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THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN NORMS AND THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION: A CASE STUDY OF INDIA IN THE SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION (SCO)

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Abstract: The primary aim of this paper is to investigate the objective of India's joining the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). The significance of this research lies in finding the correlation between the norms adopted by the organisation and the real reason for a country's joining that organisation. Similarly, special attention has been paid to the concept of international organisations as norm disseminators. The paper first discusses the normative theory of international relations and tries to bridge it with international organisations (IOs). Additionally, the paper assesses the role played by norms in driving international organisations or *vice versa*. The main argument is that India has adopted a cooperation and competition approach to the SCO, considering its bitter relations with China and Pakistan. This is a qualitative study that considers primary and secondary sources to connect the theoretical understanding with the empirical study.

Keywords: Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), India, China, Pakistan, International Organisation, Norms.

INTRODUCTION

Within the arena of International Organisations (IOs), there are long-running debates about the correlation between “norms and IOs”. But it is undeniably true that if an international organisation is established, it will be based on certain norms and values accepted by all the member states. On the other hand, there is

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a possibility that IOs can change their norms and values over time. Significantly, an IO can change its identity in order to disseminate specific norms. The bureaucratic culture of an organisation is described as its dominant profession's bureaucratic culture, which impacts how its mandate is carried out and how the organisation is regarded (Wendt 1999). The identification of the IO and the influence of norms that dictate appropriate behaviour of participants within the international system are the two primary criteria that IOs use to operationalize their mission (March and Olsen 1989). The definition of how IOs work requires an understanding of identity. While states play an important role in establishing IOs by defining their mandate, scope, and function, all of which contribute to determining their identity, an organisation's historical development and culture, as well as the professional orientation of the majority of its staff, influence how an IO will act in specific situations within the international system (Cox et al. 1973; Ascher 1983; Barnett and Finnemore 1999). Norm adoption generally works at two levels: *norm recognition* (the first reference to a norm) and *norm adoption* (the first reference to a policy devoted to a norm).

In the context of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), as the leading initiator, China first took the opportunity to set the norms and values according to its interests. Considering the security vulnerabilities China is facing throughout Central Asia, the SCO is of strategic importance to Beijing in its fight against three evils: terrorism, extremism, and separatism. For more than 15 years since its establishment, the same norms have worked for all the member states of the SCO. However, when the SCO welcomed two arch-rivals, India and Pakistan, into the organisation in 2017, the balance shifted slightly. As the use of international organisations as instruments of foreign policy by member nations has negative consequences for their development, India is keen to impose its version of the norms on the organisation.

Similarly, India's interest in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is abundant. The organisation includes Russia, India's strategic partner and friend, China, Pakistan, as well as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, four major Central Asian Republics (CARs). Due to Chinese domination through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and a large chequebook, India's lack of proper connection with the CARs has been a key barrier. As a result, innovative methods must be devised to increase India's footprint in the region's marketplaces. India and Central Asia are linked by a unique combination of history, geopolitical, cultural, civilizational, and economic imperatives. Deepening connections with Russia, monitoring and countering the influence of China and Pakistan, and expanding collaboration with CARs are the three pillars of New Delhi's agenda (Bhatia 2020). Some also argue that the persuasion of SCO's membership was driven by a desire to create strategic regional relationships and that providing

permanent status to India was motivated by a desire to balance bilateral alliances (Ahmed and Bhatnagar 2019).

Since the notion of India joining the SCO was initially floated, academic studies have investigated the potential impact of this expansion on the SCO in terms of India's foreign policy objectives (Stobdan 2015; 2016), trade expansion (Bakshi 2008), peace in Afghanistan and regional peace stability in South Asia (Qadir and Rehman 2016), and India's increasing role in regional affairs (Ahmad 2018; Qureshi and Hashmi 2020). While we want to interpret the functionalities of any international organisation, the focus must first be given to the common norms and values shared by the member states. However, very few perspectives have been found in academia about the norms that established the SCO and whether India joined the SCO because of norms or something else. Therefore, this research aims to analyse India's interest and objective in the SCO. To do so, this research addresses the following questions: i) What are the primary norms that established the SCO? ii) What is the primary interest of India in joining the SCO?

