Interests and Values in India-Australia Strategic Nexus: Comparative Insights and Sustainable Pathways for Long-Term Collaboration

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DECLARATION

The work of this thesis is substantially my own. Where any part of this work is not my own, I have indicated so by acknowledging the source of that part or those parts of the work.

ABSTRACT

This thesis provides a thorough understanding of the interests-values interplay utilised by India and Australia's to enable their meta-narrative identity utilisation for revitalisation of strategic relations. It simultaneously illustrates the gaps in collaborative endeavours that need to be filled for ensuring the long-term sustainability of India-Australia strategic relations. By employing the strategic partnership framework developed by Wilkins (2008), it compares the India-Australia strategic partnership's trajectory, with India-Russia and Australia-Japan strategic partnerships (their strongest strategic partnerships) along three phases, i.e., inception, implementation, evaluation. Theories of classical realism and constructivism have been integrated within inception and evaluation phases for scrutinising each partnership's interests-values interplay. Findings reveal that India and Australia need to move beyond the pursuit of trade-related economic goals, and instead work towards bolstering security, people-to-people linkages. This would allow them to build mutual understanding, trust, and in turn sustain their strategic partnership by helping them in navigating through each other's priorities, sensitivities.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACSA: Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement

AII: Australia India Institute

AIBC: Australia India Business Council

AIU: Association of Indian Universities

APEC: Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation

AU: African Union

BRICS: Brazil–Russia–India–China–South Africa Grouping

CAIR: Centre for Australia India Relations

CECA: Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement

CSP: Comprehensive Strategic Partnership

DFAT: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

EAS: East Asia Summit

ECTA: Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement

FIP: Five Interested Parties

FOIP: Free and Open Indo-Pacific

FTA: Free Trade Agreement

FY: Fiscal Year

GFC: Global Financial Crisis

HESC: Hydrogen Energy Supply Chain

IAMD: Integrated Air and Missile Defence

ICCR: Indian Council of Cultural Relations

IOR: Indian Ocean Region

IORA: Indian Ocean Rim Association

IPEF: Indo-Pacific Economic Framework

IRIGC-M&MTC: India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Military & Military Technical Cooperation

IRIGC-TEC: India-Russia Intergovernmental Commission for Trade, Economic, Scientific & Cultural Cooperation

IRSED: India-Russia Strategic Economic Dialogue

ISA: Information Security Agreement

JAEPA: Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement

JDSC: Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation (JDSC)

JNCC: Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Centre

KKNPP: Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant

KTF: Khalistan Tiger Force

MATES: Mobility Arrangement for Talented Early-professionals Scheme

MODJ: Ministry of Defence Japan

MEA: Ministry of External Affairs (India)

MSLA: Mutual Logistics Support Agreement

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

NDPI: Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative

NPT: Non-Proliferation Treaty

RAA: Reciprocal Access Agreement

RELOS: Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Agreement

TSD: Trilateral Security Dialogue

QI: Quadrilateral Initiative

QUAD: Quadrilateral Security Dialogue

RIC: Russia-India-China

SCO: Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

SEATO: Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation

UNGA: United Nations General Assembly

UNSC: United Nations Security Council

USSR: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

WTO: World Trade Organisation

LIST OF FIGURES

1. INTRODUCTION

Context, Thesis Argument, Research Aims and Research Question

Historically characterised as being short on results (Jaishankar 2020), indifferent and hesitant (Shekhar 2010, p. 397), based on mutual incomprehension, apathy (Oakes 2011), India and Australia have recently - in 2020 - entered into a *Comprehensive Strategic Partnership*, after having initiated a *Strategic Partnership* in as early as 2009 (Bedi 2020). Transforming their bilateral engagement at a noteworthy speed both security, economic ties have experienced significant growth (Pant 2023a).

Significant improvement in Australia-India security relations, is evidenced by the two maritime states' greater engagement in multilateral and bilateral military exercises (Bana 2022a). Similarly, having struggled with formalisation in the past, economic ties have experienced a "watershed moment" with the implementation of India and Australia's *Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA)* - meant to benefit key sectors including tourism wine, IT, and education through reduction of tariffs - and the resumption of *Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)* negotiations, which were suspended in 2016 (Kaul 2022; Kaushik 2023). These developments prompt the contemplation of why India and Australia are suddenly looking to converge despite the lack of a vigorous historical relationship. ***What has led to this sudden 'revitalisation' of strategic relations?***

The political discourse on Indo-Australian strategic relations has persistently endorsed the above developments as being "natural" based on the convergence of shared conventional values - rule of law, democracy, originating from common colonial experiences - and shared interests,

reinforced by bilateral understanding and trust (Chacko, Davis 2017, p. 26; Chacko 2023; Ministry of External Affairs 2020; Singh 2022; Toohey 2020).

However, this thesis aims to illustrate the revitalised nature of the Indo-Australian strategic partnership and argue that the revitalised Indo-Australian strategic relationship is neither a result of an interest-based alignment, nor a natural value-based convergence, instead it is a pragmatic collaboration that has been utilising a complex interests-values interplay. The rationale behind this argument is that material interests, values derived from tradition, history, culture do not work according to an "either-or proposition" (O'Brien 2013, p. 16; Van Dyke 2013, p. 567), they do not operate separately in vacuum and are not "counterposed" (Kaldor 2023). Both interests and values can be furthered in a "self-justificatory" manner and also because their endorsement can contribute to other interests and values (Van Dyke 2013, p. 567).

In utilising the above interests-values interplay, the strategic relationship uses conventional values as a 'rhetorical tool' for veiling, legitimising India and Australia's operationalisation of their **meta-narrative identities** - constituting new, varying **peripheral identities**, enduring foreign policy practices based on their **foundational ideas**, i.e. ideas derived from myths, nationalist narratives, memories that continue to resonate within their core values, identities, visions (Chacko 2018, p. 56; 2014, p. 436). This allows for construction of shared perspectives or **operational ideas**, that enable the legitimate prioritisation of traditional security, economic strategic interests in a changing geopolitical environment by smoothening core-values related differences; in turn helping the states in retaining their strategic autonomy, while safeguarding their foundational ideas, core values and reinforcing their meta-narrative identities.

Subsequently, given its historical lack of vigour, the thesis also aims to both illustrate the utilisation of the interests-values interplay and uncover opportunities for the India-Australia strategic partnership's sustainable expansion. To do so, the thesis compares the India-Australia strategic partnership with India-Russia and Australia-Japan strategic partnerships - the most well-established, important strategic partnerships for both the states.

The comparative approach has been guided by theory - the strategic partnership framework developed by Wilkins (2008), has been used for analysing the traditional security, economic elements, the interests-values interplay in India-Russia and Australia-Japan strategic partnerships along three phases of their development, i.e. inception, implementation and evaluation. The interests-values interplay in particular has been thoroughly examined through the integration of classical realism and constructivism theories of international relations within the inception and evaluation phases, in turn increasing the framework's explanatory and interpretative power. This analysis has then been juxtaposed with the identical analysis of the case in focus, i.e. the India-Australia strategic partnership to chart its trajectory towards sustenance and resilience.

Thereby, the **research question** that outlines the goal, logic, and trajectory of the thesis is: ***How do India-Russia and Australia-Japan strategic partnerships leverage the complex interplay of strategic interests and shared values, and how can they inform the revitalised India-Australia strategic partnership's developing trajectory to lend sustainability?***

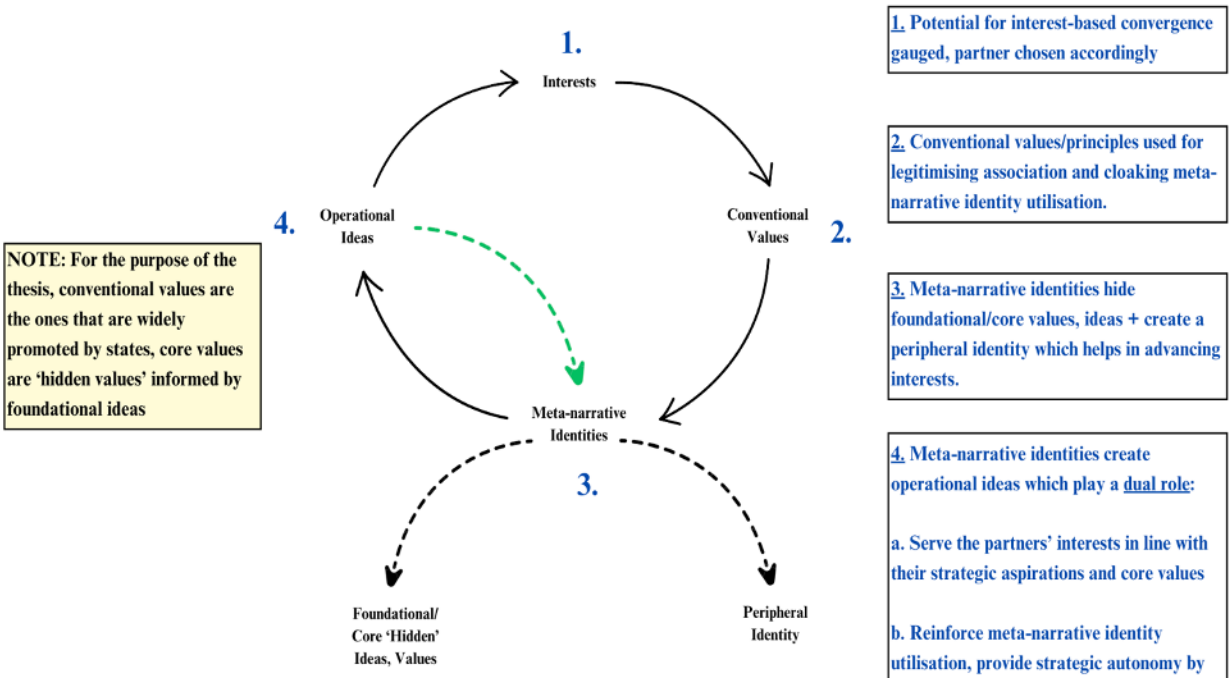

Figure 1.1: The Interests-Values Interplay Explained

Significant Novel Contributions

The thesis will make a novel, unique contribution to the dynamic and developing field of international relations by:

a. **Challenging suppositions:** the thesis adds a new viewpoint to the international relations discourse by questioning the belief that strategic partnerships are premised on either interests or values, facilitating a rigorous analysis of how states handle, harness the interests-values interplay in strategic partnerships. This is especially important as mere labelling of partnerships as strategic does not imbue them with legitimacy and credibility - the partnering states' mutual acceptance of each other's norms, values is imperative for their manifestation, maintenance (Tyushka, Czechowska 2019, p. 25; Michalski and Pan 2017, p. 12).

b. **Honing a pre-existing framework and bridging the gap between classical realism and constructivism theories:** the addition of these theories will increase the analytical, interpretive power of the strategic partnership framework by bridging the classical realist explanations of national interest, morality, power and constructivist conceptualisation of identity formation through socially constructed norms. This under-utilised combination of the two would help close the "gap" between foreign policy guiding principles and the reality that not everyone shares them in a dynamic yet "anarchic" environment (Barkin 2010, p. 171, p. 173).

c. **Undertaking a comparative analysis of trajectories:** through the comparative analysis of the most-evolved strategic partnerships for India and Australia, the thesis will provide distinctive insights into the evolving India-Australia strategic partnership trajectory. This approach is innovative and allows for a progression-orientated evaluation of how the two states may develop the partnership further sustainably.

d. **Aiding contemporary foreign policymaking:** the thesis will furnish foreign policymakers with practical, nuanced inferences on effective initiation, management of complex, even clashing interests and values in strategic partnerships amidst contemporary geopolitical circumstances. This can indeed result in mutually beneficial optimisation of diplomatic strategies.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 2 undertakes an extensive literature review explaining the strategic partnership concept, tenets of classical realism, constructivism, their combination for strong foreign policy analysis. It also outlines Indian and Australia foreign policy outlooks and presents various explanations for

the Indo-Australian strategic relationship's revitalisation. Chapter 3 introduces the theory-guided, comparative methodology, explaining, justifying case selection, data collection, scoping and analysis approaches. Chapter 4 briefly explains the elements of the strategic partnership framework developed by Wilkins (2008) and delineates the compatibility of and rationale behind integrating the international relations theories of classical realism and constructivism into the framework. Chapters 5, 6 employs the strategic partnership framework to analyse the strategic partnership case studies i.e. the India-Russia and the Australia-Japan strategic partnerships. Chapter 7 examines the India-Australia strategic relationship utilising the strategic partnership framework in conjunction with the insights gleaned from case study analysis to identify parallels, contrasts, and possibilities for further sustainable growth. Noteworthily, this chapter will also make clear the reasons behind describing the partnership as 'revitalised', instead of a strategic partnership that has experienced stable, sustainable growth over time. Finally, Chapter 8 sums up the comparative trajectory analysis by outlining India and Australia's meta-narrative identities, insights from India-Russia, Australia-Japan strategic partnerships to sustainably develop the India-Australia strategic partnership.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review comprises of three sections for consolidating the foundation required to carry out the India-Australia strategic partnership analysis. Section 1 defines outlines the functions of strategic partnerships. Section 2 makes the case for selecting classical realism and constructivism for theoretical analysis of the relationship, by defining them and highlighting the merits of combining the two. Section 3 highlights the core tenets driving the Indian and Australian foreign outlook, along with the key developments in their relationship.

Furthermore, in addition to utilising information derived from books, journal articles, it also refers to several government documents, media releases and reports, commentaries emerging out of key think tanks from both the countries, as they provide invaluable insights into the rapidly developing India-Australia strategic partnership.

Strategic Partnership: Definition and Functions

A 'strategy', according to Betts (2000, p. 6, p. 7), constitutes a "distinct plan" that bridges the gap between policy, operations by connecting them together; multiple 'strategies' act as "chains of relationships" between means and ends spanning multiple "levels of analysis". Furthermore, he has argued that strategies are crucial when they add "value" to "resources" and operate as multipliers of "force" (Betts 2000, p. 6). Thereby, bilateral strategic partnerships include both profit maximising and system-shaping goals (Grevi 2013, p. 162).

Subsequently, as Wilkins (2008, pp. 360-361; 2012a, pp. 67-68) has highlighted, strategic partnerships are related to, but not identical to, existing security governance structures, particularly alliances or coalitions, and have certain "properties" that distinguish them as innovative and different. In contrast to more rooted alliances, strategic partnerships are founded

on shared interests, not values, primarily driven by security, economic goals and are imbued with "soft balancing" abilities (Wilkins 2008, p. 360; 2012, p. 68). They are also more autonomous, flexible owing to their typically informal character, have low costs of commitment instead of binding, fixed courses of action (Wilkins 2008, p. 364; 2012a, p. 68). However, Envall and Hall (2016, p. 92) postulate strategic partnerships ought to be analysed without the implication of eventual alignments, as some strategic partnerships only seek to advance shared interests in certain fields and develop mechanisms for handling current and foreseeable conflicts without mutually agreed-upon expectations for policy coherence or unequivocal pledges to specific system principles.

