basic constructivist insight that foreign policy interests are socially constructed rather than pre-given by material capabilities and a concern with state survival (Wendt, 1999). Constructivist scholars, however, differ in their understanding of how foreign policy interests are constructed. 'Conventional' constructivist scholars, like Wendt, argue that states' identities and therefore their foreign policy interests are created through their interaction with other states in the modern state system (Wendt, 1999). In this account, states have a foundational 'corporate' identity consisting of basic behaviours such as power-seeking and egoism that are shaped by the international system (Wendt, 1999: 195-8). As Wendt seeks a systemic theory of IR, he argues that a 'theory of the states system need no more explain the existence of states than one of society need explain that of people' (Wendt, 1994: 385). For Wendt (1999: 318-43) states interact with each other in particular 'cultures of anarchy' – classed as Hobbesian (based on enmity), Lockean (based on rivalry) and Kantian (based on friendship) - which determine their relations. This abstract approach does not take us very far in explaining the strength or weakness of particular types of relationships between states (eg. weak friendship, strong rivalry, indifference) and nor does it provide a sufficient explanation as to why states imbibe particular cultures of anarchy in relation to one another in the first place.

'Critical' constructivism on the other hand, is an agent-centred approach which argues that foreign policy makers are not blank canvases prior to interstate interaction but, rather, usually have a well-developed understanding of the world and their state's place in it which is shaped by domestic and international political, historical and cultural contexts (Weldes, 1999: 9). This self-understanding forms the basis of a state's 'national interest'. In highlighting the analytical importance of the notion of the 'national interest', this approach concurs with 'realist' approaches to foreign policy analysis. However, in emphasising the social construction of the 'national interest', it goes beyond under-specified nature of 'national interest' in realist accounts which 'cannot tell us about the historically contingent content of the national interest as identified and pursued by state officials' (Weldes, 1999: 6). A postcolonial-critical constructivist approach is one that couples a 'constructivist method', with 'Postcolonialism's interpretation of world politics' (Ling, 2002: 61). By recognising modernity as 'congenitally' (Shilliam, 2013:

1133) colonial in its constitution, a postcolonial interpretation of world politics brings to the fore the colonial and imperial contexts in which the modern state system was formed and which continue to shape inter-state relations through a hierarchical ordering of states and societies premised on the basis of 'Western distinctiveness' 'which takes Western agency and ideas as the only serious site of politics' (Sabaratnam, 2013: 270). Hence, a postcolonial approach recognises contemporary international order as consisting of hierarchical, rather than anarchical, systems of sovereign states.

There is now a burgeoning literature which recognises that hierarchy and not just anarchy is an enduring characteristic of the international system (eg. Donnelly, 2006, Goh, 2008, Hobson and Sharman, 2005). In hierarchical systems, unlike anarchical systems, dominant states acquire the ability to command while subordinate states accept a duty to obey through the exercise of legitimate authority (Lake, 2013: 74, Hobson and Sharman, 2005: 69-70). Much of the literature on hierarchy in the contemporary international order is focussed on how hierarchical sub-systems are built and maintained through the construction of legitimate authority through contracts and bargains based on rational utility maximisation (eg. Lake, 2013) and logics of appropriateness based on identities and cultural or normative deference (eg. Sharman, 2012). Less often explored is how and why states resist being incorporated into hierarchical orders. Moreover, the key assumption in much of this literature is that of 'hierarchy in anarchy' (Donnelly, 2006). Yet as Hinnebusch (2011: 213) has argued, seen from the global South, rather than there being elements of hierarchy within anarchy, it is 'more accurate to say that there are elements of anarchy (at the regional level) within a global hierarchy'. Hinnebusch's (2011: 215-6) conceptualisation of global hierarchy however is a structuralist, core-periphery model based on a hierarchical economic division of labour which is legitimised by concessions and bargains in client/patron-style relations. Taking the Middle East as his case study, Hinnebusch (2011: 229-33) conceptualises resistance within this global hierarchy as attempts to build regional autonomy through the articulation of a regional identity and endogenous economic development, but argues that the success of such resistance is usually fleeting because of material structural constraints. The postcolonial-critical constructivist approach taken here understands this global hierarchy to be both material and ideational because it is based on a global economic hierarchy as well as global cultural hierarchy, both of which are underpinned by Western distinctiveness. Whereas

Australia, through its alliance relationship with the United States, has acquiesced in the creation of a regional hierarchical sub-system based on American-led liberal international order, India has challenged this order in various ways, with some success, in both the Cold War and post-Cold War periods and continues to do so (contrary to Goh, 2008: 360). The different approaches taken by Australia and India to the liberal international order reflect their differing experiences with imperialism. These historical processes shape the approach taken by states to their foreign policies, and, indeed, to one another. A postcolonial interpretation allows us to view the historical construction of liberal identities in India and Australia under colonial-modern rule in both the past and the present.