The paper is structured as follows. It begins by explaining the norms and international organisations. The paper then discusses the genesis of the SCO, followed by the perceptions of the Indian state toward the SCO. Further, the paper presents India's perceptions of the SCO. The main conclusion is that although India has entered the SCO respecting all its adopted norms and values, it uses the SCO platform in accordance with its foreign policy interests.

NORMATIVE THEORY AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS (IOS)

Brown (1992) defines normative theory as follows:

“That body of work that addresses the moral dimension of international relations and the larger questions of meaning and interpretation by the discipline”.

In the social sciences, it is well known that in the 1960s, neo-Marxists began to assert that the concept of objective and unbiased science was questionable. Theorists such as Adorno, Horkheimer, and Habermas argued that social theory implies social critique by definition, and they were able to influence the minds of many intellectuals (Strauss 2003). Normative theory, unlike empirical IR theory, deals with issues such as ethical norms, obligations, responsibilities, rights, and duties as they apply to persons, states, and the international state system. Studies with a normative orientation, in particular, concentrate on contentious issues such as the moral significance of states and borders, the ethics of war and peace, the nature of human rights, the case for (political and military) intervention, and

the demands of international distributive justice. For this purpose, normative theory is concerned with the norms, rules, values, and standards that govern international politics, and as such, it encompasses all areas of the field, including international law, international political economy, and diplomacy (Evans and Newnham 1998).

In simple terms, the normative theory of international relations refers to the moral or ethical dimension of international governance. On the other hand, the way normative analyses and reflections are deployed and practised is anything but straightforward. Certainly, a variety of practical challenges, such as intervention, nuclear issues, international legal issues, distributive justice, and others, are difficult to resolve (Lawson 2003). Furthermore, one of the primary questions is who is responsible for what, how far accountability extends, and to what extent the global and local, universal, and particular, are linked. Consider a situation where refugees are fleeing conflict and cannot feed, clothe, house, or educate their families.

From the end of WWII until the late 1980s, the normative theory was pushed aside by the popularity of theories based on positivist explanations of the profession (Nicholson 1996). Positivist approaches are inherently biased towards the normative theory because they “distinguish between facts and morality”, claiming that knowledge of facts is the only acceptable knowledge based on the natural science model of enquiry (Frost 1986). In principle, the scientific (positivist) approach should produce “explanatory hypotheses based on facts.” This means that theories based on “facts” observed in the “real” world are objective and do not need to be interpreted — a good theory should be based on things that everyone can see. In this light, morality and ethics, which are the normative theorists’ field of study, are subjective and non-verifiable; a more damning description would be to ascribe the term “value judgements” to them; morals and ethics are not intersubjectively verifiable, thus they are not accessible to all, and thus they are not “informative” (Frost 1986).

Within the international domain, International Organisations are seen as norm diffusers or transmitters (Finnemore 1993; Checkel 1999; Grigorescu 2002). Norms, according to Finnemore, are disseminated across the international system and taught to governments through international organisations and non-governmental organisations (INGOs). Norms are characterised as “collectively held views about behaviour”, with the caveat that “not like private ideas, norms are shared and social; they are not only subjective but inter-subjective”. Norms are crucial because they educate states about appropriate behaviour in any given circumstance, explaining why actors behave in ways that are not explained by rationalist theories or contradict them. Furthermore, the existence of international norms explains how governments with disparate interests come up with identical policy goals when there is no clear demand or necessity on the part

of the state (True and Mintrom 2001). This explains how national interests develop in states and refutes solely materialist theories of state behaviour in the international system. However, international institutions are subject to criticism for various reasons.

John Mearsheimer's (1994) piece on international security, "The False Promise of International Institutions," is a fascinating read. It was written in response to a specific set of circumstances in the early 1990s, and it reflected Mearsheimer's hard-line scepticism of international organisations, but the argument is still relevant to the (non-) debate of the 1930s, as well as the future of international institutions in the 2010s and 2020s. Part of Mearsheimer's lengthy piece is devoted to what he refers to as "critical theorists", primarily Wendtian (1992) constructivists, but the argument's core is a critique of liberal institutionalists like Keohane (1989), who was at the time the most famous. Peace (when there is peace) is the result of a balance of power, according to Mearsheimer, and institutions are, at most, intervening variables rather than the independent variables that liberal institutionalists believe they are. In fact, relying on institutions may jeopardise peace by weakening the power balance.