In terms of strategic partnerships' functionality, Michalski and Pan (2017, p. 28) have argued that strategic partnerships are structured around the "social logic of action" and enable "reflexive learning" for states in a bilateral setting, in turn allowing them to internally re-negotiate their identities not only for increased identity cohesion, but also for the simple adoption of role conceptions in line with each other's expectations, instead of fundamentally converging their identities as partners (Michalski, Pan 2017, pp. 30-31). They do so by enabling "reflexive learning" for states in a bilateral setting, in turn allowing them to internally re-negotiate their identities for increased identity cohesion, and the simple adoption of role conceptions in line with each other's expectations, instead of fundamentally converging their identities as partners (Michalski, Pan 2017, pp. 30-31).

Renard (2016, p. 27) has stated that strategic partnerships' advanced design of policy dialogues and ministerial meetings, including on security issues, can also play a cooperation-facilitation function by creating the skeleton and "dynamic" from which cooperation on various political issues and security issues can occur. Indeed, the above characteristics of strategic partnerships,

instils within them the capacity to lessen the possibility of “mutual alienation” among states, by helping them in managing multifarious (at times clashing) interests, standpoints, self-perceptions in an international setting and offering “critical leverage for common action” (Grevi 2013, pp. 162-166).

Classical Realism and Constructivism Combination for Foreign Policy Analysis

Classical Realism

Since strategic partnerships possess the ability to confer position, status in the international system upon partners, it is imperative to analyse them from a classical realist standpoint for understanding how power contributes to the interests-values interplay. Classical realism as dubbed by Morgenthau (1948, p. 125, p. 142; Cozette 2008a, p. 668), advances that cooperative arrangements, within the system of balance of power in anarchy - the "constellation" resulting from the desire for power on the part of many states, each attempting to either uphold or topple the “status quo” - are overshadowed by uncertainty due to their reliance on “political considerations of individual nation states”. The same can be owed to their interests and values, in terms of morality. According to Thucydides (Morgenthau 1967, p. 8), the strongest tie, between individuals or states, is “identity of interests”. Additionally, politics in general is thought of as something that is aimed at seeking “power” instead of “truth” (Cozette 2008b, p. 9).

However, Morgenthau (1962, cited in Cozette 2008a, p. 671) claims that politics is not just a “struggle of power” in the form of chasing interests, but instead it is essentially an effort to “realise moral values”. All in all, “national interest” reflected through foreign policy of a given nation in itself is imbued with the struggle for the conservation or expansion or triumph of specific “moral values” perceived as being “ethically” correct (Cozette 2008a, p. 671). Therefore, according to the classical realist lens, the degree to which interests, and more

importantly, the values that underpin them, are identified and accepted by the nations entering into a strategic partnership can be a critical factor in evaluating their potential sustenance of their relationship.

Constructivism

While classical realism expounds upon the role of interests and values in foreign policy, constructivism explains how interests, values, are reliant on the conceptualisation of "social constructed" identity (Wendt 1999, p. 1; Berenskoetter 2010, p. 4). Constructivism holds that states, the key players in international politics, are far more independent of the social structure in which they are entrenched, and that domestic politics, analogous to an individual's personality, largely determines their "foreign policy behaviour" (Wendt 1999, p. 7). Such arguments are supported by the assumption that to create, follow their interests, states must be conscious of themselves as subjects, and their priorities (Berenskoetter 2010, p. 4).

Furthermore, norms or "rules" serve two important functions - they "define" and implement state identities (Katzenstein 1996, p. 5). They have a "constitutive effect" in that they define the exact activities needed to get others to "recognise" a certain identity; they have a "regulative effect" in terms of "enactment" defining "standards" of desirable behaviour (Katzenstein 1996, p. 5). Thus, constructivism focuses on the dynamic social and material environment in which a state's identity development occurs, and it improves comprehension of a state's identity, how it is expected to behave in a particular context (Checkel 1998, pp. 325-326).

Combining Classical Realism and Constructivism

While the above conceptual summarisation points towards the fact classical realism and constructivism are two distinct approaches, their features nonetheless make them compatible

with each other. In fact, their combination is necessary for understanding the basis for strategic partnerships in the current global scenario. Indeed, while the immediate goal of constructivism is explanation, using the idea of "intersubjectivity" as a tool to comprehend global politics and classical realism mainly focuses on prescribing policy, the two can be combined to form a "set of practices, procedures, or guidelines" (Barkin 2010, p. 167; Jackson 2004, p. 344).

Classical realism limits the comprehension of global politics to social connection, especially with regards to "governance" and cautions the utilisation of a given state's policy by another state for maximisation of power (Barkin 2010, pp. 170-171). Constructivism is especially helpful for tackling challenges related to "social structure and change" (Barkin 2010, p. 171). Combined together, classical realism and constructivism would be able to address, and cover the "gap" that exists between values that underlie foreign policy, and the fact that such values are not shared by everyone in an ever-changing yet "anarchical" setting (Barkin 2010, p. 171, p. 173). Indeed, such an analysis is imperative to understand the partnering states' motives behind getting into a strategic partnership and the overall longevity of the same.

De-bunking Indian, Australian Foreign Policy Outlooks and Bilateral Relationship

The Indian Foreign Policy Outlook

In terms of India's foreign policy approach, both policymakers, Indian citizens mostly agree on the need of putting "India first" emphasising the underlying assumption of classical realism (Pant 2019, p. 106). Kautilya, an Indian statesman, philosopher, thought of "interstate relations" as a complicated "game of power" in around 4th century B.C. (Bandyopadhyaya 2003, p. 4). Consequently, "non-alignment" has been India's answer to this predicament since its independence from colonial authority, based on an anti-imperialist sentiment (Bandyopadhyaya

2003, p. 51; Pant 2019, pp. 144-145). This philosophy, and essentially the core ideas that inform Indian foreign policy values, outlook, are also evident in Panchsheel or the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, outlining the need for "peaceful coexistence" by upholding equality, mutual benefit, non-aggression, and regard for "territorial integrity and sovereignty," as formally articulated within the India-China Agreement on Trade and Intercourse (1954) (MEA 2004, p. 1).

However, the unexpected 1962 Chinese invasion, China's current growth, and long-standing strategic issues with China and Pakistan have put India's non-alignment philosophy to test (Pant 2019, p. 131, p. 138). Consequentially, India is forging new ground in its foreign policy under the Modi administration, based on the idea that instead of announcing “non-alignment as an end”, India has to interact more deeply with its allies, particularly prioritise improved interaction with neighbouring countries, in order to gain influence over its rivals and competitors (Pant 2019, p. 145; Debiel, Wulf 2016, p. 62).

First conceptualised as *Non-Alignment 2.0* in 2012, India now refers to this strategy as multi-alignment, aimed at maximising Indian interests in a global order whose rules, norms might get altered as result of American, European power’s relative decline (Khilnani et. al 2012, p. 8; Hall 2016, p. 282). Multi-alignment drives India to “forge convergences and manage divergences” while having “congruence with none” by helping it in engaging, instead of distancing from multiple partners, bolstering its strategic autonomy by giving it multiple options to deal with, mitigate a given issue (Jaishankar 2020, cited in Viswanathan 2020).

The Australian Foreign Policy Outlook

While Australia once saw itself as a "white" nation, driven by the "White Australia Policy" aimed at keeping "coloured people" out of the country (Elkin 1945, p. 17), it now describes itself as driven by "shared values" - respect for the rule of law, economic, religious, political freedom, gender, racial equality, liberal democracy, mutual respect - that are not defined by a single national identity formed on the basis of resentment (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2017, p. 11). Furthermore, despite being an ardent supporter of human rights, liberal institutions, and universal values - at the heart of Western ideas of political and economic freedoms - it has stated that it is a “pragmatic” country that seeks global support for these values because it believes they help make societies “fairer and more stable” without imposing them on others, and thus serve its national interests. (DFAT 2017, p. 11).

This switch to an outright multicultural foreign policy outlook, can be simply viewed as an attempt to reflect its changed domestic realities, changed demographics due to increased migration in the post Second World War period - Australia is now home to more than 350 languages and 250 ancestries - however, it has been unquestionably triggered by rapidly evolving geopolitical dynamics (Henry, Kurzak 2013, p. 1; Hsu 2022). Once solely driven by its perception of Anglo-Saxon eminence as being important for global affairs, liberal notions of progress to “colonial visions” wherein the US and the UK were seen as leading champions of democracy and liberalism worldwide, Australia has now been pushed to base itself on liminality, i.e. balancing its “old” traditional ties with the US and the UK, with the “new certainties” in Asia and Australia’s attempts at relocating itself to the region (Chacko, Davis 2017, p. 33; Patience 2017, p. 1).

Consequently, there are three factors that are currently driving Australia's actions abroad. First, Australia recognises the need to adapt to emerging centres of strategic and economic power, especially India and China, which have the potential to change the international order (White 2006, pp. 8-9). Second, it believes that strengthening its alliance with the US, which underpins Australia's security by sustaining Asian regional order, would aid in mitigating shared difficulties in the Indo-Pacific (White 2006, pp. 12-13).

Third, Australia is aware that bolstering the role of the United States in the Indo-Pacific does not come without implications. As Gyngell (2021, p. 403) has asserted, the Australian alliance with the United States has "expanded greatly in ambition". Therefore, if the United States is brought into an aggressive strategic conflict with China, Australia will be forced to help it both substantially, practically (White 2006, p. 13). This would have repercussions for Australia's Indo-Pacific engagements; it would essentially reiterate that - Australia is still a part of the "English-speaking world", it is now located in the United States, after having previously been in Britain (Bell 1993, p. 187) for its Asian allies.

Developments in India-Australia Strategic Relationship

Rapid developments in India-Australia strategic relations, particularly India and Australia's conceptualisation of a "free, inclusive, rules-based, and open" Indo-Pacific (DFAT 2020), have prompted assertions from policy stalwarts and academics alike, with the most common explanation being India and Australia's shared concerns about China's rise. According to Viavoori (2022, p. 17), China's expanding influence and forcefulness in the area has hastened India-Australia strategic interactions, leading to the upgraded *CSP*. Similarly, Rajagopalan (2021a), while highlighting the contrast in terms of strategic engagement between the countries in past has argued that the traditionally "cool" strategic relations between India and Australia are

bound to get “stronger”, given that India not only wants to covertly support Australia in dealing with its problems with China through increased collaboration, but also wants to benefit from the “Sino-Australian trade spat”.

However, both Hall (2022a) and Pant (2023a) have expressed concerns about the sustainability of strengthened Indo-Australian strategic relations, stating that more needs to be done to ensure that the relationship remains on an “upward trajectory” particularly as India continues to be mindful of Australia's “non-independent” foreign policy decision-making. This, in turn, reinforces Varghese's (2018, quoted in Davis 2018) worries about the relationship failing to live up to Australia's expectations of India sustaining the "liberal international order" (by increasing liberalisation) based on shared history and ideals.

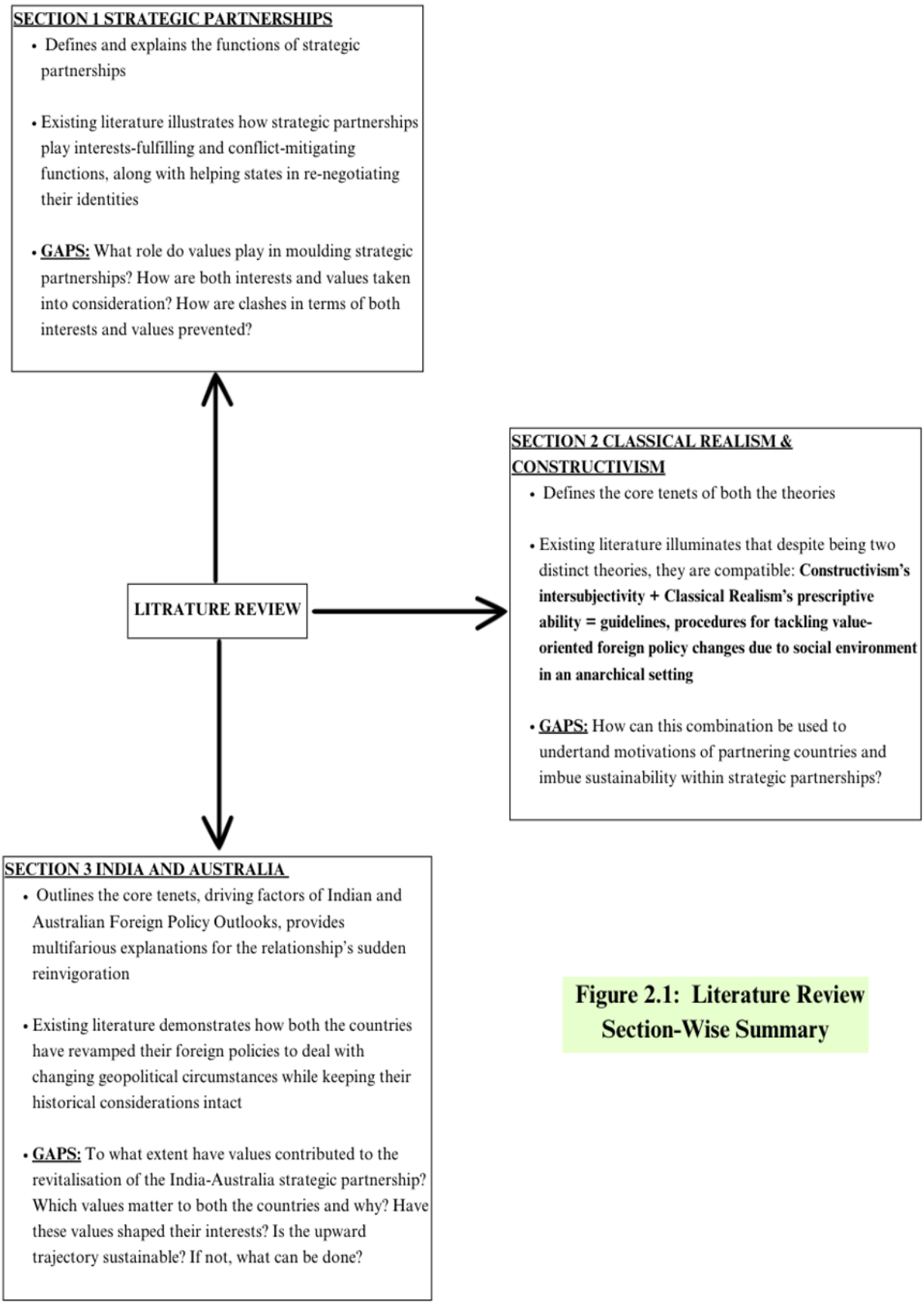

Figure 2.1: Literature Review Section-Wise Summary

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the thesis's theory-guided, comparative approach for analysing two similar case studies using a strategic partnership framework, with the goal of identifying aspects of the India-Australia Strategic Partnership that need to be developed further for its sustenance. First, it will explain the thesis's research strategy while underlining why it is appropriate for addressing the research question. Second, it will illustrate the basis for case selection using a Most-Similar Systems Design (MSSD), method, scope of data collection, types of data collected. Third, it will discuss data analysis methods using classical realism and constructivism international relations theories. Finally, it will discuss research limitations and mitigation strategies.