Constructing Liberal Identities in India and Australia

India, Liberalism and Empire

Liberal theory, as Pitts (2006: 5) has argued, 'has been constituted by its engagement with politics' and the consolidation of empire has been key to this process. The colonial encounter brought not just political and economic subjugation to India but a new liberal language of equality and rights that challenged many existing socio-cultural practices and ideas. An oft-repeated claim is that Indian leaders like Nehru and Gandhi were liberals who turned the liberal values of the British against themselves in their fight against colonial rule. Tony Abbott (2014b) drew on this claim in his speech to the Australian parliament during the visit by Narendra Modi: 'Australians admired the way India won independence – not by rejecting the values learned from Britain, but by appealing to them…'. However, as Mehta (1999: 10) notes, this is a misleading reading that overlooks the significant reconstitution that liberal theory, both in India and globally, underwent as a result of its encounter with anticolonialism (Bayly, 2012: 4). Rather than simply rejecting liberalism or accepting it unquestioningly, Indian political leaders engaged 'with the specific nature of Indian society, its immediate political history and predicament, its cultural past and inheritance' in order to layer familiar concepts with 'new meanings and signification' (Mahajan, 2013: 7-8). They did so by reflecting on and critiquing colonial rule and the liberal ideas that accompanied it, using resources from indigenous and Western traditions, and memories and representations of the past in order to reconstruct liberal discourse in an 'intellectual assault' against the 'policies, moral character and culture of their rulers' (Bayly, 2012: 3). In the Constituent Assembly debates of 1946-50 for instance, the appropriateness of

democracy for India was justified in part with references to traditions of democratic assemblies in ancient India (Jaffrelot, 2010: 208-9). Nehru's (1974: 42) engagement with liberal ideas drew on what he called a 'strange medley' of 'Buddha, Marx, Gandhi' and the conceptions of freedom, equality and diversity that he and other Indian leaders developed were centred around the community rather than the individual (Chacko, 2011) which gave rise to distinctive domestic governance practices in independent India, such as a willingness to accommodate diversity and group rights in the public sphere (Mahajan, 2013: 128). This inflection of Western liberal ideas is broadly termed here, 'postcolonial liberalism'.

As Hobson and Sharman (2005: 88) have argued, the imperial hierarchy of the 18th and 19th centuries was based on the ideology of liberal imperialism.Within this imperial hierarchy, India was positioned as a stagnant, backward civilisation which required paternalistic guidance. In rejecting British renderings of India's past as irretrievably backward, pointing to the failures of the British colonial regime in providing material betterment for India and to the connections between liberalism, imperialism, fascism and war, Indian leaders challenged the intellectual basis of liberal imperial hierarchy. Moreover, they recognised that the end of formal colonialism and the delegitimisation of imperialism did not mean an end to imperial hierarchy but rather gave rise to 'informal hierarchies' in great power alliance systems and international institutions, whereby formal and universal state sovereignty coexists with practices that continue to perpetuate hierarchies premised on Western distinctiveness (Hobson and Sharman, 2005: 93). Post-independence Indian governments have consistently challenged the informal hierarchies that have characterised the post-World War II liberal international order by adopting policies aimed at building counter-hegemonic coalitions – sometimes with states that have very different, non-liberal political regimes, securing India's autonomy as an international actor and shaping international institutions. In other words, resistance to subordination in the global order, and recognition of India's right to autonomy has defined its postcolonial liberal identity.

For instance, Nehru's foreign policy tenets of Panchsheel (five principles of peaceful coexistence) and nonalignment were developed through readings of ancient Indian history, Marx, Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore and aimed at challenging a Cold War politics of alliance and collective defence pacts which perpetuated informal hierarchies while creating new antagonisms