Ikenberry (2011) has chronicled how America's post-war political leadership built this system, employing the enormous material advantage the war had given them not for short-term benefits but to build a structure that would operate in their long-term interests. This has proven to be a very effective technique. The other major international powers, both past friends and former adversaries, have regained and exceeded their previous strength under the canopy of American dominance, and the United States has retained its preeminent position in the world despite fostering the rise of its rivals. Brooks and Wohlforth (2015) eloquently summarised the facts to support this position. The US's GDP accounts for 22.5% of global GDP and 36% of the GDPs of the nine major countries, while US defence spending accounts for 34% of global defence. Russia, China, and India continue to lag far behind the United States in terms of defence spending.

For instance, if one asked what the US would do to mitigate the rise of China in the coming period, what would the answer be? The common response from IR experts to this topic is that the United States should continue to support the institutional frameworks it has established or reinforced over the past 100 years through its own initiatives. Thus, international organisations are trapped between the "idealism" and "realism" of contemporary politics. On the one hand, there is a set of rules and norms that members of the institutions should ideally follow, and on the other hand, certain members have an interest in establishing that institution for their own benefit.

UNDERSTANDING THE SCO

The Shanghai Cooperation Group began as a counterterrorism and security organisation. It then evolved into a multifunctional regional organisation that includes economic cooperation and active diplomatic contact. The SCO was basically established as an Intergovernmental Network headed by annual summits and frequent meetings of the Heads of State, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, and other high-ranking officials. Except for India, the majority of observer states send comparable personnel to comparable high-level meetings. The most frequented teams of working-level meetings in the security sector are currently national security secretaries and heads of supreme courts (Bailes et al. 2007). China's Central Asian diplomacy and the development of "non-alliance" forms of strategic cooperation have become anchored by the SCO. The SCO is also important to Russia. Despite the SCO's efforts to portray itself as a platform for information exchange and trust-building, as well as political and economic cooperation, hard power concerns continue to play a significant role in the organisation's policymaking (Majid 2016). Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan decided to form a regional multilateral forum to address these transnational concerns and difficulties, which became known as the Shanghai Five when the inaugural meeting of the member nations took place in the Chinese city of Shanghai on April 26, 1996 (Chung 2006). With the addition of Uzbekistan in June 2001, the Shanghai Five changed its name to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. The historic summit of the SCO leaders of state and government, held in Astana, Kazakhstan, on June 8 and 9, 2017, marked the start of a new phase in the organisation's growth. One of the main consequences was the admission of India and Pakistan to the SCO as full members. The SCO's capability has been strengthened, and its range of prospects has been expanded because of the addition of these two powerful and prominent South Asian states, especially in countering existing and developing problems and dangers (Alimov 2020).

The SCO has the SCO Secretariat and the Regional Anti-terrorist Structure as two permanent entities. Situated in Beijing, this Secretariat is made up of 30 personnel assigned to the budget of the SCO by the member states. The Secretariat works closely with the National Coordinating Council to prepare draft documents, make proposals, implement resolutions, and supervise the budget for the organisation. The RATS is based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, and its staff are responsible for intelligence collection and sharing on suspected terrorist groups operating in member states of the SCO (Chung 2006).

The SCO has four main objectives. These are: (i) strengthening relations among the member states; (ii) promoting cooperation in political affairs, economics, and trade, scientific-technical, cultural, and educational spheres, as well as energy, transportation, tourism, and environmental protection; (iii)

safeguarding regional peace, security, and stability; and (iv) creating a democratic, equitable international political and economic order (SCO 2001a). China, as one of the SCO's founders, has had a considerable impact on the organisation's formation and subsequent evolution. For a variety of reasons, China initially regarded the SCO as a helpful instrument. First, China anticipated that it would aid in the consolidation of the Shanghai Five's achievements on border settlement and security confidence-building measures along China's borders with its neighbours in the SCO. Second, the SCO was expected to aid in the resolution of outstanding border issues with Russia, such as the disputed islands in the Amur and Argun rivers. Third, it was believed that the SCO would help ease the Bush administration's increasing security constraints on China, particularly in the aftermath of the Hainan aviation crash. Finally, China anticipated that the organisation's goal might be expanded to include collaborative operations against the "three evils", economic partnerships, and cultural exchanges (Qingguo 2007).