Research Design

The thesis adopts a theory-guided, comparative approach to understand 'how' the association between interests, values has sparked momentum within the India-Australia Strategic Partnership. As per Yin (2014, p. 38), a theory-guided research design provides "strong guidance" in the form of a "blueprint" determining data collection and analysis strategies, along with heightening the researcher's overall ability to "interpret" data. The comparative approach in itself is appropriate for answering "how" questions, and theory-guided case studies allow for "explicit and structured use of theory", paving way for key explanations for distinct cases that are better than those offered by a historical analysis and have stronger fundamental propositions with fewer conceptual inconsistencies (Goodrick 2014, p. 2; Levy 2008, pp. 4-5).

As such, the thesis utilises the strategic partnership framework developed by Wilkins (2008), to analyse the India-Australia Strategic Partnership along three dimensions - inception,

implementation, and evaluation. The framework also includes classical realism and constructivism as international relations theories, with the goal of strengthening its explanatory and interpretive capacity by employing them as lenses for comprehension of the subject matter.

Next, the thesis generates novel insights into the India-Australia Strategic Partnership by employing the above framework for a comparative study of India and Australia's most well-established strategic partnerships and their economic, traditional security elements - the India-Russia Strategic Partnership and the Australia-Japan Strategic Partnership. While Russia has been a "time-tested" and "longstanding" partner for India, Australia's strategic partnership with Japan has been the "closest and most mature in Asia" (Embassy of India Moscow 2022; Australian Embassy Tokyo n.d.). This comparative approach has allowed for individualisation of comparison – it has helped in "clarifying" the distinctions in each case's "dynamics and trajectory" (Tilly 1984, cited in Tarrow 2010, p. 251).

Further reiterating the selection of these cases for comparison with the case in focus, i.e. the India-Australia strategic partnership, is the MSSD that has been used in the thesis. According to Anckar (2008, p. 389), the MSSD involves the selection of cases that are as similar as possible except the outcome or dependent variable. Explaining the rationale behind the approach, Lipset (1990, p. xiii) has argued that the same enables the researcher to "isolate" factors leading to differences between the two cases. Thereby, the theoretical framework's employment for comparison has played a dual role, first, it has helped organise the information, second, it has enabled the effective analysis of the interests-values interplay and its distinct role in consolidation, sustenance of the strategic partnership case studies. This analysis has been used to gauge the areas where the India-Australia Strategic Partnership is currently lacking, or the gaps it needs to fill in order to be sustainable for both the countries.

Indeed, this method has proven to be integral and the best choice for tackling the issues at hand within the thesis as changes in the strategic relations between India and Australia have been and are being implemented across numerous contexts and there is no way to "control" the way in which the same is happening (Goodrick 2014, p. 2).

Case Selection, Data Collection and Scope

The comparative case study approach necessitates the selection of suitable cases i.e. "spatially bounded" phenomena, observed at a specific point in time or determined period of time (Gerring 2004, p. 342, cited in Nielsen 2016, p. 570). The selection of cases permits the encapsulation of complicated ideas into concise narratives for the readers to "vicariously experience" the discussed events and draw inferences, by narrowing down complicated "social units" comprising more than one variable of potential interest for investigation (Stake's 2003, p. 141; Merriam 1988, cited inVanWynsberghe, Khan 2007, p. 41). Considering the dynamic, ever-changing nature of foreign policy relations, the thesis has used a "looser application" of a MSSD, involving the selection of the India-Russia and the Australia-Japan strategic partnerships as cases, based on the approximate similarities of their "background characteristics" (Anckar 2008, p. 390).

These include but are not limited to both the strategic partnerships having historical links, consistent, institutionalised, bilateral and multilateral mechanisms such as dialogues and summits for cooperating on matters related to security, economics, including cultural and people-to-people ties as well as the basic way in which the interests-values interplay has been employed to initiate and sustain strategic relations. Despite these similarities, differences in terms of prioritisation of particular sectors over others, intensity of linkages through the implementation

of the above mechanisms, and the interests and values that have been utilised as a part of the interests-values interplay are present. Both similarities and differences have been used to inform the India-Australia strategic partnership's trajectory.

Subsequently, secondary research has been undertaken to collect relevant primary, secondary data for analysis of the above cases. Primary data is defined as the data that indicates an actor's positionality, without providing an analysis, and secondary data comprises of the data that was previously collected for a reason other than the issue at hand (Lowndes et. al 2018, p. 249; Martins et. al 2018, p. 2). Apart from the feasibility of using pre-existing data for enquiry, the collection of primary and secondary data using secondary research has proven to be helpful for the purpose of the thesis because of its capacity to gain access to and aid the utilisation of "high quality" insights and datasets based on "larger samples" (Johnston 2014, p. 619, p. 624).
In terms of scope, since India started "adjusting tactically to the realities of power" after its independence in 1947 , Australia commenced playing its role as a truly "independent power" in the post-Second World War era, and the India-Australia Strategic Partnership has only recently been "renewed (Menon 2020, p. 10; Bisley 2016, p. 6; Bhide, Mukund 2022, p. 2), the selected time frame for data collection spans from the Second World War to present.

Primary data sources include government documents from online archives, for instance, press releases, statements, government-commissioned work such as briefing papers and position papers on India and Australia's foreign policy outlooks, on the India-Russia and Australia-Japan strategic partnerships. Secondary data sources include academic papers, books on strategic partnerships, international relations theories of classical realism and constructivism, analysis of India-Australia bilateral relations, strategic partnerships with Russia and Japan, particularly their origin and rationale for formation, implementation, and maintenance. These also include media

articles and special reports written by leading think tanks, including but not limited to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) and the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) - ensuring that the thesis covers insights provided by experts in the field.

The information derived from primary and secondary data is appropriate for answering the research questions outlined in the first section due to three reasons. First, because the thesis's goal is to make sense of India and Australia's overall value composition for inferring values indirectly from their patterns of association through strategic partnerships and eventually yielding new insights into their "attitudinal structure" (Rathbun 2016, p. 126), re-interpreting existing data in a novel manner is essential. Second, considering the recent revitalization of the India-Australia partnership, the utilisation of the above-mentioned primary and secondary data will be more useful in examining the foundations of the same. Third, the use of primary, secondary data will ensure that perspectives from field experts, government portfolio holders and foreign policy stalwarts, which are otherwise fairly difficult to get in touch with, are included and interpreted within the thesis. To sum up, the use of primary and secondary data will not only cater to the subject matter the research questions aim to analyse but will also ease the process of collecting somewhat privileged data.

Data Analysis

In-line with the adoption of a theory-guided, comparative research design, a theoretical analysis of collected data has been taken on to examine and compare the cases at hand. In doing so, the inherent strengths of comparative case studies and secondary research have been utilised to their fullest potential. The two comparative case studies themselves entail the analysis and fusion of patterns, differences and similarities (Goodrick (2014, p. 1). Secondary research has engendered a “sound explanation of political processes”, due to its ability to provide researchers explanations

encompassing the past events. This has indeed proven to be crucial for claim-making as “where and when political processes occur influence how they occur” (Lowndes et. al 2018, p. 250).

Coupled with the international relations theories of classical realism and constructivism, this method has helped organise data, while illustrating how different pieces of data fit together Maxwell 2012, cited in Carter 2020, p. 308). Rule and John (2015, p. 7) have defined this interplay between theory and research in case studies as a ‘dialogical’ i.e. an open-ended interaction between research, practice and theory, leading to their “reconceptualisation”, both in relation to each other and distinctively.

Indeed, this has been powerful in terms of giving rise to “working solutions” to the research questions, imperative for making inferences on the trajectory of the India-Australia strategic partnership based on the interaction of their interests and values, the gaps the partnership still needs to fill. Therefore, as maintained by Thomas (2010, p. 578), this combination of comparative case study analysis and theory can be simply described as an approach that does not necessarily aim to make generalisations, but instead aims to squeeze “judgement” into the mix for interpretation.

Limitations and Strategies for Mitigation

Multiple limitations and strategies for their mitigation have been identified. First, with regards to a small-n study and its utilisation of a MSSD, limitations are linked to what Lipjhart (1971, p. 685) has called the main, “interrelated” problems inherent within the comparative approach in social science - “many variables, small number of cases”. Consequentially, a combination of a small sample size and MSSD is presumed to lack generalisability due to its overdetermination of the effect or dependent variable it aims to study, especially since finding “countries” as cases

with universally constant “background variables” is impossible (Landman 2008, p. 69; Przeworski, Teune 1970, p. 34, cited in Anckar 2008, p. 393).

Herein, it is imperative to reiterate that thesis is neither aims to study a dependent variable, nor does it aim to make generalisations. Instead, as a “case-orientated” study (Landman 2008, p. 69), it is aimed at explaining the specific unfolding of economic, traditional security developments in the India-Russia, Australia-Japan and India-Australia strategic partnerships, and how the developments in the India-Russia, Australia-Japan strategic partnerships can help fill in the gaps of the India-Australia Strategic Partnership. Therefore, rather than coming up with “broad empirical generalisations” the operates at a “lower level of abstraction” in which concepts and ideas are operationalised in ways that fit more closely with the contextual specificities of the strategic partnerships – and not individual countries - used in the comparison (Landman 2008, p. 69). In doing so, the thesis also ensures that the validity of the entire study is bolstered by providing “more particular and nuanced explanations” of interests and values in the context of all three cases and particularly, the India-Australia strategic partnership. (Landman 2008, p. 69).

For mitigating the problem of the cases having too many variables, the thesis, as a part of its loose adaption of the MSSD, has used two “comparable” cases, i.e. the strategic partnerships which are similar in a substantial number of significant characteristics (as highlighted in the above section) (Lipjhart 1971, p. 687). Paired with lower-level abstraction, the selection of comparable cases has enabled the thesis to establish “equivalence” in an easier manner (Landman 2008, p. 69).

Second, in relation to secondary research, an obvious limitation relates to the use of published expert commentaries and the biases implicit within them. To counter researchers’ implicit biases

i.e. unconscious attitudes that negatively affect their ability to take a neutral, and not a positive or negative stance (Morrow-Jones, Box-Steffensmeier 2014, p. 16), these resources have been used in compliment to academic sources, particularly journal articles and books. The third limitation is also linked to data collection. The thesis has not been able to utilise some government documents such as policy briefs that have been archived physically, due to travel constraints. As a mitigation strategy, academic sources that have cited and analysed such documents have been referred to - especially for Indian foreign policy documents.

4. THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK

This chapter briefly discusses the three aspects - inception, execution, evaluation - of Wilkins' (2008) strategic partnership framework, which has been adopted by the thesis for the purpose of arranging and evaluating data throughout the thesis, along with explaining the rationale behind integration, compatibility of classical realism, constructivism theories in the inception, evaluation phases.

The Strategic Partnership Framework and its Elements

As per Wilkins (2008, p. 363), the strategic partnership framework has been developed for analysing strategic partnerships based on their institutional properties because as a "collaborative social enterprise". The "necessarily brief" framework is composed of organisational theory components that are relevant and easily "transferrable" to international politics, is crucial as accommodates significant facets of strategic partnerships related to their scope, evolution and challenges (Wilkins 2008, p. 363). Consequently, it divides the three consecutive development phases —inception, implementation, and evaluation—across a continuum of collaboration to examine various organisational features.

Inception

According to the framework, in addition to being informal, generally incurring low costs of commitment compared to a formal alliance and allowing states to chase after "global issue agendas", multiple "domestic goals" without letting go their "freedom of action" (Nadakarni (2010, p. 201), the inception phase of a strategic partnership is driven by several critical aspects, i.e. environmental ambiguity, strategic receptivity and compatibility, and a common, binding purpose or a "system principle" (Wilkins 2008, p. 364). Potential partners primarily strive to

mitigate some of the international security environment's aggressive elements through collaboration, and while they may perceive threats similarly, this is not necessarily the only determinant for cooperation. In fact, the strategic desirability of partners is gauged on the basis shared interests, values and ideology and ability to provide accessible, complimentary benefits, capabilities. Finally post-identification, an all-encompassing framework premised on a mutually agreed upon common purpose, grounded in shared interests and values, or a 'system principle' is solidified.

Implementation

The implementation phase provides empirical evidence corroborating the progress of a strategic partnership since it is associated with diffused, unique and complex institutionalisation of an organisational structure that regulates partner-states' interaction. Notably, as a "meta-organisation" comprising of distinct state identities and organisational apparatus, a strategic partnership's structure expounds its members' respective responsibilities and roles (Wilkins 2008, p. 365) by linking policy with operations (Betts 2000, p. 6, p. 7). It outlines the procedures, rules, and policies to be followed, as well as the vertical linkages or bureaucratic elements - public, executive, military, ministerial, financial - of each participating state, and the horizontal linkages or sector-wise delineation of the partnership's scope through "functional areas of cooperation" such as economic, military/defence, cultural, societal, and diplomatic/security (Wilkins 2008, p. 365). This entire procedure fosters mutual comprehension of partners' sensitivities and partners' anticipations. Over time, a novel culture for organisational cooperation, handling present, anticipated conflicts (Envall and Hall 2016, p. 92), a shared identity emerges.

Evaluation

This section is concerned with validating a strategic partnership's overall organisational cohesiveness, and thus effectiveness through revisitation of the inception phase, with an aim to assess progress and sustainability by using a combination of Bergquist (1995, cited in Wilkins 2008, p. 372), and Segil's (1996, p. 22, cited in Kwon 2000, p. 13) crucial performance indicators - perspectives, complementarity of goals, values/interests. Mutual perceptions include aspects that may strengthen or weaken the partnership's integrity, such as cultural clashes/affinities, historical legacies, ideologies, public acceptability. The evaluation of progress towards goal achievement not only helps to understand how well the partnership is doing, but also of goals that need to be modified for increased efficiency.

This, in turn, necessitates an in-depth examination of the partner states' interest, value alignment, since tight alignment leads to cohesion while incentivizing collaboration for mutually advantageous payoffs. As a result, shifting goals, cultural or social friction, hidden motives, a lack of enthusiasm, or the resources required for capacity-building can all have an impact on a partnership's future prospects. While a partnership proving to be effectively working towards its mission has the potential to evolve, expand and adapt to external and internal surroundings, particularly through addition of new partners or increased vertical, horizontal linkages, a partnership faltering on its goals and commitments can be terminated or simply maintained indefinitely as a "hollow or false partnership" without any investments (Wilkins 2008, p. 367)

Greater Explanation and Interpretation: Integration of Classical Realism and Constructivism as Analytical Lenses

Analysing the role of the interests-values interplay in the India-Russia, Australia-Japan strategic partnership case studies and especially the role played by the same in the revitalisation of the

Australia-India Strategic Partnership inevitably requires a "realist-constructivist synthesis" for understanding how the social context is "endogenous" to the practice of foreign policy (Michaels 2022, p. 102).