and conflicts (Chacko, 2012: Ch. 3). Moreover, independent India engaged with the newly created institutions of the post-World War Two era in ways that sought to address global material inequality and racism. For instance, India was an active participant at the 1944 Bretton Woods Conference where it attempted and, on occasion, succeeded in shaping the Articles of Agreement of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to benefit 'developing' countries, (Kirk, 2011: 11). India co-founded and shared the leadership of the Non-Aligned Movement with the states of Yugoslavia, Egypt, Indonesia and Ghana. At the United Nations, India was heavily involved in the establishment of the Human Rights Commission (HRC) and used the first session of the UN to raise the issue of South Africa's Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act, a precursor to apartheid (Bhagavan, 2008). Nehru (1984: 216-7) saw the HRC as a first step toward establishing the UN as 'a world republic in which all States, independent States are represented and to which they may be answerable on occasions'. In an attempt to remake the global economic order, India helped to establish the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Group of 77 at UNCTAD's first session in 1964. Indian diplomats were also active in the drafting documents calling for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) in 1974. As we demonstrate below, India's liberal identity continues to be inflected through its anti-colonial/postcolonial politics and its foreign policy remains focussed on contesting the informal hierarchies that persist and place it in a subordinate position in the international order.

Australia, Liberalism and Empire

As with India, Australia's liberal identity developed in the context of the British Empire, through settler-colonial discourses. The vision of Britain settling an empty, uninhabited continent is still a facet of contemporary political discourse (Abbott, 2014c). Australia's fears of Asian settlement were visible throughout the 19th century, with the use of non-white, including Indian, labour only allowed when strict regulations were placed on forcing these 'coolies' to return to their port of origin (Davis, 2013). Similarly, Walker (1998) has shown how racialized stereotypes of the Chinese as untrustworthy and underhanded were a central part of Australian identity. Srdjan Vucetic (2013: 119) argues that Anglo-American liberals consistently believed that Anglo-Saxon supremacy was necessary for the future of world affairs and 'the progress of mankind'. Australia was very much part of this liberal imperialist vision. Indeed, until the 1940s

Australia did not even see itself as a sovereign state, rather as part of a vast imperial system (MacDonald and O'Connor 2013: 185). This liberal narrative of progress, though, was tied to colonial visions of liberal imperialism, in which the US and the UK were seem as leading the world (by force if necessary) to liberalism and democracy.

This narrative played out in particular ways in Australia. In the context of World War One, in rebutting arguments that Australia was detached from conflict, Prime Minister Billy Hughes (in Burke, 2003: 51) wondered if 'those who think Australia remote from the world which hatches dangers and wars ever looked at the map.' Australia's isolation from Europe during this period may have been a cause for celebration and security. Hughes (in Burke, 2003, 51), however, was concerned that Australia was 'but a tiny drop in a colour ocean.' This fear of Australia's Asian geography and its racialized vision of liberalism can be seen clearly through White Australia policy. Indeed, the first bill to pass the newly sovereign parliament was the Immigration Restriction Act. Australia's defence of this policy was often framed as an economic imperative: not wishing to take too many poor immigrants for the protection of Australia's budding egalitarian society. Menzies (1949) argued in his victorious 1949 electoral campaign :

> The strength and history of our race have been founded upon this vital principle. We will continue to maintain Australia's settled immigration policy, known as 'The White Australia Policy'; well justified as it is on grounds of national homogeneity and economic standards.

This vision of a prosperous, economically vibrant society was tethered to racialized understandings of who could economically succeed. The economic defence of the White Australia policy was obviously racial however, as wealthy people from Asia could not emigrate, but comparatively poor Europeans were allowed to.

This racialized identity was offensive to India and was resisted by India's first diplomats to Australia in creative ways (Davis, 2015). Nehru (1984: 315) did not speak openly on White Australia topic, but his resistance was made clear at Bandung, in which he argued:

> The problem of racialism and racial separation may become more dangerous than any other problem that the world has to face… They hurt us. Simply because we cannot do anything effective, and we do not want to cheapen ourselves by mere shouting, we remain quiet. But the thing has gone deep down into our minds and hearts. We feel it strongly.

Even though India was more focused on the very serious issues of racial discrimination in South Africa, the policy led India to look upon Australia as a colonial backwater.

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Australia maintained the White Australia policy until the 1970s. This ideational conflict on Australia's position between 'Asia' and 'Europe' still plays out in discourse on Australia's role in the world. It can be seen in a discourse on Australia choosing between its 'history' and its 'geography' (Howard, 2006). Australia's so-called 'familial' connection to the US and the UK strengthened the intensity of Australia's anxieties over Asia. Racialized liberalism has long been central to Australia's development, and has played out in Australia's selection of 'great and powerful friends'. It is telling that the one major change in Australian foreign policy was from one Anglo-American power (the UK) to another (the US). This preference for the Anglo-American powers might have been diluted by Paul Keating's (1996) ideational project, claiming Australia as 'part of Asia'. This narrative of Australian identity placed it between two broader civilizations. Even within this discourse, however, Australia had to be 'secure it [its] identity', an implication that the opportunities presented to Australia as part of Asia were tempered by a sense that the 'rise' of Asian powers was threating (Brookes, 2012).