The objectives and tasks foreseen for the SCO are visibly described in Article 1 of the SCO Charter. In addition to regional cooperation in multiple spheres, Article 1 clearly emphasises the need to strengthen cooperation to combat terrorism, separatism, and extremism, and to combat illicit drugs, arms trafficking, and other forms of transnational criminal activity and illegal migration in all its forms (SCO 2001b). Significantly, Article 2 of the SCO Charter specifies that in neighbouring territories, no nation shall pursue "unilateral military supremacy". This gives a very strong impulse to the organisation's efficiency, as it implies that any strategic distrust between Russia and China, or between Russia and other smaller nations, or between China and other smaller nations, will not hinder any front movement within the organisation, as that decreases the sensibility of the perceived military threat as a result of that provision.

There are common values with which most member states agree and comply. These include fighting terrorism, drug trafficking, extremism, and increasing diplomatic and economic interaction between member states. Many nations, including Russia and China, support the notion of "collective security" and agree fully with the role of the SCO. Sovereignty and international law are two notions that are intertwined in collective security (Li et al. 2020). On the sidelines, each member state has its own expectations regarding the SCO, but the organisation, however, is said to be dominated by Chinese standards and interests. The SCO's official pronouncements frequently allude to Chinese rhetoric on the "three evils" of terrorism, separatism, and extremism, which is one evidence among many of Chinese domestic influence (Renard 2013).

China has developed its influence in both political and economic spheres through the SCO over the years and, therefore, has arguably emerged as a significant participant in regional affairs. In essence, China has used the procedures, equipment, and institutional processes of the SCO to carry out its

diplomatic ambitions in Central Asia. China's diplomacy in Central Asia has had such an influence that the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is now regarded and acknowledged as a key regional platform for the larger Eurasian area, just two decades after its founding (Hashmi 2021).

Similarly, despite being a founding member of the SCO, Russia has formed a self-initiated regional cooperation organisation, the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO), and the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). Both organisations overlap the economic and security agendas of the SCO in many ways. This indicates the expectation of Russia to be in the driving seat of any organisation. On the other hand, the SCO also plays a vital role in managing the increasing asymmetric relations between Russia and China. Some doubt Russia's true objectives for the SCO. Moscow failed to provide adequate support for the actual development of the SCO's competencies which would have allowed it to become a more effective organisation (Gabuev 2017). There are even broader critiques of the group, which is accused of "overpromising and underdelivering" and is said to be more concerned with symbols than content (Stronski and Sokolsky 2020).

Similarly, in 2017, Pakistan became a member of the SCO, which it described as an opportunity to improve relations with regional countries by facilitating trade through the Gwadar port, contributing to a regional solution to the Afghan problem, addressing its growing energy crisis, and learning from and contributing to the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS). To improve bilateral relations with the SCO member states, Pakistan wants to increase interaction with Russia, contribute to the anti-terrorism campaign along with China, Iran, and Russia, and address the emerging energy needs (Zeb 2018). Likewise, the economic growth of Central Asian nations is currently below expectations, and they want the SCO to devote more attention to this problem. As a result, Central Asian member states of the SCO increasingly perceive the organisation as a forum to express their economic goals and promote their economic initiatives (Hashimova 2018).

INDIA IN THE SCO

In 2005, India was admitted as an observer to the SCO. Both the Council of Heads of States (CHS) and the Council of Heads of Government (CHG) meetings were attended by Indian Ministers of External Affairs or Ministers of Power during India's observer status (due to the high energy reserves of oil, gas, coal, and uranium in numerous SCO members). The SCO voted to welcome India and Pakistan as full members in July 2015 at Ufa, Russia. In June 2016, India and Pakistan signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, which started the official process of becoming full members of the SCO. India and Pakistan became full members of the SCO on June 9, 2017, during a historic

meeting in Astana (MEA 2020). India's full membership in the SCO has been formalised with the formation of the SCO Division at the Ministry of External Affairs and the appointment of a National Coordinator and Permanent Representative to the SCO. Various SCO meetings have been held regularly.