In terms of compatibility, contrary to popular beliefs, classical realism's rationalist ontology is compatible with constructivism due to its "open" ontology (Michaels 2022, p. 102). While constructivism clarifies the reality of "intersubjective" knowledge, it struggles to explain the conditions that allow for ideational continuity and change. (Sterling-Folker, 2002, cited in Michaels 2022, p. 102). Herein, classical realism's emphasis on "limitations" at the "individual decision-makers" level, as per its rationalist ontology, can help ensure explanatory precedence for agency by defining the parameters in which the "social construction of reality" takes place (Michaels 2022, p. 102, p. 114). Similarly, in terms of epistemology, classical realism and constructivism are compatible owing to their shared focus on "historical contingency" (Barkin 2010, p. 46).

Subsequently, the utilisation of realism-constructivism combination will enable the analysis of the strategic partnerships through a "mind-world" framework, with an aim of demonstrating the role of the countries' "dispositional properties" in restraining and facilitating their interaction with each other (Michaels 2022, p. 115). Thereby this framework would aid the analytical search for processes, mechanisms, constructs, in terms of interests and values, that have worked to bring the countries together within the current geopolitical scenario in the inception, evaluation sections.

5. THE INDIA-RUSSIA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

This chapter utilises the strategic partnership framework detailed in the previous chapter to scrutinise the India-Russia strategic partnership - first of the two case studies chosen to aid India-Australia trajectory development - and its interests-values interplay across three key phases: inception, implementation, and evaluation.

Inception

The signing of the *India-Russia Strategic Partnership* in 2000 marked the renewal and formalisation of India and Russia's mutually beneficial, friendly security and economic relations in the post-Cold War era. Since the 1950s, the amicable relations between New Delhi and Moscow have developed based on "realpolitik" (Azizian 2004, p. 2). During the Cold War, Indian leaders believed that the USSR offered valuable lessons on rapid industrialisation and poverty reduction, in addition to it not being an "imperial power" India had to be cautious of, and the USSR was "prepared to pay more than it received" due to its aspirations of having India at the centre of its security system in Asia (Menon, Rumer 2022, p. 7; Lalwani et. al 2021, p. 6). Consequently, their relationship developed due to three factors. First, the supply of Soviet arms to India, leading to the USSR becoming the primary "source of arms" for all three Indian services after 1964 (Menon, Rumer 2022, p. 8). Second, similar economic strategy centred on the public sector, considerable Soviet assistance in developing India's steel making, heavy and power generation industry brought India and the USSR closer, owing to the lack of the US

enthusiasm in doing the same and protectionist Indian policy restrictions on foreign investment at the time (Menon, Rumer 2022, p. 9).

Finally, the alignment of China, Pakistan and the US resulted in an increased perception of reliability and the convergence of "strategic interests" between India and the USSR especially after the Soviet-Sino split in the 1960s, the end of US arms sales to India during its 1965 and 1971 clashes with Pakistan (Menon, Rumer 2022, p. 9; Lalwani et. al 2021, p. 5). This convergence also resulted in India and the USSR's discernment of China as a common threat, in turn aiding the formalisation of the *1971 Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Corporation* (Lalwani et. al 2021, p. 5). However, it is worth noting that owing to India's employment of the "non-alignment" strategy for preventing itself from getting dragged into the Cold War politics, it did not want to be viewed as a "Soviet ally" and limited the Treaty's scope by not allowing for any clause on "mutual defence" (Harshe 1990, p. 399; Lalwani et. al 2021, p. 5).

In the post-Cold War period, the New Delhi-Moscow relationship has only been sustained by one of the factors mentioned above, i.e., the trade of arms. After the disintegration of the USSR in 1991, India played an instrumental role in reviving the newly established Russia's strategic and economic sectors, by continuing to make "defence purchases" from it (Mukerji 2020). To India's advantage, arms from Russia have tended to be cheaper than Western alternatives and have been provided along with the options of licensing "weapons production" and transferring "technology" (Menon, Rumer 2022, p. 11). As a result, India has acquired the licence for producing T-90 tanks, SU-30 aircraft, along with the "BrahMos missile system"; Russia has contributed two-thirds of India's overall armament acquisitions (Menon, Rumer 2022, p. 11).

The confinement of the India-Russia relationship to arms trade can be owed to the notable change in their respective relationships with the US and China in the post-Cold War period. While India was occupied with the liberalisation of its economy and gaining Western investment, trade support, Russia initially adopted a pro-Western stance, but eventually started pursuing a "no limits" friendship with China to contain the US and its allies (Kapoor 2019, p. 2; Menon, Rumer 2022, p. 4). This change was also evident through the replacement of the 1971 Treaty with the *1993 Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation*, which eliminated the Cold War "security clauses" aimed against the US and China (Azizian 2004, p. 3). Furthermore, this change also prevented the revival of India and Russia's economic relations, which were "never the most robust" (Menon, Rumer 2022, p. 12). Nonetheless, based on a strong security-oriented relationship, the India-Russia relationship was elevated through the *2000 Declaration on Strategic Partnership* based on principles of equality, sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs, mutual benefit and respect, to bolster overall ties and further upgraded to a *Special and Privileged Partnership* in 2010 (MEA 2000, p. 2; Chaudhury 2020).

Subsequently, an analysis of the India-Russia strategic partnership's inception stage using tenets of classical realism and constructivism reveals that the partnership has been propelled by interests but sustained using an interests-values interplay. Both India and Russia have used their widely promoted principles for legitimately veiling their constructed meta-narrative identities that bridge the gap in their discordant strategic value orientations.

Indeed, from a classical realist point of view, the initiation of Indo-Russian strategic partnership clearly epitomises that interests expounded as power - for survival and probable growth of the state to ensure survival - are the "driving force" in international politics (Morgenthau 1973, p. 5, cited in Soendergaard 2008, p. 5). Furthermore, both the states have evidently made use of

practical, “political morality” - to adapt to changing geopolitical circumstances and interests, India and Russia have adopted a “consequentialist orientation” which merges imperatives of national survival and morality, while placing a “strict” limit on morals for pursuit of interests (Murray 1996, p. 81). This explains how mutual satisfaction of interests aided the gradual shift from friendship between India and the USSR, later Russia to consolidated strategic relations in 2000, upgraded strategic relations in 2010 to present, despite India’s non-aligned stance and their changed geopolitical priorities.

Elucidated through a constructivist point of view, what has enabled India and Russia’s utilisation of their political morality, has been their adoption of the strategic partnership principles - interrelated to values in the sense that they guide ethical considerations based on India and Russia’s political sensitivities (Koffas 2017, p. 627) - to legitimise strategic relations, while enabling and obscuring the usage of their meta-narrative identities.

These identities are amalgamations of varying, peripheral foreign policy practices - selected for interpretation of new domestic, geopolitical challenges, legitimisation of the states’ actions and enduring foundational ideas, which inform their core values, identities, and visions (Chacko 2018, p. 56; 2014, p. 436). Consequently, they help India and Russia in constructing flexible, context-specific “operational” interest-fulfilling ideas, perspectives (Chacko 2014, pp. 435-436), which help them in easing the sustenance of collaborative endeavours despite the obvious dissonance in the value-informing foundational ideas.

India’s meta-narrative utilisation is discernible from the replacement of its outright announcement of “non-alignment as an end” with the strategy of multi-alignment (Pant, Super 2019, p. 145). As a core value, non-alignment is at the centre of this identity, based on the India’s foundational idea of delegitimising the colonial claim of it requiring “paternalistic

guidance" owing to its backwardness, stagnancy (Chacko, Davis 2017, p. 31). Consequently, multi-alignment as a peripheral identity pushes India to have "convergence with many but congruence with none" i.e. cultivate, leverage mutually beneficial "broad-based relations" for enhancing its strategic capacity to exercise independent agency through generation, exploitation of multiple options to deal with a given scenario (Jaishankar 2020, p. 41, p. 73, cited in Tellis 2020, pp. 2-4; Raghavan 2017, p. 328).

Russia's employment of its meta-narrative identity is perceptible from its peripheral 'Eurasian' identity to get out of its awkward east or west conundrum, define its "future" and undertake "new order-making" initiatives for "regional integration" (Korosteleva, Paikin 2021, p. 323). Anti-Atlanticism constitutes the core value and identity, based on Russia's foundational idea of rejecting Europe, the West due to their advancement of "threats", i.e. free-flowing information, democracy advancement, foreign intervention (especially in the parts of the former USSR) (Klump 2009; Kofman 2018). This allows Russia to assert historical, cultural destiny and unity of Russians, non-Russians of Asia and former USSR, prioritise collaboration with Asian countries, particularly with India and China, while undertaking its practice of "raiding" or "international brigandry", comprising of direct, indirect operations planned, enacted centrally to compel the US into compromising on a "new power condominium" (Laruelle 2014; Lalwani et. al 2021, p. 12).

Consequently, after gauging the importance of continued interest-based convergence, India and Russia have used their strategic partnership principles to cloak, utilise the above meta-narrative identities, and endorse an international order structured on the basis the interest-fulfilling operational idea of polycentrism – a global order without any one hegemonic state having sway over other states (Lalwani, Jacob 2023) - and this constitutes the common purpose or 'system principle' that binds the two together and drives strategic collaboration. In doing so, both India

and Russia fervently advocate for “spheres of influence” - India aspires for its Western partners to regard the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) as India’s traditional sphere of influence, and Russia contends that it should wield “unrivalled influence” over Commonwealth of Independent States and states that were formerly a part of the USSR (Lalwani et. al 2021, p. 11).

Implementation

The systematisation of Indo-Russian collaboration has been approached from several angles. Budhwar (2007, pp. 60-61) has discerned the strategic partnership’s initial institutionalisation of rudimentary parameters commenced in the years leading up to 1991 - “Delegations, at all levels of the two countries not only visited each other…Mutual respect and understanding was the standard phrase earmarked for joint statements; later on, upgraded to declarations befitting the high importance”.

Nonetheless, since then, the strategic partnership's framework has evolved into an intricate blend of informal and formal connections between India and Russia, in bilateral, multilateral and minilateral contexts. Furthermore, structured based on the January 1993 *Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation* and October 2000 *Declaration of Strategic Partnership*, this relationship is founded on “equal rights” and co-operation based on “collaboration”, and is non-hierarchical (Förschner 2006, p. 4; Brandstetter 2006, p. 7). Within the partnership neither India nor Russia can be deemed as a “junior partner” (Menon, Rumer 2022, p. 3).

Vertical bilateral cooperation takes place through a plethora of mechanisms with different degrees of connection. They comprise of multiple “institutionalised dialogue mechanisms” for ensuring regular contact and follow-up on activities for aiding cooperation on economy, trade, culture, security, defence, people-to-people ties, science and technology (Embassy of India, Moscow 2022). These mechanisms include annual summits, commissions, regularised 2+2

meetings between state executives, defence and foreign ministers of both the countries and even telephonic conversations (Embassy of India, Moscow 2022).

Vertical multilateral, minilateral cooperation between India and Russia is also noteworthy in the context of the Brazil–Russia–India–China–South Africa (BRICS) grouping. While Russia continues to view BRICS as a "useful vehicle" for countering American hegemony globally, India perceives it as an important "lobbying group" for increasing representation in global governance; together they aim to resist "destructive actions of unfriendly states and alliances" (Salzman 2017; Pant 2023b). Russia and India have also utilised their strong relationship within the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) to set up a "permanent bilateral channel" in the wake of the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan (Saini, Jacob 2022, p. 18). Furthermore, India and Russia also coordinate strategies in the G20, the minilateral Russia-India-China (RIC) grouping and the East Asia Summit (EAS) (Joshi, Sharma 2017, p. 38). For both the strategic partners, multilateral, minilateral cooperation serves as an inclusive tool to manage "mutual interdependencies" for enhancing national, global welfare (Modeér, Lemma 2023).

Subsequently, horizontal "functional areas of cooperation" comprise of the strategic partnership's focus areas, stemming from the "broader system principle" (Wilkins 2008, p. 371). Security, defence, trade, economy, and people-to-people ties have been the most crucial domains of cooperation. In terms of security cooperation, the Indian and Russian United Nations Security Council (UNSC) secretariats closely cooperate through regular multilateral-side line meetings, bilateral consultations; Russia continues to support India's permanent membership in the UNSC based on its "vast diplomatic experience" and "reputation" in the region (The Times of India 2022; Sarwar 2011, p. 272).

In terms of defence cooperation, the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Military & Military Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-M&MTC) has been set up as a forum for the Indian and Russian defence ministers' discussion, implementation of mutually agreed-upon agendas (MEA 2022; Indiawest Journal 2021). Finally, in terms of trade, economic cooperation, the "primary mechanism" for strengthening the same is the India-Russia Intergovernmental Commission for Trade, Economic, Scientific & Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC), jointly chaired by the Indian External Affairs Minister and the Russian Deputy Prime Minister (MEA 2022). The India-Russia Strategic Economic Dialogue (IRSED) is another Government-to-Government mechanism jointly chaired by the Indian NITI Aayog Vice Chairman and the Russian Minister of Economic Development (MEA 2022).

People-to-people ties have operated as "collaboration multipliers", thanks to the various initiatives taken to fortify the relationship from the "bottom-up" (Wilkins 2008, p. 373). India's Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Centre (JNCC), Moscow, collaborates with Russian institutions to teach languages such as Hindi, Marathi, Urdu, Gujarati, and Sanskrit, in addition to conducting classes in music, yoga and dance (Embassy of India, Moscow 2022). The Indian embassy in Moscow, Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR), MEA and Joint Working Group on Culture regularly organise programmes on "public diplomacy" in collaboration with numerous NGOs; the ICCR also offers scholarships to Russian students keen to study in India (Usha 2019). India and Russia also hold "reciprocal festivals", including film festivals and have taken significant steps to further increase tourism, youth engagement and even science and technology cooperation (Press Information Bureau 2019).

Evaluation

In 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Vladimir Putin reaffirmed that the Indo-Russian friendship is not only “special”, but their foreign policy, defence, multilateral cooperation is “indicative of the high level of strategic relations" between the countries (Talukdar 2018). To gauge the validity of these official assertions, it advantageous to utilise the combination of Bergquist and Segil’s performance indicators - perspectives, complementarity of goals, values/interests. In terms of perspectives, the role of thriving people-to-people ties, leading to the constant reinforcement of mutual trust and understanding is evident. For India, its strategic partnership with Russia is inherently based on the Innenpolitik - 43% of young Indians, aged between 18-35, regard Russia as the “most reliable partner since independence”, and a staggering 87% back the robust India-Russia defence relations (Pant et. al 2022, p. 21; Mattoo 2022). For Russia, to a substantial extent, a similar view of India has persisted through its citizens’ admiration for Indian music, Ayurveda, dance, and yoga (Usha 2019).

In terms of complementarity of goals, there is a strong indication of commitment through genuine collaborative actions. To improve the struggling trade, economic ties, a target for achieving $30 billion worth of trade by 2025 has been set by India and Russia, as per the 2014 “Druzhba-Dosti” joint statement (Kapoor 2019, p. 7). This statement has also identified development of energy innovation sector for accelerating “full realisation” of extensive “untapped potential” in bilateral investment, trade, and economic cooperation” (Kapoor 2019, p. 6). In line with the same, the Vladivostok-Chennai energy corridor was inaugurated in 2019 and the Russian share of oil exports to India increased to 23% in November (Paul 2023). Further to this, the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP), a “flagship project” of the Indian and Russian governments for augmenting the “peaceful use of nuclear energy” is also being

developed - while the initial two units are already operational, another four units are under construction (Embassy of India, Moscow 2022).