Australia's racialized liberalism continued to play out in its domestic politics. In the bicentenary of Australia's 'settlement' in 1988 Australia celebrated its inclusivity even alongside protests by the aboriginal community and minority groups at the crippling and obvious inequities in Australia society (Vucetic, 2013). Australia (as with the US and the UK) is now frequently defined as 'post-racial' or 'colour-blind'. Ongoing fears of multiculturalism, though, have been consistently voiced by the Australia's conservatives (Johnson, 2007), arguing that this model has failed, and that, as Tony Abbott has put it, minorities need to join 'Team Australia' (The Australian, 2014). Australia's foreign policy has treated the rise of Asia as allowing economic opportunities (through greater trade liberalisation) while presenting geopolitical threats. As a result, Australia has transactional relationships with Asia (Thakur, 2013b), but 'familial' connections with the US and the UK. In this sense, Australia's liberalism is still shaped by its racialized construction. In terms of foreign policy, this identity leads Australia to seek security through US hegemony over world order, particularly in the Asia-Pacific/Indo-Pacific region.

Divergent Liberal Agendas and Foreign Policy

Russia and the Annexation of Crimea

India and Australia's starkly contrasting reactions to Russia's actions in Ukraine provide a strong example of these states' divergent liberal agendas. In March 2014 Russia annexed the region of Crimea in Ukraine following the Ukrainian parliament's decision to vote out of power its pro-Russian President, Viktor Yanukovych, and moves by the pro-Russian Crimean parliament to secede from Ukraine. A variety of motives have been attributed to Russia to explain its actions. For some commentators, Russia's actions are the result of the expansionist aspirations of a power in decline (Eg. Patrick, 2014), while for others they are a legitimate response to the threat posed to Russia's core security interests by Western expansion of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (Eg. Mearsheimer, 2014).

The former interpretation has been adopted by Western states and allies, including Australia, which condemned both the annexation and the referendum that legitimised Crimea's secession to Russia as contrary to international law. Australia's Foreign Minister Julie Bishop argued that 'International law does not allow one state to steal the territory of another on the basis of a referendum that cannot be considered free or fair' (quoted in Wroe, 2014). Australia was one of 100 countries to vote in favour of a United Nations General Assembly Resolution which rejected recognition for Russia's annexation and the referendum. Along with the United States and the European Union, it imposed targeted financial sanctions and travel bans against key individuals and companies associated with the Russian regime.

India's reaction to Russia's annexation of Crimea surprised some Western commentators (Stravers and Harris, 2014). India rejected an unsuccessful Australian attempt to prevent Putin's attendance at the G20, it was one of 58 countries to abstain on the UN resolution condemning the Crimea annexation and referendum, and it refused to be party to sanctions against Russia. Commenting on the events in Crimea in March 2014, India's former national security advisor, Shivshankar Menon even stated that, '[t]here are legitimate Russian and other interests involved and we hope they are discussed and resolved' (quoted in Times of India, 2014). India's new government, elected in May 2014, has maintained this approach to Russia with Modi describing Russia as 'India's closest friend, and the preferred strategic partner' (quoted in Holodny, 2014).

India's distance from other liberal democratic countries in relation to Russia has been explained as a peculiar 'hangover' from their close Cold War ties, or as a reflection of India and Russia's burgeoning contemporary economic and other links (Stravers and Harris, 2014; Mazumdaru, 2014). Russia has emerged as a source of energy supplies for India and is also a key source of sensitive defence technologies. However, India's economic ties with the West and its allies, like Japan, dwarf its economic links with Russia. India's total trade with Russia in 2013-14 stood at a paltry $US 6 billion while its trade with Australia was double this at $US 12 billion. India's trade with Japan is also higher at $ US 16 billion. The United States is India's third largest overall trading partner, with $US 61 billion in overall trade and remains the biggest destination for India's exports. Russia still remains a small player in India's energy market, which is heavily reliant on West Asia but is increasingly diversifying its sources to South America and Africa.[3] In addition, Russia is facing increasing competition from Israel and the United States as India's largest defence supplier. The US-India Defence Technology and Trade Initiative established in 2012, promises to increase trade and technology transfers. None of this however, has led India to dilute its relationship with Russia.