When India and Pakistan were accepted into the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in 2017, political scientists and professionals split into two camps: optimists and pessimists. Pessimists claimed that the organisation's admittance of New Delhi and Islamabad would spell its demise: India and Pakistan would bring their host of disputes to the organisation, thus paralysing its operations (Denisov and Safranchuk 2017) and that could be seen in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) as an example. Optimists, on the other hand, claimed that without India, and even without Pakistan, a full-fledged system of stability in Eurasia could not be built. Therefore, there was no genuine choice but to embrace them (Kupriyanov 2020).

For both geopolitical and economic considerations, India's admission to the SCO as a full member state is an important milestone. China and Pakistan, both SCO members, have border issues with India. Since its independence, the country has been a victim of cross-border terrorism. India has not been able to tackle this problem on its own and therefore welcomes its participation in an organisation whose primary goal is to combat terrorism, extremism, and radicalism (Chakraborty 2017). Similarly, India, being a developing country, has huge energy demands. Resourceful Central Asian republics may be able to offer reliable electricity. Because of its participation, India will also be able to carry out its "Connect Central Asia Policy". India may now use SCO procedures to pressure Pakistan to open land routes to Central Asia, allowing the Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India (TAPI) pipeline project to restart operations (Jaspal 2016).

In this broader environment, India seeks to pursue diplomacy concurrently along two parallel lines. The first way was to equate China in the Indo-Pacific Region with American assistance and aid, and the second way was to counter China with Russian support and help in the Eurasia Region. This is the method for India to emphasise its genuine long-term interests in the Indian Ocean and the Eurasian countryside as well. In other words, it represents the aspiration of India to emerge as both a continental and a maritime power, given its geostrategic location in the south and the physical proximity to the Eurasiatic landmass in the north (Mudiam 2018).

Similarly, there are two strategic approaches to India's position in the SCO. First, relations between India, Russia, and Central Asia (SCO members) are a key component in the group's functioning. Indeed, Russia and Central Asian nations applauded India's decision to become an SC Officer, despite China's early

inhibitions. The reason behind the Central Asian Republics' sympathising with India is that these countries clearly understand that India can challenge China's increasing domination in the Eurasian region. Secondly, the notion of India playing a major role in the post-Soviet Eurasia region through the SCO is increasing in certain places. But here it must be emphasised that India, even without the SCO, is a key participant in Eurasia's post-Soviet geopolitics. In Eurasia, there is also a need to extend the membership of the SCO due to evolving geopolitical realignment (Mohapatra 2020).

Currently, India is using the SCO platform for three primary reasons. Taking into account the Sino-Indo strategic rivalry in East Asia and the Indo-Pacific region, India is using the SCO to minimise Chinese influence on its borderline. While addressing the Shangri-La Dialogue in 2018, PM Modi stated, referring to China, that India thinks that for the region's development and security, we must develop a shared rules-based system via discussion. It also must apply to everyone individually, as well as globally. Such an order must value sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as the equality of all states, regardless of size or power. These laws and standards should be based on universal consent rather than the authority of a few. This must be based on trust in discussion rather than relying on coercion (MEA 2018). Especially after the China-India border clash in the Galwan River Valley in the Ladakh region, India has constantly used "mutual respect and sovereignty" in its SCO addresses. Similarly, India constantly opposes China's penetration of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its connectivity projects in the SCO agreements. In his speech on November 10, 2020, PM Modi emphasised the importance of a diverse set of connectivity initiatives for long-term growth. He added that the "international North-South Transport Corridor, Chabahar Port, and Ashgabat Agreements demonstrate India's strong determination towards connectivity (Mohapatra 2020)."

Second, India is constantly using the SCO summit to confront Pakistan. Without mentioning Pakistan, India's vice president in 2020 stressed the need for all countries to work together to combat terrorism, particularly cross-border terrorism. The VP reprimanded nations that use terrorism as a tool of state strategy. He chastised members who brought up bilateral problems in SCO discussions, saying that this was against the organisation's norms and mission. PM Modi also raised this issue during the SCO CHS meeting hosted by Russia on November 10, 2020 (Sajjanhar 2020). At the same meeting, PM Modi also said he also chastised individuals who try to "unnecessarily" bring bilateral matters to the SCO in contravention of the grouping's founding principles, referring to Pakistan (Stobdan 2020). At the recent meeting of the National Security Advisor in Dushanbe, India's NSA Ajit Doval proposed an action plan against Pakistan's terrorist organisations Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM). He condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, called for the

elimination of double standards in dealing with terrorists, and agreed to share terrorist intelligence. India's administration thinks that acting against terrorist groups is critical to tightening the screws on Pakistan (*Times of India* 2021).