In the field of security and defence, India-Russia military technical cooperation, innovation is evidenced by the evolution of the "buyer-seller framework" to one including collaborative research and development of innovative "defence technologies" (Kapoor 2019, p. 2). Exemplified through the BrahMos Missile System, licensed production of T-90 tanks and SU-30 aircraft in India, the security and defence cooperation was further solidified through the signing of an agreement authorising the production of Russian military equipment spare parts during the 20th Annual Bilateral Summit in 2019 (Chaudhury 2020). For further expanding joint weapons production, the Russian state-owned weapons manufacturer, Rosoboronexport has been engaging with Indian state, private enterprises for integrating "aviation weapons" into India's current fleet (Reuters 2023). Nonetheless, the two have to conclude the discussions on and successfully sign the administrative Reciprocal Exchange of Logistics Agreement (RELOS), which would have enabled reciprocal access to support and logistics facilities at their respective ports and bases, in turn helping Indian and Russian navies to have better operational reach and coordination in the Arctic region (Rajagopalan 2021b).

Finally, for evaluating the Indo-Russian strategic partnership in terms of the shared interests/values driving the same, the employment of classical realist and constructivist assertions is necessary. From a classical realist standpoint, given that India and Russia's "geopolitical ties are loosening" and they share neither "partners", nor "enemies", they have been drawing on flexible "evaluative standards" that do not emerge and are different from abstract, rigid "individual morality" (Tillyris 2019, p. 1582; Erman, Möller 2022, p. 434) to sustain their relationship.

Invigorating these flexible moral standards for sustenance of the relationship, as per the constructivist standpoint, are India and Russia's meta-narrative identities, along with their consequent interest-based co-constitution - emanating from contingency, indeterminacy, social construction, instead of a "natural necessity" (Hay 2015, p. 105; Sterling-Folker, Badie 2011, p. 105). India's employment of its 'multi-aligned' meta-narrative identity and Russia's employment of its Eurasian' meta-narrative identity has enabled both the states to successfully utilise their operational idea of 'polycentricism' for bridging the gaps in their foundational ideas. This has in-turn led to the reciprocal, sustained fulfilment of security-related interests in particular, has had a lock-in effect, and puts forward "resistance" while imbuing the relationship with a sense of resilience amidst changing geopolitical circumstances, preventing India and Russia from severing their longstanding ties even within the context of other competing relationships (Wendt 1992, p. 404; Knorr Cetina 1993, p. 184, cited in Adler 1997, p. 323).

Illustrating the persistence of this interest-based co-constitution based on flexible moral standards is the "reciprocity of silence" which forces both the states to either defend each other or remain silent on politically charged issues (Lalwani et. al 2021, p. 7), such as the ongoing Russia-Ukraine War. It has been widely argued that the India's recent categorisation as a "hybrid regime"- neither a complete democracy nor a complete autocracy, owing to democratic backsliding (Tudor 2023, p. 121) - made it viable for India to take a neutral stance against autocratic Russia's actions in Ukraine. However, impelling India to refrain from "publicly condemning" Russia has been their "time-tested", "all-weather" mutual interest-serving friendship - India supported the USSR's invasions in Afghanistan, and in return, Russia supported India's UN position on Kashmir, military undertakings in Sri-Lanka, Bangladesh, Goa and its 1974, 1998 nuclear tests, its admission into the UNSC as a permanent member (Lalwani et. al 2021, p. 7).

The above phenomenon has been further reinforced by India and Russia's interest-based strategic calculations that point towards security-threatening ramifications of severing ties. India needs the partnership to limit Russia's temptation to strengthen ties with Pakistan and particularly China, with which Russia has announced a "no-limits partnership"; similarly, Russia needs the partnership to (even minimally) inhibit the growth of India's steadily developing relationship with the US (Menon, Rumer 2022, p. 4, p. 6) and most recently, Australia and Japan as the QUAD countries that actively contribute to the US power augmentation and re-engagement in the region.

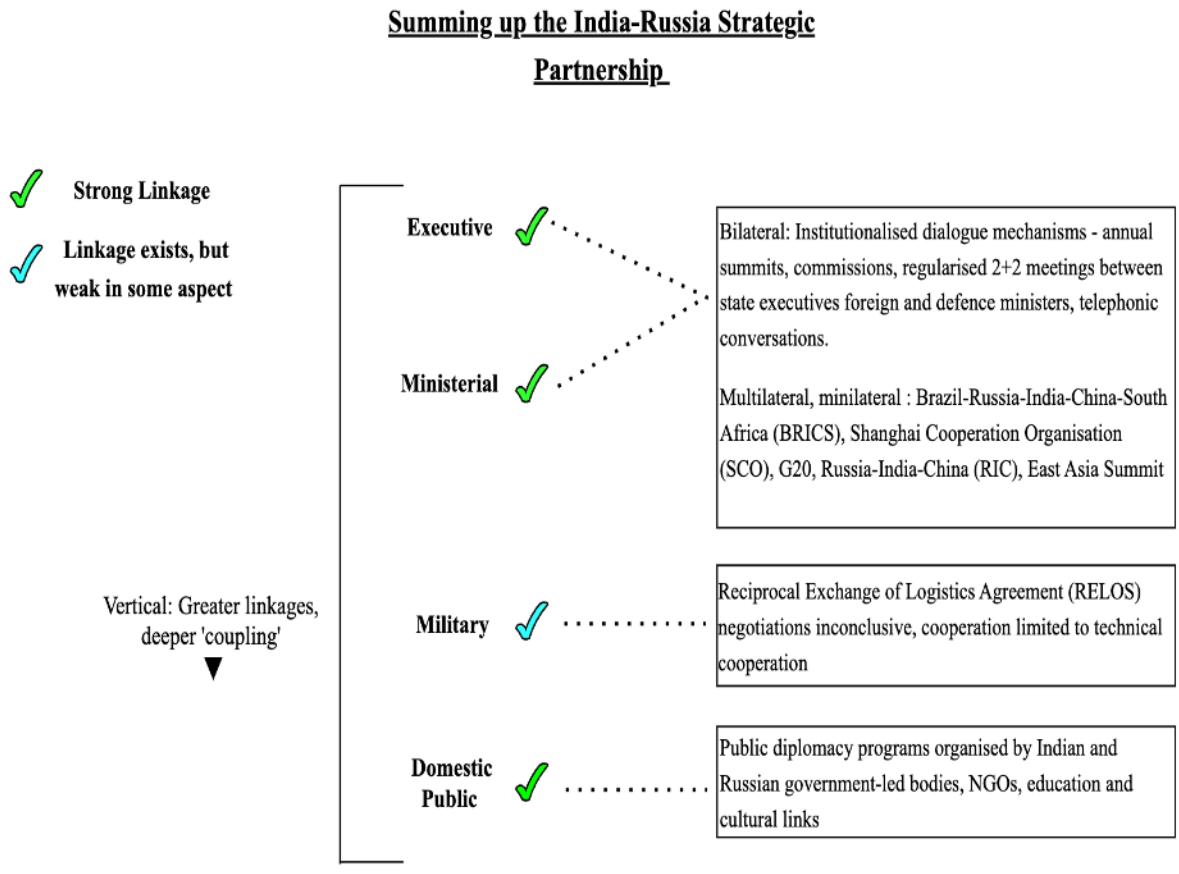

Figure 5.1: Vertical Linkages

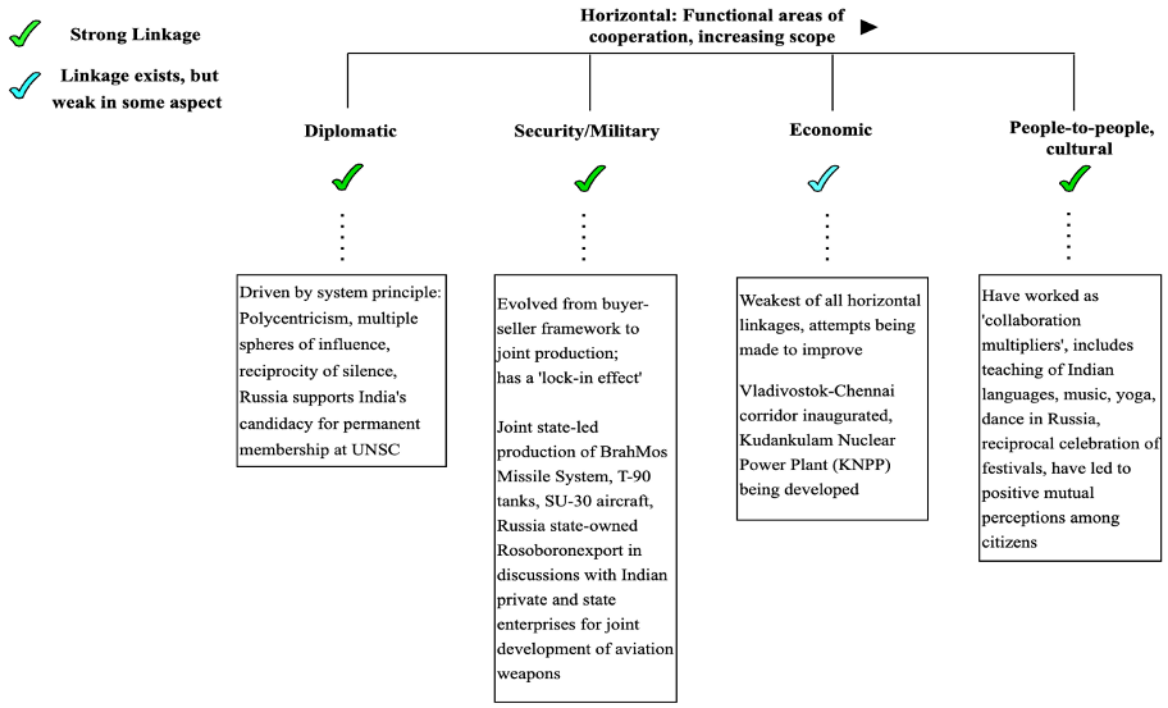

Figure 5.2: Horizontal Linkages

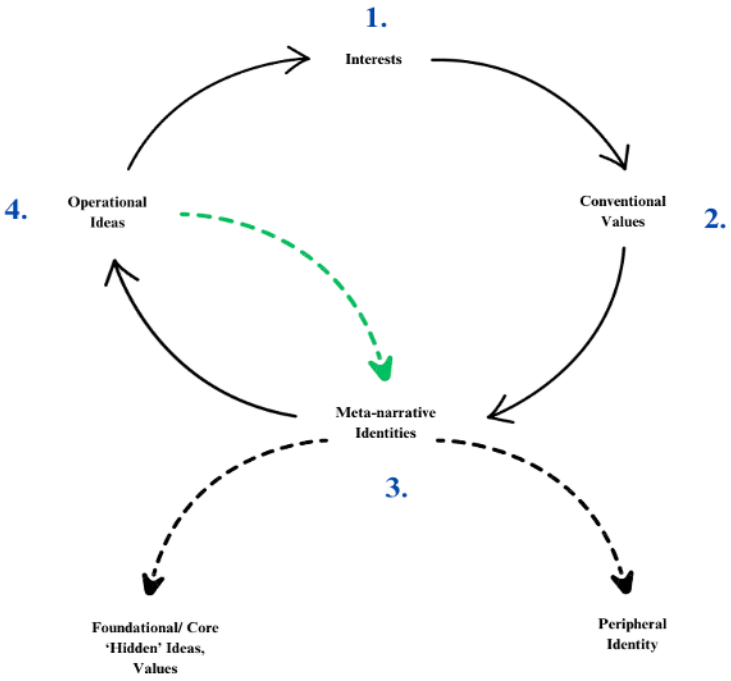

Figure 5.3: Interests-Values Interplay

1. Interests:

India's interests: Initially nation-building, cheaper weapons, need for increased influence in IOR, at present sustaining weapons lock-in, preventing strengthening of Russo-Chinese relations

USSR, later Russia's interests: Support during Cold War, defence export, at present sustaining weapon-dependency through joint manufacturing, preventing strengthening of US - QUAD - India relations

2. Conventional values/principles for legitimising association: Equality, sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs, mutual benefit and respect

3. Meta-narrative identities:
- India:
  - Core: Non-aligned
  - Peripheral: Multi-aligned
- Russia:
  - Core: Anti-Atlanticist (against Western and European dominance), against democratisation, free-flowing information, foreign intervention
  - Peripheral: Eurasian identity

4. Operational Ideas: Polycentricism, multiple spheres of influence

6. THE AUSTRALIA-JAPAN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Using the strategic partnership framework, this chapter thoroughly examines the Australia-Japan strategic partnership - the second of the two case studies selected for facilitating India-Australia strategic partnership's trajectory development - and its interests-values interplay across its inception, implementation and evaluation phases.

Inception

The Australia-Japan partnership took a long time to get established. Fierce foes in the Second World War, Australia and Japan initially signed the *1957 Commerce Agreement*, after the facilitation of the *1951 San Francisco Peace Treaty* by the US, which Australia objected to but eventually subscribed (Price 2001, p. 39). However, it was not until the signing of the *1976 Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation* that Canberra and Tokyo established concrete bilateral relations through "commercial diplomacy" centred around trade (Mark 2019, p. 103; Drysdale, Kitaoji 1981, p. 424). The relationship was mostly limited to the economic domain throughout the relatively steady Cold War period.

In the post-Cold War period, both Australia and Japan had a newfound desire to strengthen bilateral ties due to reasons of their own. Australia was compelled to do so because of its aspiration of exhibiting its continued allegiance to the US after the 9/11 attacks and maximising the commercial benefits of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Japan (Walton 2010, pp. 430-431). Japan was drawn towards Australia after the 9/11 attacks as it sought to thoroughly review of its security and foreign policy and started looking for prospective partners having mutual

conventional values and complimentary interests while reassessing its ties with its "traditional ally', the US, amidst the obvious alteration in power dynamics globally because of China's rise (Wilkins 2012b, p. 119).

Playing a prominent role in the inception of the strategic partnership, Former Australian Prime Minister John Howard not only frequently visited Japan to build "momentum" for the partnership, but also provided spirited bureaucratic support and provided "political leadership" in Australia for succession of substantial government-sponsored declarations, conferences, and security upgrades (Walton 2010, p. 430). Similarly, Former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe stated that Australia, shared "fundamental values" with Japan, making it imperative for Japan to partake in "strategic dialogues" with it, for expanding the network of "free societies" worldwide (Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet 2006).