Rather, a closer examination of Indian statements suggests that it views Russia as key to its broader, long-term goal of challenging global hierarchy through the creation of what some officials have termed, a 'polycentric' world order (Menon, 2012). The India-Russia joint statement released during Vladimir Putin's visit to India in December 2014, committed both countries to building such an order:

> Reaffirming their commitment to upholding the principles of international law and promoting the central role of the UN in international relations, India and Russia will work together to promote a polycentric and democratic world order based on shared interests of all countries. (Government of India and Government of Russia, 2014).

In a manner consistent with a postcolonial liberal tradition in which contemporary political ideas are legitimised and shaped by locating their precursors in ancient India, Shivshankar Menon (2012), has argued that a polycentric order is in line with India's historical 'tradition and culture of thought' and distinct from the hierarchical traditions of other countries:

> When we in India call for a plural, inclusive and open security architecture in the Indo-Pacific we are well within a tradition and culture of thought which was relativistic, idea driven and omni-directional Other traditions, which are more hierarchical, claiming universal validity, find these ideas hard to understand… Chola, Pandyan and Oriya manuscripts and inscriptions are early

examples of what the free flow of goods, ideas and people could achieve - the ancient version of the open, inclusive architecture that we speak of today.

Keeping with this conception of a polycentric world order, the former Chairman of India's National Security Advisory Board, Shyam Saran (Quoted in Sharma, 2013), has praised Russia's growing profile in Central Asia and its heightened global presence, as evidenced by its role in 'managing' the Syrian conflict. Saran further encouraged Russia to take a more active role in the 'emerging theatre of the Indo-Pacific' in the interests of creating a more 'balanced security architecture'. The 2014 India-Russia joint statement affirmed a joint commitment to:

> the evolution of an open, balanced and inclusive security architecture in the Asia Pacific region based on collective efforts, considering legitimate interests of all states of the region and guided by respect for norms and principles of international law (Government of India and Government of Russia, 2014).

Russia's affirmation of Indian conceptions of regional and international order is reminiscent of its approach to India in the Cold War. During the Cold War, as Muppidi (1999: 136-7) has argued, the Soviet Union built a shared anticolonial identity with India by acknowledging lingering informal international hierarchies in the international system and supporting India's attempts to challenge them without seeking to interfere in Indian domestic and international policies. Countries like Australia and the United States, however, regarded India's anti-colonialism as misguided and a distraction from the key issue of the communist threat to a liberal international order and they actively sought policy changes to force India's conformity to their economic and political policy precepts (Muppidi, 1999: 141).[4]

In contrast to Indian officials, Australian officials have treated Russia's actions in Crimea as part of a broader belligerent strategy that once again challenges a US-led liberal international order. In stark contrast to recent Indian statements on Russia, Australia has sought to isolate Russia, presenting it as a threat to regional security and has tried to shore up the West-centred liberal order by strengthening existing regional security arrangements based on the US alliance. According to Australia's ambassador to the UN, Gary Quinlan, for instance,

> In pursuing its current course of action Russia has chosen a path towards isolation. In doing so it undermines its own standing, credibility and relations with other states and increasingly poses a threat to security and stability in the region. Inevitably, there are consequences for its unlawful actions (Kukolja, 2014).

While Australia's attempt to bar Putin from the G20 summit failed, a trilateral was held on the side-lines of the meet, after which the liberal troika of Australia, the United States and Japan issued a statement criticising 'Russia's purported annexation of Crimea and its actions to destabilize eastern Ukraine' and announcing expanded military cooperation (Spetalnick and Siegel, 2014). Contrary to Indian visions for regional security architecture, Australia's conceptions of the Indo-Pacific do not include a role for Russia but instead rest on the traditional pillars of Australian foreign policy, enmeshment with Asia alongside the US alliance (Abbott, 2014d).

Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Uranium Sales

Distinctive foreign policy interests emerging from India and Australia's divergent liberal identities can also be discerned in issues of nuclear non-proliferation. The trade in nuclear materials and global regimes regulating nuclear proliferation have been a long-standing difficulty in India-Australia relations. Part of this dispute has recently been overcome, with Australia agreeing to sell uranium to India despite India's continued unwillingness to sign the NPT. In Australia, this move been interpreted primarily as an important step-forward for the relationship. Indeed, this language appears in the joint statement which announced the civil nuclear agreement, which noted the deal as 'a concrete symbol of the bilateral partnership' (Abbott and Modi, 2014). This has been the case in India as well, and, indeed, this decision marked a significant change in the relationship. In India, however, this deal was also perceived as part of India's effort to disrupt the global nuclear hierarchy which subordinates it. This comes into clearer focus once we consider India's long-term resistance to global nuclear regimes and Australia's acquiescence to US-led nuclear hegemony.