And third, India has also managed to demonstrate its leadership capabilities through the SCO in the region. The SCO members held several major activities to improve economic, commercial, and cultural cooperation. India hosted the first-ever SCO Young Scientists Conclave (November 24–28) in a virtual format, with more than 200 young scientists attending. Additionally, the first Consortium of SCO Economic Think Tanks (August 20–21) and the first SCO Startup Forum were also held in India (October 27). The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry held the inaugural SCO Business Conclave on November 23 in a B2B format, with a focus on MSMEs' collaboration. Similarly, India also aimed to develop three new pillars of collaboration under its leadership: startups and innovation; science and technology; and traditional medicine.

Similarly, during the chairmanship of India in the SCO in 2020, India introduced three new pillars within the SCO framework, namely, Startups and Innovation, Science and Technology, and Traditional Medicine. The first Consortium of SCO Economic Think Tanks (August 20–21) and the first SCO Startup Forum were also held in India (October 27). The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry held the first SCO Business Conclave (November 23) in a B2B format, with a focus on MSMEs' cooperation (Sajjanhar 2020). India's activities, especially after 2020, signalled India's intention to expand economic cooperation within the SCO.

However, on the sidelines, the SCO has become hostile because of the bilateral relations between the member states. Bilateral antagonism was specifically prohibited, for example, in territorial conflicts, from the SCO agenda with the accession of India and Pakistan (*Times of India* 2017). However, India and Pakistan were bound to be included as full members, creating tensions within the SCO. Surprisingly, the tensions between India and Pakistan were less obvious than those between India and China. A little less than a week after India joined the SCO in 2017, a disagreement broke out over a Chinese-built road in Doklam, and border troops were amassed on both sides (*Xinhua* 2017). This was a precursor to the 2020 battle. Some months later, the issue was resolved with the removal of soldiers from both sides. In order to deescalate this issue, the SCO has played no part.

CONCLUSION

According to some studies, International Organisations' authority in world politics has been growing in recent years. Over the past few decades, international organisations have grown in authority, becoming less reliant on the control of

individual member nations. National governments are increasingly putting aside their vetoes by embracing majoritarian forms of decision-making (pooling) and empowering independent institutions to act on their behalf, reflecting the growing authority of international organisations (delegation). For instance, Peritz (2020) made an assessment of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on how the domestic veto influences the decision-making process within the organisation. The findings of the study are premised on the fact that although the decision-making process of the WTO is superior to that of other organizations, participant countries wilfully delay or disobey complying with the standard for domestic economic and political reasons. The reasons for the development of international authority are threefold: i) the functional drive for successful cooperation, (ii) rising political demands for non-governmental engagement, and (iii) the spread of authoritative institutional templates among international organisations (Lenz 2017). In the future, these forces are likely to continue to push for greater international authority. And although the world is inherently competitive, governments do cooperate on a variety of norms, they believe collectively. Sometimes it is difficult to maintain the balance between competition and cooperation. Concerns about cheating and relative gains are two variables that prevent collaboration. Mearsheimer (1994) mentioned that states must be driven largely by concerns about relative gains when considering cooperation because they are concerned about the balance of power. While each state seeks to maximise its absolute benefits, it is more vital to ensure that it outperforms, or at the very least does not outperform, the other state in any agreement. Academically, if we look at the ontological foundation and the regulatory link between international society and its normative side, it is not clear that it can act, create standards, and apply its own criteria of membership. This underlines the basic issue that the functionality of an international organisation is theoretically sound but less pragmatic in reality.

Thus, academic superficiality, optimistic objectives, and the power struggle between the member states that derive the focus of the organisation can be clearly seen in the SCO. More specifically, India does not focus on normative values but is focused on minimising the gains of China and Pakistan through the organisation. In recent years, New Delhi has been cautious with regard to Beijing. India avoided direct confrontations (except for the Doklam moment), engaged in proxy wars against Chinese influence in the region (Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives), and strengthened cooperation with friendly Indo-Pacific nations.