Indeed, Australia shared crucial conventional values and key features with Japan - a commitment towards the rule of law, human rights and having a liberal democratic system of government and a market economy centred around free trade. Furthermore, due to the above shared values, Australia, and Japan found a common strategic ally in the US and were predisposed to having similar policies, and to a considerable extent, similar perceptions of their respective positions (as middle powers) in the international system. Both Australia and Japan suffered with the so-called "Lilliputian syndrome" (also called liminality) - Japan felt that it had never been "fully accepted" by the West, and Australia felt a "seeming nearness yet infinite distance" between itself and the rest of Asia (Watanabe 1996, cited in Terada 2000, p. 179).

Subsequently, a classical realist and constructivist analysis of the relationship's gradual consolidation illustrates the shared conventional values of based on liberalism have been used rhetorically to 'cloak' Australia and Japan's utilisation of their meta-narrative identities. This way, shared values have come to play a 'validating' and 'legitimising' role, while shared

interests have majorly played the ‘bridging’ role. From a classical realist perspective, the partnership appears to have been materialised not just because of shared values, but Australia and Japan’s shared interests, i.e. the need to secure safety, trust, order, protection and cooperation terms (Williams 2005, p. 3, cited in Cozzaglio, Favara 2022, p. 96) for relative augmentation of power in a rather volatile world. The promotion of shared values as strategic cooperation propellers has worked to validate, legitimise the need for augmented power in an “ethical” manner, and selling the bolstered cooperation as something that transcended the mere serving of ‘egoistical’ interests - as states consistently feel the need to justify everything in terms of ethics (Morgenthau 1946, p. 7, p. 183; Wong 2000, p. 397, cited in Cozette 2008a, pp. 668-669).

As in the India-Russia strategic partnership, the constructivist perspective demonstrates the process through which Australia and Japan have utilised their shared conventional values to legitimise their pursuit of shared interests. They have employed their shared conventional values to conceal their meta-narrative identity operationalisation, necessary for preventing a clash in their extremely diverse, somewhat mismatched value-apprising foundational ideas.

Australia’s meta-narrative identity is the ‘Asia identity’, developed to cater to its economic, political prospects that are presently tied to the Indo-Pacific region and not just the US alliance (Gorjão 2003, cited in Kizekova 2013, p. 9). Despite its rather broadened “migration policies” - Western, specifically Anglo-Saxon political tradition’s foundational ideas of economic, political freedoms continue to remain at the core of this identity and inform fundamental Australian values (Kizekova 2013, p. 9; Pan, Gao 2021). Nonetheless, its gradual promotion as “pluralistic” and “multicultural” has been aimed at helping Australia in challenging the “historic image” of it being a European, white settler-colonial nation at home and abroad, thereby bolstering its ability

to interact with Asia, while getting integrated by within prevailing regional cooperative frameworks as an “equal partner” (Kizekova 2013, p. 9, p. 14).

Japan’s meta-narrative identity is constituted by its increasing military capabilities, and its aspiration to become an Indo-Pacific leader. This identity is still driven by the foundational idea of “Asian Otherness”, based on core values of “self-defined cultural exclusivity” and an “introverted” desire to oppose predominant “Western cultures” (Hagström, Gustafsson 2015, p. 14; IWABUCHI, 2002, p. 11, cited in Tay 2010, p. 106). Nevertheless, Japan has been gradually abandoning its historical “pacifist” stance by significantly increasing its military expenditure (Global Times 2022). Given its narrowed perception of threats emanating from North Korea and China, urge for “counterbalancing” them, specifically by assuming leadership in the Indo-Pacific, the militarised identity is intended to help Japan in using force when required for promotion of “regional prosperity” (Kildong 2017, p. 6).

Consequently, motivated by the change in global power dynamics, both the states have used their meta-narrative identities to cement their relationship around a shared purpose, a ‘system principle’ using multiple interest-based operational ideas - developing regional cooperation structures, protecting sea lines of communication, tackling weapons of mass destruction proliferation, threat of international terrorism and enhancing their respective leadership abilities as “complementary powers” by making up for their diplomatic deficiencies (Terada 2000, pp. 176-177; Wilkins 2012b, p. 119). These operational ideas have now been packaged into one operational idea or system principle, through Australia and Japan’s adoption of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) concept. It reflects their shared perception of dealing with Indo-Pacific’s strategic, economic competition, dynamism by sustaining the US engagement, advancing India’s role, and enabling cooperation among countries that are “like-minded” (Wilkins 2021, p. 2, cited in Envall 2022, p. 1).

Implementation

The Australia-Japan strategic partnership has been codified in numerous ways. As highlighted by Tow and Yoshizaki (2014, p. 8), the 2007 *Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation* was a strategic document representing a monumental moment in Australia-Japan cooperation through its introduction of an "explicit framework for cooperation". Furthermore, since 2014, the two states have been deepening their cooperation under the *Special Strategic Partnership* framework having vertical and horizontal linkages. Correspondingly, Australia started regarding Japan as its "closest partner in Asia" and Japan designated Australia as its most important security ally second to the US (Wade n.d.).

In terms of vertical bilateral cooperation, at the highest level of the hierarchy are the annual meetings between the two prime ministers; next are the annual 2+2 meetings, between the foreign and defence ministers, as well the Ministerial Economic Dialogue to compliment these meetings 2 (DFAT n.d.a). Multilateral, minilateral vertical cooperation is also evident, especially through the QUAD and the Trilateral Security Dialogue (TSD). In the QUAD, Australia, and Japan, alongside India and the US, have been advocating for "values-based security" by collaborating to maintain a free and stable Indo-Pacific, the rules-based economic order and dissuade the employment of forceful means for resolving territorial, political disputes in the region (Mehra 2020, p. 13; Lee 2020, pp. 4-5). Similarly, Australia and Japan cooperate with each other, and the US in the TSD to uphold democratic values, preserve transparency, ensure adherence to international norms, while expanding the scope of institutional and collaborative defence in the Indo-Pacific (US Department of Defense 2023; Pollmann 2015). The two states are also close partners in the EAS and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum (Australian Embassy, Tokyo, n.d.).

In terms of horizontal cooperation, functional areas can be recognised. Some of the initiatives are in line with Australia and Japan's pursuit of multilateral resolutions to global problems as a part of their middle power diplomacy (Nagy 2020, p. 5). The two states are co-founders of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) and Australia also backs Japan's bid for inclusion as a permanent member in the UNSC (Australian Embassy, Tokyo, n.d.). Other functional areas are demonstrative of security, defence, economic and cultural cooperation. First, Australia-Japan security and defence cooperation has been mainly consolidated through the signing of the 2007 *Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation (JDSC)*, allowing for coordination on issues including but not limited to border security, counterterrorism, aviation, maritime security, humanitarian relief operations, disarmament, and law enforcement on transactional crimes (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2007).

Recently updated in 2022, the *JDSC*, while still an informal, "non-binding" commitment, allows for increased consultations on "contingencies" having the potential to affect Australia and Japan's "sovereignty and regional security interests" (Walton, Akimoto 2022). The countries have also concluded the Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA) for bolstered interoperability between the Australian Defence Forces and the Japanese Self-Defence Forces through combined military exercise, trainings (Satake 2023). Other important accords include the Information Security Agreement (ISA) and the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA).

Second, as of 2020, Japan was Australia's third largest trading partner; the "central pillar" of economic cooperation is the 2015 *Japan-Australia Economic Partnership Agreement (JAEPA)*, providing improved goods, services market access and investment protections (DFAT n.d.a.; Minister for Trade and Tourism 2022). Its successful implementation also contributed to increased awareness about Japan as a business and overall investment destination in Australia, while highlighting how both the states have moved beyond their historical preconceptions

(Hiraki 2015, p. 7). Economic cooperation has also spilled into the energy domain - both countries have been consistently advancing, collaborating on "clean technologies" such as ammonia and hydrogen, particularly through the Australia-Japan Hydrogen Energy Supply Chain (HESC) pilot project (Minister for Trade and Tourism 2022). Third, societal and cultural cooperation has been characterised by people-to-people ties between Australia and Japan, broadened by several Track II initiatives, including dedicated conferences, cultural exchanges facilitated by the Australia-Japan Cultural Mixed Commission, the Australia Japan Foundation, and education-related exchanges (DFAT n.d.b; c).

Evaluation

In 2022, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and his Japanese counterpart, Fumio Kishida, reaffirmed that the *Special Strategic Partnership* between Australia and Japan is indispensable; it is a "pillar" of a resilient, inclusive, free, and open Indo-Pacific, while committing to expand, deepen "comprehensive engagement" over the next decade (Prime Minister of Australia 2022). Employing the previously used combination of Bergquist and Segil's performance indicators to assess the perspectives, complementarity of goals, values/interests, will help evaluate the plausibility of the above assertion.

Mutual positive perspectives between the countries are apparent, primarily advanced through people-to-people linkages. According to the *2023 Lowy Institute Poll*, an overwhelming 85% of Australians view Japan as being trustworthy (Neelam 2023, p. 4). Similarly, as per the Japanese Government's *2018 Public Opinion Survey on Diplomacy*, while 65.1% Japanese citizens "feel an affinity" towards Australia, 71.3% view the relationship between the countries as being "good" and 74.3% view the same as being "important" in the region (Public Relations Office 2018, pp. 13-15). Nonetheless, the issue of whaling has remained contentious. While Australia

continues to maintain its anti-whaling stance, based on environmental considerations, Japan continues to vehemently protect its whaling rights, viewing a ban on it as a "resource security" threat, inconsiderate of interstate disparities in cuisine, culture (Davis 2011, pp. 425-427; Wyeth 2019).

With regards to complementarity of goals, Australia and Japan continue to demonstrate immense dedication towards strategic partnership sustenance through real collaboration. The two states, fearing Washington's "potential shift towards isolationism" have been working closely to cooperate with the US within the QUAD, and simultaneously achieve common security and defence goals through the signing of the 2022 *JDSC*, which itself is supposed to a "limited insurance policy" and a supplement to their alliance with the US (Ashley 2022; Wilkins 2022). Consequently, the "de-facto allies", ready to utilise their defence forces for boosting their "shared strategic goals", while maintaining US security engagement within the Indo-Pacific, have reaffirmed the value of intensifying trilateral training with the US by enabling Australia's debut at the Japan-US Exercise Yama Sakura and by welcoming the Trilateral Exercise Southern Jackaroo (Ashley 2022; Japan Ministry of Defence Japan 2023).

Furthermore, along with the RAA's conclusion, Australia and Japan have succeeded in augmenting cooperation related to "strategic capabilities", inclusive of the Integrated Air and Missile Defence (IAMD) system, long-range guided weaponry, and in expanding air-to-air refuelling pairings between the Royal Australian Air Force and the Japan Air Self Defence Force aircraft, and cyber association through the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence "Locked Shields" exercise (MODJ 2023).

Australia and Japan also continue to reap the benefits of having "mutually complementary economic relations" premised on the *JAEPA* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2020, p. 76). As elucidated by the Australia-Japan Business Co-operation Committee (AJBCC) (2021), a "positive correlation" is apparent between the increase in services, investment trade and the introduction of *JAEPA*. This has allowed the strategic partners to "leverage" JAEPA for deepening the bilateral trade relationship, cooperating on energy and resource security issues such as Australia's growth of rare earths processing, its supply of Liquid National Gas through the Ichthys project - a project in Darwin funded by the Japanese government (Wilkins 2021, p. 6).

However, with regards to their overarching goal of using the FOIP concept for world order stabilisation the establishment of inclusive, prosperous and resilient "regional balance" through collaboration (Envall 2022, p. 7), a disparity in terms of actual investment into the region is apparent. While Japan has been taking on the FOIP concept as an "order-building project", making tangible investment into Asia, Australia has been lagging to prioritise its outward international investment into the Indo-Pacific, and thereby selling its Indo-Pacific vision as a "strategy" (Envall 2022, p. 2, p. 8).

Finally, in terms of complementary interests/values analysis, a classical realist viewpoint posits that, the Australia-Japan strategic partnership is demonstrative of a "political practice" structured around power that utilises political morality (Cozzaglio, Favara 2022, p. 94), compelling the states to be inherently devoted to chasing, developing shared interests, in-turn reinforcing Australia and Japan's ability to trump any value-related clashes.

A constructivist analysis of the strategic partnership further reiterates this view by evaluating Australia and Japan's use of shared conventional values for veiling their operationalised meta-

narrative identities that help them in smoothening the differences in core values, foundational ideas. With social and material contexts informing actions of states based on the "logic of appropriateness" (Checkel 1998, pp. 325-326), both the states continue to focus to on the widely publicised, conventional, shared 'middle power' values concerned with democracy, rule of law and human rights. Using these values rhetorically, Australia has furthered its 'Asian' meta-narrative identity, and Japan has furthered its 'more militarised, Indo-Pacific leader' identity, to essentially adapt to each other's role conceptions - required for reciprocal fulfilment of interests – without actually converging their core national identities, values based on their different, to an extent, disharmonious, core values and foundational ideas (Michalski, Pan 2017, p. 31). Doing so has proven to be imperative as both the states historically lack "bonds of solidarity", premised on "shared memories, myths and traditions" distinct from their bureaucratic, legal associations (Smith 1991, p. 16, cited in Reilly, Olijinyk 2023, p. 3) that have been promoted as being based on present-day shared, conventional values. Overall, while interests have primarily propelled Australia and Japan to consolidate their strategic relations, shared conventional values have been used to pave the way for cooperation by continuously to allowing for legitimate, uninterrupted management of interests through trust-building.

Indeed, Australia and Japan's employment of this interests-values interplay has enabled them to strategically persevere amidst a turbulent geopolitical scenario, despite Australia's anti-whaling stance, in line with the global promotion of its unceasing commitment towards protecting marine biodiversity and sustainably managing marine assets at the United Nations High–Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (Australian Government 2018, p. 91).