For much of its history, India has denounced the global nuclear order as 'nuclear apartheid'. This label clearly defines the nuclear order as discriminatory (Biswas 2001). Australia, however, has sought to champion such an order while hoping to position themselves under the US 'nuclear umbrella' through the rhetoric of 'extended deterrence' (Cohen and O'Neil, 2014 and Cohen, 2014: 113). Muppidi (2005: 286) has argued that India's 1998 decision

to test nuclear weapons as an 'apt manifestation of a postcolonial state's deep ambivalence towards a colonial order of governance'. India has consistently opposed the construction of this global hierarchy which subordinates it. The regimes formed by the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Nuclear non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) legitimated the permanent five members of the UNSC to allow for a nuclear order informed by a clear and formalized hierarchy. The US, UK, France, Russia and China had special rights to hold nuclear weapons while instituting treaties which prevented further proliferation from other states.

The rhetoric of nuclear apartheid dissipated following the Vajpayee government's decision to test a weaponized nuclear device in 1998. Jaswant Singh (1998) declared that India's nuclear explosion had ended the discriminatory order. In response to this test, the Australian Government (1998) argued that:

> The Government considers that India's actions could have the most damaging consequences for security in South Asia and globally… India must immediately sign the CTBT, join the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and forswear forever the use of nuclear weapons.

Australia's response was harsher than its western contemporaries (Kaul, 2000: 365). Australia suspended all non-humanitarian aid to India and ended all defence collaboration.

Despite its nuclear test, India remained excluded from uranium trade and could not be recognised as a 'legitimate' nuclear weapons state. By seeking deals with Australia and the US on nuclear trade, India has sought to mitigate its marginalization within global nuclear hierarchy and reshape relations with Australia and the US. For example, when defending his deal with the US, Manmohan Singh (2007) stressed India's continued independence in the Lok Sabha that:

> Our right to use… our independent and indigenously developed nuclear facilities has been fully preserved… India is too large and too important a country to have the independence of its foreign policy taken away by any power… There is independence in our thought and independence in our actions.

Modi has been relatively silent on the NPT since taking power but there has been no hint of a shift in India's position.

A more concrete example came in October 2014 following a UN vote on the NPT, after which the Indian government provided an oft-repeated reasoning of India's (2014) continued refusal to sign the NPT:

> India's position on the NPT is well-known. There is no question of India joining the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state. Nuclear weapons are an integral part of India's national security and will remain so, pending non-discriminatory and global nuclear disarmament.

Almost identical language was used under Manmohan Singh (Government of India, 2009).The President of India's Atomic Energy Commission R.K. Sinha (2014) showed India's objections more clearly, when asked about India signing the NPT due to its deal with Australia. He argued that:

> We cannot sign the NPT… having been a strong supporter of the non-discriminatory regime. We will be bound by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards in respect of facilities in which these equipment, material or fuel will be used if they are coming through the international cooperation but not beyond that.

On this matter, and on the wording of India's justification, there has been no movement. The India-Australia nuclear deal has been interpreted as both an improvement in bilateral relations and a continuation of resistance to the hierarchical/colonial nature of the international system. It is here that a further motivation for India's US and Australia nuclear deals becomes clear: creating a more equal playing field and levelling the global nuclear hierarchy.

For India, a postcolonial liberal world order demands dismantling the nuclear hierarchy. As Modi (2014a) argued in his address to the Australian parliament, the world needs to create a 'currency of co-existence and cooperation; in which all nations, small and big, abide by international law and norms'. For Australia, only nuclear weapons states at the top of this hierarchy that embody western distinctiveness are forces for global stability. As the Australian Department of Defence (2013) has argued, 'Australia's security benefits from extended nuclear deterrence under the US alliance.' Australia submitted to the US Nuclear Posture Review process in 2009 that US nuclear weapons '[assured] very close allies, like Australia, that they do not need to develop their own nuclear weapons' (O'Neil, 2013: 113). Australia has applied similar safeguards to both the US and the UK as it does to India, yet it has consistently seen these states' nuclear weapons as a force for its own security. Australia has viewed a hierarchical global nuclear with its chosen western-liberal partners in control as a means for security, and sought to

be protected by it without having to enter into it. India, however, has viewed this order as discriminatory and colonial and has consistently sought to undermine and dismantle it.