While the establishment of the SCO has forwarded the Chinese idea of regionalism to fight the so-called *three evils*, India has approached the organisation in a different manner. Geopolitically, China and Pakistan are the main reasons why India joined the SCO. However, now India is taking various initiatives within the organisation that not only represent the leadership capabilities of the organisation but also the attitude based on interest in the organisation. India

identified the foundational characteristic of Eurasia as being “SECURE” during the 2018 SCO summit, which is expected to influence India’s future involvement in the area. SECURE is made up of (Roy and Roy 2020):

- a. S: Security of our citizens,
- b. E: Economic Development for all,
- c. C: Connecting the Region,
- d. U: Unite our People,
- e. R: Respect for Sovereignty and Integrity, and,
- f. E: Environmental Protection.

Similarly, Prime Minister Narendra Modi summed up India’s approach to economic development in the SCO in his presentation to the SCO Council of Heads of Government on November 10, 2020, emphasising the importance of a diverse set of connectivity projects for long-term development. At the summit, Prime Minister Modi remarked that “the International North-South Transport Corridor, Chabahar Port, and Ashgabat Agreements represent India’s strong commitment to connectivity.” To enhance connectivity, India feels it is vital to stick to the core values of respecting each other’s sovereignty and territorial integrity. Not only that, India now frequently uses the SCO platform to oppose the “One Belt, One Road” initiative as well. India rejects the OBOR initiative and has simply abstained from signing the OBOR declaration at both the “SCO Council of Heads of Government” and the “meeting of the Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.” The “Joint Communique following the meeting of the Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation” detailed the “alternative connectivity system” in Central Asia under the UN plan in great detail (Mohapatra 2020). The inclusion of the UN to counter the idea of China also signals the basic foundation on which India’s norms are inclined.

On the other hand, having great power with different interests within one organisation can linger or make the organisation dysfunctional. Scholars point out that these organisations suffer from unique pathologies that cause them to become bureaucratic and unresponsive to the requirements of their stakeholders. Having China, Russia, India, and Pakistan in the SCO has the same effect when their states’ interests directly impact the organisation’s decision-making. In this context, there are three ideal scenarios for India within the SCO.

First, one may expect that, through rigorous discussions, India and China would either resolve their border dispute, restore the *status quo*, or find another method to ensure that the border issue does not obstruct the growth of their relationship. The same may be said of India’s and Pakistan’s ties. Second, the SCO will not regard the current situation as a problem but will continue to cooperate in areas where

the differences between India, China, and Pakistan are not important, and talks on matters such as counterterrorism will be carried over to bilateral levels. And third, within the SCO, two organisations will emerge: the “broader SCO”, in which all participants interact on issues that do not cause any contradictions; and the “restricted SCO”, with alternative mechanisms of interaction, through which dialogue on topics blocked by Pakistan and India is conducted.

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БОРБА ИЗМЕЂУ НОРМИ И МЕЂУНАРОДНЕ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЈЕ: СТУДИЈА СЛУЧАЈА ИНДИЈЕ У ШАНГАЈСКОЈ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЈИ САРАДЊЕ (ШОС)

Апстракт: Примарни задатак овог рада је да истражи циљ придруживања Индије Шангајској организацији за сарадњу (ШОС). Проналажење корелације између норми које је организације успоставила и правог разлога зашто се једна држава придружује тој организацији кључни је значај студије. Такође, посебна пажња је посвећена концепту међународних организација као дисеминатора норми. У раду се прво говори о нормативној теорији у међународним односима и покушају да је премости са међународним организацијама (МО). Поред тога, у раду је дата процена улоге коју имају норме у покретању међународне организације и обрнуто. Главни аргумент је да је Индија уједно усвојила и сарадњу и конкурентски приступ према ШОС-у, посебно имајући у виду непријатељске односе са Кином и Пакистаном. Овај рад је квалитативна студија, која је разматрала примарне и секундарне изворе података, како би повезала теоријско изучавање са емпиријским истраживањима.

Кључне речи: Шангајска организација за сарадњу (ШОС), Индија, Кина, Пакистан, међународна организација, норме.

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