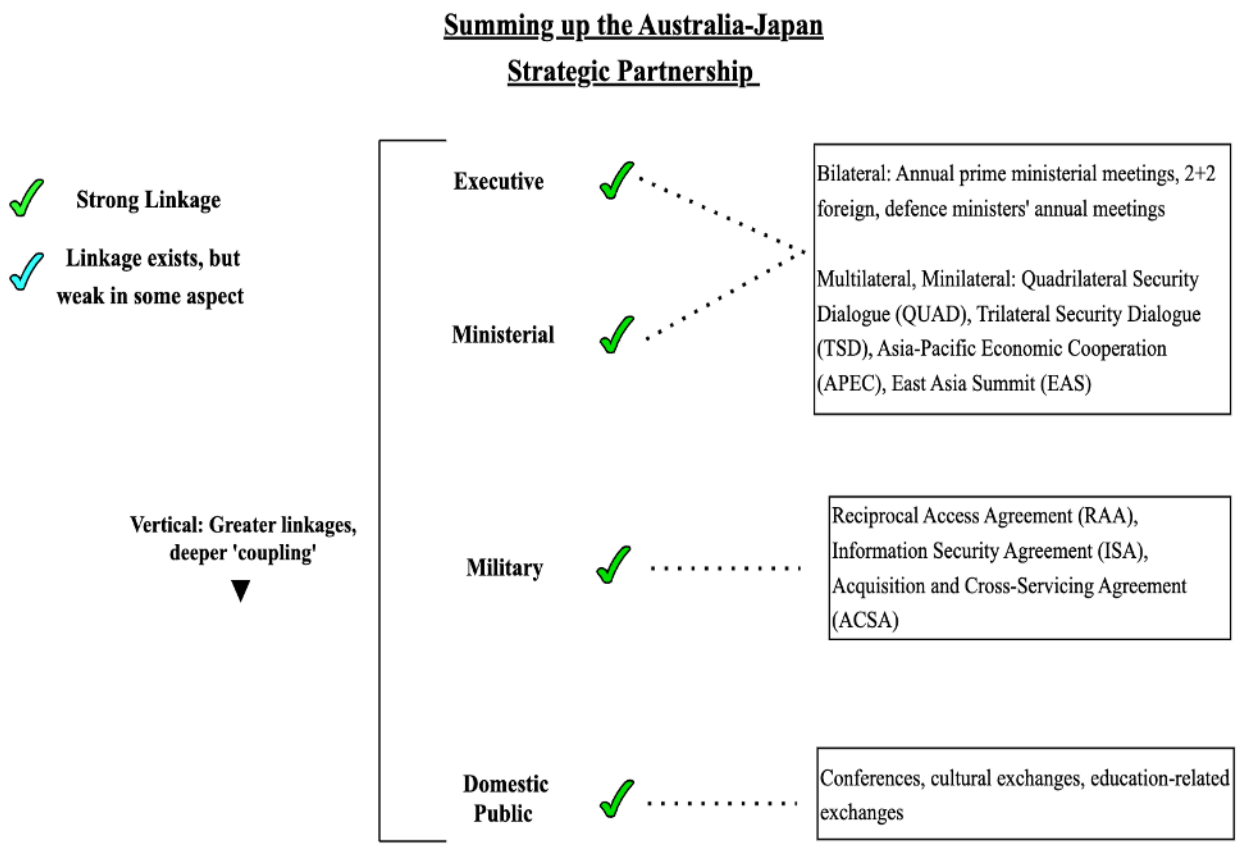

Figure 6.1: Vertical Linkages

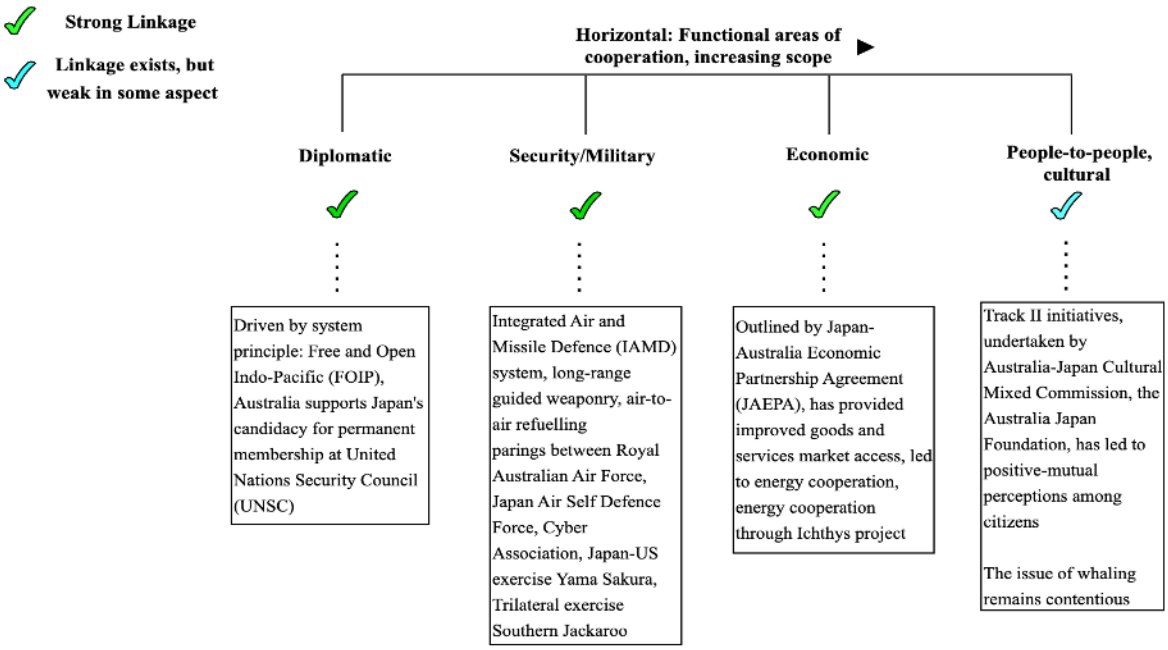

Figure 6.2: Horizontal Linkages

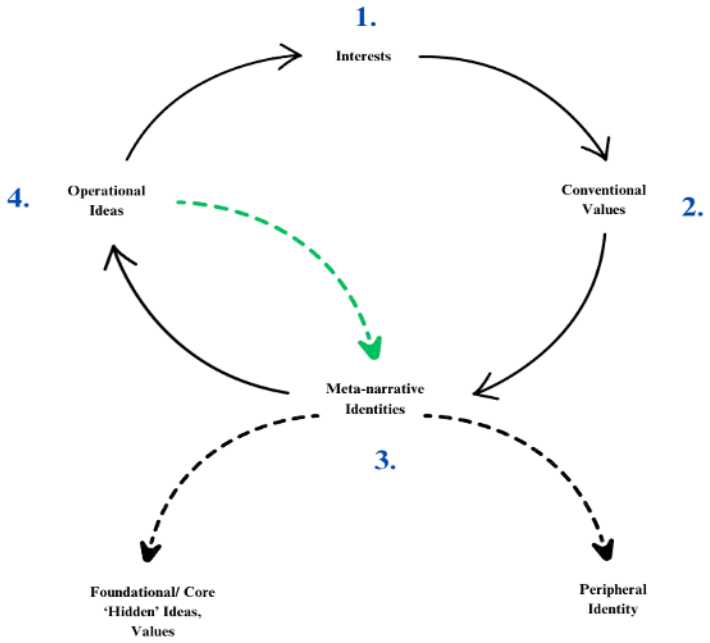

Figure 6.3: Interests-Values Interplay

1. Interests:

Australia's interests: Economic benefits, repositioning itself in Asia, preventing US disengagement in Indo-Pacific, increasing defence capabilities, democracy promotion

Japan's interests: Adapting to changing geopolitical realities, maintaining strategic engagement with the US, repositioning itself in Asia as an Indo-Pacific leader, increasing defence capabilities, regional stability promotion

2. Conventional values/principles for legitimising association: Rule of law, human rights, liberal democratic system of government and free-trade market economy, Lilliputian syndrome

3. Meta-narrative identities:

- **Australia:**
  - **Core:** Western nation, allegiance to the US, and the UK, Anglo-Saxon political tradition's foundational ideas of economic, political freedoms
  - **Peripheral** Asia identity
- **Japan:**
  - **Core:** Asian Otherness, self-defined cultural exclusivity, introverted desire to oppose Western cultures
  - **Peripheral:** Increasingly militarised state, aspiring Indo-Pacific leader

4. Operational Idea: Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)

7. THE INDIA-AUSTRALIA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP: ANALYSIS AND SCOPE FOR TRAJECTORY DEVELOPMENT BASED ON INDIA-RUSSIA AND AUSTRALIA-JAPAN STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

This chapter analyses the inception, implementation and evaluation phases of the India-Australia strategic partnership, illustrates its revitalisation, while explaining the role of interests-values interplay in the same. Through astute comparisons with and synthesis of indispensable insights from the India-Russia, Australia-Japan strategic relationships, this chapter aims to delineate a sustainable course of trajectory development for India-Australia strategic relations.

Inception: Revitalised Strategic Relations?

In the past, India-Australia have been hampered by three major hindrances that have prevented the consolidation of strategic relations. First, informed by the Cold War logic, India opted for non-alignment, while Australia, chose to embrace Britain, later the US, by signing the *ANZUS treaty* in 1951, and joining US-led alliances, such as the Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) (Brewster 2014, p. 67; Jaishankar 2020, pp. 4-5; Dang et. al 2022, p. 2).

A rather troublesome ramification of these contrasting approaches was the issue of Pakistan - as Pakistan joined US-alliance, it became Australia's "de facto co-ally", Australia extended its support to Pakistan on issues concerning India's security (Gopal, Ahlawat 2015, p. 211). Notably, it acted as the "main" mediator for the India-Pakistan Kashmir dispute through Australian High Court Justice, Sir Owen Dixon's appointment, whose mediatory attempts proved

unfruitful as India perceived his suggestions as infringing on its "powers of sovereignty" (Das 1950, p. 282; Naidu 2000, p. 17; Eggleston 1951, p. 8).

The second hindrance was caused by India's development of its nuclear abilities outside of the *Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).* Perceiving the treaty as "discriminatory" given its authorisation for nuclear-weapons states to pursue their nuclear aspirations, while denying the same to non-nuclear weapons states, India refused to be a signatory (Mahmood 1996, p. 96). Conversely, Australia not only supported the status quo, but also became a signatory in 1970 (Reynolds, Lee 2013, p. xxvii). Consequently, India's 1998 Pokhran II nuclear tests provoked a harsh response from the Australian Government - it condemned the tests by calling them "outrageous acts", broke off all "defence contacts" with India, imposed an enduring ban on the sale of uranium to India (Parliament of Australia 1999, p. 74; Gopal, Ahlawat 2015, pp. 211-212; Hall 2022b, p. 116). Third, the relationship lacked considerable economic substance. *Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper*, while acknowledging that the Indian economy was "expanding rapidly" and was comparatively "more open" than in its early years, pointed out that it was still not in the "tiger class" (DFAT 1997, p. 24). Indeed, India's protectionist trade policies aimed at economic autarky in the post-independence period, which despite reforms in 1990s, led to economic growth that only "slightly better" than before (Ahluwalia 2002, p. 67, cited in Panagariya 2004, p. 6), prevented Australia from strengthening its economic ties with India.

Nonetheless, the parallel emergence of India and China accelerated the creation of a genuine India-Australia strategic cooperation. Given India's stellar economic growth in 2000s, it gradually started transforming into what Rajamohan (2006, p. 17) has called a "swing state", i.e. a state having the opportunity to construct "Asian stability" and manage globalisation.

Aiming to normalise relations owing to the opening up of India's economy, its "economic renaissance", the former Australian Prime Minister John Howard sought a trade, economic partnership with India, and to that end, signed a *Trade and Economic Framework Agreement* in 2006, while stating that - in spite of having "links of law and language, commitment to democracy, shared experiences in two wars … somehow or other there was no sense of connection in the relationship" without a bolstered economic relationship (Howard 2006, cited in Gurry 2012, pp. 293-294). Unfortunately, the successor, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, due to his pro-China stance, somewhat overturned the increased engagement; under his leadership Australia reinforced its ban on Uranium sale to India, withdrew from the Quadrilateral Initiative (QI) in 2008, meant to foster strategic engagement, send a "tacit signal" of cooperation among India, Australia, Japan, the US as democracies to China (Shekhar 2010, pp. 403-404). To retaliate, India kept Australia out of its annual MALABAR naval exercise, held with the US and others (Hall 2022b, p. 116).

Temporarily bringing the two states together was China's assertive conduct post the 2008-2009 Global Financial Crisis (GFC) (Hall 2022b, p. 116). India started viewing China as a "major strategic threat" even though it had burgeoning economic relations with China at the time (Ganguly n.d., cited in Pan 2006). Similarly, in its *2009 Defence White Paper*, Australia acknowledged the need to alter its "strategic outlook", given the potential for "miscalculation" and confrontation among India, Russia, Japan, the US and China as rising and major powers in the Indo-Pacific region, erstwhile Asia-Pacific, as per Australia's usage (DFAT 2009, p. 16, p. 33). It also recognised the "underlying difference" in Australian and Chinese foreign policy priorities, as revealed by controversial investments made by state-owned Chinese investors acting policy-oriented and manipulating Australian market processes while prioritising the Chinese state's economic interests and distanced itself from China (Shekhar 2010, pp. 404;

Wilson 2011, p. 287). Consequently, notwithstanding their inability to resolve the Uranium sale deadlock, India and Australia elevated their bilateral relations to a "strategic partnership" in 2009.

Yet, the relationship was once again characterised as mutually apathetic primarily due to two major factors. The first factor was India's faltering economic development and, India and Australia's consequent inability to sign a CECA. During and after the GFC, foreign direct investment in India's stock markets fell dramatically, and bilateral trade stalled as exports grew slowly (Viswanathan 2010, pp. 9-10). Additionally, this decline continued to be steady as investment rate declined from 38% of GDP between 2008-2009, to 30% of the GDP between 2017-2018 (Nagaraj 2020). Resulting from India's failure to effectively pursue liberalisation through economic reforms, this decline in-turn engendered scepticism within Australian leadership about India's ability to harness its soft power for engaging with Asia, other global economic powerhouses (Gordon 2014, p. 208). The suspension of *CECA* talks after nine negotiation rounds not only prevented India and Australia from successfully signing a free trade agreement, but also affirmed India's status as being "too hard" (Palit 2022; Gordon 2014, p. 208) for Australia to invest in and further partner with strategically.

The second factor comprised of India and Australia's efforts at efforts at engaging China for reaping benefits in their own ways. In terms of India-China relations, economic ties between the two were employed to "manage" their longstanding 'asymmetric' rivalry due to territorial claims not only because of China's more vigorous "material power" but also because of its perception of India as a "lesser rival" than the US and Japan (Pardesi 2021, p. 45). Contrastingly, economic ties were the sole foundation of Australia-China relations. To enable smooth relations, Australia pragmatically compartmentalised strategic preferences and conventional values-related

incongruence on issues such as democracy promotion and human rights, while "never having to choose" between the US and China (Bisley 2018, p. 384, p. 397).

Subsequently, India and Australia have been prompted to 'revitalise', upgrade their strategic relations after more than a decade - through the *2020 CSP*- due their pragmatic perception of gradually converging traditional security, economic strategic interests. Indeed, this consistent with the analyses of India-Russia and Australia-Japan strategic partnerships' inception phases - as per which common interests, drove the states enter into a strategic partnership arrangement. In the former, shared interests in the domains defence and energy drove strategic collaboration; in the latter shared interests regarding economic stabilisation, regional security facilitated strategic cooperation. Similarly, the inception of India-Australia strategic partnership has also been aided by convergence of interests, but the intensity variation of the same has created the roadmap for cooperation - while the low-intensity of interest-based convergence made the partnership inconsistent, rendered it lifeless, the high-intensity of interest-based convergence has now propelled the partnership towards rejuvenation.

This 'high-intensity' of interest-based convergence is evident through changes in India and Australia's immediate, geopolitical environments and their ways of dealing with it through foreign policy. Both India and Australia have been grappling with severe security concerns related to China. For India, these concerns have been related to its long-standing border dispute over the Line Actual of Control (LAC) in the Aksai Chin region of Ladakh, most recently escalated through the 2022 India-China clash, through the deadly 2020 Galwan Valley clash, labelled as the "most perilous" clash between the India and China since the 1967 (Tirziu 2023; Pollock, Symon 2023). The clashes, perceived as China's attempts at "scything" the Indian

territory, have prompted India to engage in an “infrastructure-building competition” for bolstering its relative logistical capabilities during peace time (Bana 2022b; Tirziu 2023).