Dealing with the Rise of China

Our final case study considers India and Australia's divergent strategies for dealing with a rising China. The rise of China and its impact on regional and world order has become a hotly contested topic of scholarly and popular commentary as well as government policymaking. Some commentators (eg. Garnaut 2014) have suggested that the rise of China presents a similar challenge to both India and Australia, and that this can be a driver of closer relations. According to Twining (2015) for instance, because of their common commitment to democracy, 'Chinese assertiveness is uniting the Indo-Pacific's most powerful states [which include India and Australia] against it, reinforcing their interest in working more closely to uphold international rules and norms'.

India and Australia are, indeed, both concerned about the implications of China's rise. And yet they perceive the challenge to world order presented by the rise of China differently. China has long been constructed as a rival by many Indian strategic thinkers. This characterisation of China dates to the turn of the twentieth century and the imperial geopolitics of the Raj (Alamgir, 2009: 45). While Nehru sought to contest this construction in the first two decades of India's independence through an emphasis on the shared experience of anticolonialism, the 1962 border war, which remains unresolved; China's alliance with Pakistan, with which India has a serious and long-running territorial dispute; and China's rapid economic growth in the 1980s and 1990s has fuelled the dominance of a discourse of rivalry (Alamgir, 2009: 46). An emerging theme in India's foreign policy discourse is also the assumption that China has a historical tradition of hierarchical statecraft, in contrast to India's. According to Menon for instance:

> In many ways it is India's historical experience of poly-centric multi-state systems, plurality, and of the omnidirectional diplomacy and relativistic statecraft that it produced, that is closer to the world we see today. (In contrast, the single sovereign, universalist, and hierarchical statecraft and diplomacy of traditional China is easier to explain and attractive in its simplicity but fundamentally different.) (Menon, 2012).

This hierarchical tradition, moreover, is seen to have the potential to result in a new period of expansionist and hegemonic behaviour. In an implicit reference to China, Modi, during his visit to Tokyo, noted:

> The 21st century is Asia's century… The question is - how will it be? There are two ways - one of 'Vistarvaad' (expansionism) and the other of 'Vikasvaad' (development). Those who walk on the path of Buddha, those who have faith in the path of development, they come with a guarantee of peace and progress. But we are witnessing today the expansionism that prevailed in the 18th century (NDTV 2014).

While China has been constructed as a potentially belligerent rival in Indian discourse, China has long been constructed as a potentially dangerous cultural 'Other' as the foremost symbol of the 'Asian menace' which threatens the Australian continent with its 'yellow aggression' as Alfread Deakin, Australia's Prime Minister in the early twentieth century put it (Macintyre 2009:142-3) Though China-Australia relations have advanced and deepened considerably, historical anxieties about China and Australia's vulnerability routinely surface (Pan 2012: 254-5). Tony Abbott (2009: 160), in his 2009 book *Battlelines*, for instance, agreed with his predecessor John Howard that:

> despite very important trade links and much high-level contact, 'we can never had the sort of intimate strategic relations with China that we have with the United States because of the very different nature of the Chinese political system'.

However, while India and Australia both have concerns about China, their reactions to China's rise diverge because of their different positions toward the Western-dominated international order.

These different perspectives were evident during Modi's visit to Australia in 2014. In his speech, Modi (2014a) noted that while India and Australia should both play a role in ensuring peace and security in the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean region, 'we do not have to rely on borrowed architecture of the past. Nor do we have the luxury to choose who we work with and who we don't'. This approach is reflected in India's embrace of new or expanded China-led regional institutions, like the New Development Bank, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Fund, to further the creation of a 'polycentric' world order with multiple states forming multiple centres of power. It is also reflected in India and China's issue-specific cooperation in multilateral fora, such as the Copenhagen conference on climate change, and multilateral institutions such as the World Trade Organisation. Their joint

membership of various multilateral coalitions and institutions means that India and China's relationship is increasingly institutionalised in ways that seek to contest the status quo.

In contrast, the key countries in Australia's Indo-Pacific vision are India, Japan, the United States and a China that is to be engaged and integrated into the existing liberal order. As Australia's Prime Minister Tony Abbott (2014d) put it in a speech during a visit to India:

> …the shift of economic weight to the Indo-Pacific region is accompanied by strategic change… Australian and Indian interests are converging as never before. Namely, to protect and promote the stability and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific…Australia and India have shared interests in continued US engagement in the region, just as we both do in a China that makes a positive contribution to stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific.

Unlike India, Australia's anxiety stems from China's challenge to the existing hierarchy. The Australian Department of Defence (2009: 49) White Paper outlined these anxieties, albeit while only referring to China's rise implicitly:

> Australia has been a very secure country for many decades, in large measure because the wider Asia-Pacific region has enjoyed an unprecedented era of peace and stability underwritten by US strategic primacy. That order is being transformed as economic changes start to bring about changes in the distribution of strategic power.

More recently, Michael Thawley, the secretary of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, characterised China as a country that 'won't help you find a solution. China will get in the way or out of the way' (Garnaut & Wroe 2015). He went on to note that 'Given that we think in my view that US leadership is going to be crucial in the period ahead, we ought to maximise out capacity to influence US strategy and make sure it maintains its alliance commitment' (Garnaut & Wroe 2015).

Driven in part by concerns about China's rise, Australia and India have recently sought to deepen their relationship by conducting bilateral military exercises and high-level trilateral talks with Japan, in which they discussed China's land reclamation in the South China Sea. This issue, however, has also highlighted India and Australia's different approaches. While India has limited its public comments to expressions of concern about the need for freedom of movement in the South China Sea, Australia has been unequivocal in its condemnation of China's land reclamation (Haidar 2015).

Nonetheless, India-China cooperation has its limits. China continues to resist backing India's desire to be a member of the United Nations Security Council, because of Pakistan's opposition and the fear that India's ascension would pave the way for Japan's (Aneja 2015). India, in turn, has been unenthusiastic about supporting China's Indo-Pacific vision, its 'One Belt, One Road' initiative for building land and maritime infrastructure to increase economic connectivity between China, Africa, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Central Asia and the Mediteranean because 'It was not an international initiative they discussed with the whole world, or with the countries which in some way or the other have opinions (about it) or which are affected by it' (Deccan Herald 2015). If this view of China's growing unilateralism persists and deepens among the Indian leadership, a joint interest in resisting a Chinese-centred hierarchical order may well provide the basis for a 'natural' partnership between India and Australia. Even were this to eventuate, however, Australia and India would oppose a Chinese-led hierarchy for different reasons and this would likely result in the continued misperception and misunderstandings that have long marked India-Australia relations.

Conclusion

When he visited Australia in 2014, Narendra Modi became the first Indian Prime Minister to address both houses of the Australian parliament. Both Modi and Abbott evoked colonial histories in their addresses as they sought to create a deeper relationship. When introducing Modi, Abbott (2014a) noted that 'above all' Australia and India 'share a history'. Modi (2014a) similarly argued that India is 'linked to Australia by the great Indian Ocean; by our connected history and our many shared inheritances.' Yet while Abbott cited various wars in defence of the British Empire as evidence for shared history, Modi referenced the 'First War of Indian Independence' and an Australian lawyer's defence of a leading Indian figure in this war, the Rani of Jhansi:

> More than 150 years ago, an Australian novelist and lawyer John Lang fought the legal battle for a brave Indian freedom fighter, the Queen of Jhansi, Rani Laxmi Bai against the British East India Company in India's first War of Independence.

This example is illustrative: even as ties between the two states escalate, when they talk of shared values, liberalism, democracy and colonial histories, they frequently arrive at different endpoints.

Since the end of the Cold War, Australia has sought to accommodate India and China within a Western-liberal hegemonic world order, so as to prevent its ultimate demise. India, on the other hand, as we have shown in this paper through case studies on India and Australia's different approaches to Russia, China and the nuclear non-proliferation, has consistently opposed this structure, seeking a polycentric order by challenging international regimes and forming selective coalitions to undermine existing hierarchies. India remains resistant to the NPT, a regime it has long regarded as enshrining informal hierarchies in international politics, and it has used the establishment of new or expanded regional institutions that involve countries like Russia and China, such as the New Development Bank, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Fund to further the creation of a 'polycentric' world order with multiple states forming multiple centres of power. In contrast, Australia has consistently sought protect the US (and earlier UK) led liberal global order. Contemporary claims to a shared identity and shared interests are at best murky: India has consistently aimed for a diffuse, polycentric world order with China and India the key players in Asia rather than an external hegemon. This vision of world order has always caused Australia considerably anxiety.

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[1] Emphasizing that the two states are democracies and that this should make the two states attractive partners for one another is a common facet of scholarly discourse on the relationship, see: Roy (2011); Gurry, 2012: 296 and Medcalf and Gill (2009).

[2] See the trade statistics on the Indian Department of Commerce website: http://commerce.nic.in/eidb/iecntq.asp

[3] All of these statistics are taken from the Indian Department of Commerce website: http://commerce.nic.in/eidb/iecntq.asp

[4] Australian, Canadian and British diplomats frequently voiced their frustration with India's perceived 'obsession' with colonialism. See: Crocker, 1961.