Security concerns have been triggered for Australia by the China’s signing of a security deal with the Solomon Islands - only about 2,000 kilometres away from north-eastern Australia - in response to Australia’s participation in the QUAD perceived as “stoking geopolitical rivalry” and is at present progressing towards a “policing implementation plan” (Al Jazeera 2023; Gan 2022). Furthermore, Australia has also raised its strong suspicions against China’s interference in Australian domestic politics, its involvement in cyberattacks against the country, along calling for an independent investigation on the role of China in the origins of COVID-19 pandemic (Gill 2023, p. 255).

These security concerns have in-turn compelled India and Australia to start de-coupling or ‘diversifying’ their respective economies from China, and to stop compartmentalising their security interests from their economic interests related to China. India has banned 232 China-linked websites and apps, while highlighting the risks associated with working for Chinese technology companies, shifted towards protectionism, substantiated by Atmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) and Make in India campaigns (Jiang 2023; Verma 2023, p. 165). Australia has also banned the Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei from 5G trials in the country, and while Australia and China have been able to somewhat remove “trade blockages” that were imposed by China in retaliation to Australia’s actions, Australia has expressed that it is only keen to “stabilise” and not “normalise” relations, given its belief that it’s no longer feasible for Australia to separate economic and strategic aspects (Gill 2023, p. 255; Tillett 2023).

Thereby, similar to the India-Russia and Australia-Japan strategic partnerships, from a classical realist perspective, the India-Australia strategic partnership exemplifies and reiterates Morgenthau's key concept of "interest defined as power" and the flexibility imbued within it - despite being indeterminate, ability of interests and power to foster political action through their content, usage depends upon the political context within which they are conceptualised through foreign policy formulation (Williams 2004, p. 640). Clearly, India and Australia experienced a simultaneous shift in perception of the aforementioned dynamics from "major issues" that had the potential to negatively affect their ideological, economic, and political well-being but could be resolved through diplomatic negotiations, to dangerous "vital issues" that have the potential to alter the world order, affecting their national prestige and associations as well as their ideological, economic, and political well-being (Nuechterlein 1976, pp. 249-250). Since the latter seriously endangered their survival, India and Australia sought help from each other to counter-balance Chinese economic vigour, while re-engaging the US in the region, to signal the high costs involved (Nuechterlein 1976, p. 249).

As per the constructivist perspective's assessment of India-Russia and Australia-Japan strategic partnerships' formation, what has charted the way for the above interest-based convergence, is India and Australia's use their shared conventional values for veiling the operationalisation of their meta-narrative identities. After gauging the need for further interest-based convergence, both India and Australia have legitimised their bolstered collaborative endeavours on the basis of being commonwealth countries sharing values of rule of law, pluralism owing to their Westminster-style democracies.

Simultaneously, to bridge the gap foundational ideas emerging from distinct, and not similar colonial experiences - while India wanted to break free from British imperial hierarchy, Australia

perceived Anglo-Saxon eminence, “colonial visions” as being important for global affairs, mankind’s overall progress Chacko, Davis 2017, p. 33 - both India and Australia have used their meta-narrative identities. India has utilised its ‘multi-aligned’ meta-narrative identity that allows it to steer clear of alliances, according to its core value of non-alignment, while seeking new partners (Brewster 2014, p. 67). Australia has similarly utilised its ‘Asia’ meta-narrative identity which enables it to reposition itself in Asia through partnerships with Asian states, while championing western liberal notions of progress, and particularly the US as a leader for global democratisation and liberalism (Chacko, Davis 2017, p. 33). Using these meta-narrative identities, India and Australia have used operational idea of FOIP (as in the Australia-Japan strategic partnership) as a system principle for resurrecting their bilateral and multilateral ties - by aiding their joint creation, sustenance of FOIP and signalling both the states’ increased cooperation with the US and Japan - other important democratic partners, especially within the QUAD.

Furthermore, because the FOIP is based on the Indo-Pacific construct, it serves to strengthen India and Australia's meta-narrative identity utilisation by giving them with implicit advantages while maintaining their core-value informing fundamental notions. The FOIP allows India to thrive as a global "great power" by making it the "centre of strategic gravity" in the Indo-Pacific and providing it with the strategic edge needed to strengthen issue-based coalitions and partnerships with "like-minded countries" aimed at countering China (He 2018, p. 14; Saha 2023). For Australia, the FOIP, and particularly India's acceptance of the same as a "like-minded" democracy, allows it to legitimately practise norm entrepreneurship for the establishment of conflict-preventing, crisis-mitigating norms to further develop (or legitimise) the rhetoric of a peaceful, Indo-Pacific through rules or engendering a'rules-based order' within the region (He 2018, p. 12).

Implementation

Initiatives taken to systematise Indo-Australian cooperation have been significantly enhanced, both in terms of frequency and intensity, signifying greater commitment towards the consolidation of the strategic partnership. As observed by Das (2023), the "institutionalisation of cooperation" between India and Australia has evolved into being "more strategic" than before. Rajagopalan (2023) also pointed out that there have been "transformational shifts in the bilateral and mini-lateral engagements" between the two states amid the Indo-Pacific's "rapidly changing geopolitical equations". The signing of the *2009 Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation*, a "non-binding declaration" designed to lay the groundwork for future security cooperation, paved way for the 2009 *strategic partnership*, the 2014 *Framework for Security Cooperation*, which laid out an "Action Plan" for a deeper defence and security relationship (Brewster 2015, p. 41) and finally the *2020 CSP*.

In terms of vertical, bilateral linkages, similar to the India-Russia and Australia-Japan strategic partnerships, the India-Australia strategic partnership has evolving institutional mechanisms across ministries, spanning from the highest to operational levels, to gradually couple the states together, enable cooperation on economy, trade, security, etc. These include the recently added to high-level visits, Annual Meetings of Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers' Framework Dialogue, upgraded 2020 2+2 dialogue - from Foreign and Defence Secretarial level to Ministerial level and pre-existing Defence Services Staff and Policy talks, Joint Trade & Commerce Ministerial Commission, Joint Working Groups and Australia-India Education Council (High Commission of India, Canberra 2023b).

However, before 2020, lack of mutual trust, political will obstructed maximum utilisation of institutional mechanisms, and regular, as in the India-Russia and Australia-Japan strategic

partnerships. For instance, since the relations seemed to have a “terminal date” with low “future payoffs” due to divergence in interests, high-level visits were irregular and asymmetric - before the signing of the *2020 CSP*, five Australian prime ministers had visited India, opposed to just one Indian prime ministerial visit by Modi in 2014 (Parkhe 1998, p. 422; Hall 2022b, p. 113). Up until 2014, the foreign ministerial visits were also sporadic, with only three visits from Indian foreign ministers and seven visits from Australian foreign ministers (Hall 2022b, p. 117). Nonetheless, a positive indication is that genuine efforts for rectification of this issue are now apparent - since 2020, five high-level visits have been undertaken by both India and Australia, including those by the respective Prime Ministers Modi and Albanese (High Commission of India, Canberra 2023a).

Multilateral, minilateral vertical linkages at present have been stronger than bilateral linkages. The most notable multilateral, vertical linkage that has been revived after Australia’ withdrawal from the QI in 2008, is India and Australia’s cooperation at the QUAD. Highlighted in Australia-Japan strategic partnership case study, the QUAD has been a platform that advocates for a FOIP in response to China’s rise. At the UN General Assembly (UNGA), both India and Australia have been advocates for expansion of the UNSC, and Australia has most recently reiterated its support for India’s candidature as a permanent member at the expanded UNSC, while demanding “constraints” on the use of Veto power by the permanent members (NDTV World 2023). At the 2023 G20 summit, hosted under India’s presidency, Australia supported India’s key priorities and its proposal to admit the African Union (AU) as a permanent member into the G20 (The Times of India 2023). Both are also members of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), launched in 2022 and comprising of four pillars - “Connected Economy, Resilient Economy, Clean Economy, and Fair Economy”- arguably a US initiative aimed at containing and isolating China (Jiang 2022, pp. 5-7). India and Australia continue to cooperate as

Five Interested Parties (FIP) members in the World Trade Organisation (WTO), and participated in the EAS, been members of the ASEAN Regional Forum, the Commonwealth, Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, Asia Pacific Partnership on Climate and Clean Development (High Commission of India, Canberra 2023b).

There are also horizontal linkages through the identification of functional areas of cooperation - security, defence, trade and economy, culture - that are being bolstered, but have not yet reached the level of advancement as in the India-Russia and Australia-Japan strategic partnerships. In terms of security and defence cooperation, with Australia seeming to "rediscover the Indian Ocean at roughly fifteen-year interval" following its all-time low relationship with India between 1998 and 2007, evolving cooperation in the maritime domain at present has been notable (Bateman et al. 2017, cited in Bateman, Brewster 2022, p. 276). Outlined under the *CSP* by the 2020 *Joint Declaration on a Shared Vision for Maritime Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific*, the two states have committed to increasing navy-to-navy interaction and reinforcing awareness in the Indo-Pacific marine domain through greater information sharing (MEA 2020). Both states are also keen to cooperate for the improvement of "civil maritime cooperation" between coast guard cooperation and law enforcement agencies, while pledging to protect the Indo-Pacific marine environment, reduce the effects of marine pollution and combat climate change (MEA 2020). Adding to that, India and Australia have also upgraded the Technical Agreement on White Shipping Information to the 2020 Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA) with the goal of improving military interoperability and collaborative capabilities (Pandey 2022).

In terms of trade and economic cooperation, India and Australia have entered into an interim economic agreement, i.e. the *2022 ECTA* to kick-start their attempts at consolidating economic diversification. Labelled as an "early harvest agreement" meant to quickly deepen and liberalise

goods and services' bilateral trade and help the two states in building a foundation for the resumption of the *CECA* negotiations, which were stalled indefinitely in 2015 (Dhar 2022). With the *CECA* negotiations now underway, with India and Australia's mutual expectation of concluding it by the end of 2023, the rationale behind bolstering the *ECTA* is based on the states' newfound economic complementarity facet (Ministry of Commerce & Industry 2022). It covers services and goods trade, facilitation, technical barriers and remedies, rules of origin, procedures for customs, institutional and legal issues, movement of natural persons, Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures (Ministry of Commerce & Industry 2022). As articulated by the Indian Union Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, the *ECTA* will help India gain access to "cheaper raw materials" for producing globally competitive, more affordable but high-quality goods, while exporting "finished goods" to Australia and furnish it with "huge amount of work and job opportunities in both goods and services, provided by Indian talent" (Ministry of Commerce & Industry 2022).

Cultural cooperation constituted by people-to-people ties and, interconnected with trade and economic cooperation has also been experiencing a boost in momentum in line with the ECTA's overarching objective. The increasing Indian diaspora in Australia, which as Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has mentioned is a "living bridge" between India and Australia, has been leveraged by India and Australia to enter into a "migration and mobility pact" (Kwan 2023; Press Trust of India 2023). It aims to increase labour mobility and ease the exchange of researchers, students, business people and graduates especially through the new S-5 visas for Australian citizens wanting to practice research in India (Kwan 2023). Both the states have also launched the Mobility Arrangement for Talented Early-professionals Scheme (MATES) specifically tailored for Indian graduates in areas such as FinTech, engineering, etc. with a scope for more areas in the future (Kwan 2023; Press Trust of India 2023).

Further to this, in addition to the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC), under the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, a central government body, Centre for Australia India Relations (CAIR) has been inaugurated in Sydney with an aim of coordinating exchanges between India and Australia by engaging with all levels of government, academia, industry and civil society, and disseminating information about opportunities, such as the *Maitri Scholars Program* to support high-achieving postgraduate students in STEM-related disciplines (CAIR, n.d.). Additional efforts are also being undertaken by the Australia India Institute (AII) and the Australia India Business Council (AIBC) for highlighting opportunities for businesses and civil society further economic and security through panel discussions, conferences and research.

Evaluation and Trajectory Development

In May 2023, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed that at this point, India-Australia relations are based on their mutual bond and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, told the Australian Parliament that "it is a relationship we need to invest in" (Jain 2023). Consequently, using Bergquist and Segil's performance indicators, i.e. perspectives, complementarity of goals, values/interests, along with insights uncovered from India-Russia and Australia-Japan strategic partnerships, the gaps and trajectory of the India-Australia strategic partnership can be gauged.

Evident through the evaluations of the India-Russia and Australia-Japan strategic partnerships, mutually favourable perceptions have been crucial in forging and retaining strategic relations, as they have gradually created a suitable or 'conducive' environment for incremental policy coordination and collaboration. Such an environment for both the cases has been constituted by favourable perceptions in terms of dependability and reliability, reinforced through cultural and

societal ties or people-to people linkages, indicating a significant stake of the 'innenpolitik' or the citizens in the consolidation of the partnerships.

Considering this standpoint, the sustainability of India-Australia strategic partnership's upwards trajectory at least partly depends on strong people-to-people linkages having the capacity to engender positive public opinion. Drawing on the 2022 ORF Foreign Policy Survey and the 2023 Lowy Institute Polls, Australia was second after Japan, with 30% of Indian respondents preferring to have Australia as India's most important partner in the upcoming years, while 58% of Australian respondents trust India as a partner (Pant et. al 2022, p. 41; Neelam 2023, p. 6). Indeed, factors affecting the Indian respondents' opinion on Australia as a partner can be the 2009 racially-motivated violence faced by Indian international students in Australia's cities, Sydney and Melbourne, but more plausibly so, Australia's prolonged travel ban, threat of persecution and penalisation against travellers from India (Dunn et. al 2011, p. 72; Jose 2021). Two other revelations are also notable - one, in the ORF survey, 85% Indian respondents continue to view Russia as India's "most trusted partner" and in the Lowy Institute Polls, while Australian respondents' trust in India has "more than doubled in 2022", 44% of them still view Japan as "Australia's best friend in Asia" and only 16% voted for India's similar status (Pant et. al 2022, p. 48; Neelam 2023, p. 8). This illustrates that while mutual positive perceptions are increasing between India and Australia leading to greater degrees of mutual trust, there is still a significant gap that exists between the trust inculcated for the strongest strategic partners having strong historical foundations that were set during pivotal times, i.e. Russia and Japan, and for each other.

Subsequently, in terms of complementarity of goals, there are indications of increased momentum, as well as significant preliminary impacts of collaborative initiatives taken by India

and Australia. Yet, gaps remain in the dimension and important lessons can be learnt from the India-Russia and Australia-Japan strategic partnerships. With regards to India and Australia's security-oriented goals premised on the system principle of their revitalised strategic partnership or the *CSP*, i.e. free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific, the first domain worth evaluating is the maritime domain. While the broad-based impact would take a while to be assessable, the signing of the 2020 *Joint Declaration on a Shared Vision for Maritime Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific* and on the lines of it, the MSLA, has already led to the Indian Navy and Australian Royal Navy's increased engagement through various exercises - AUSINDEX, Austra-Hind, Pitch-Black navy, infantry and air combat exercises, along with the MALABAR naval exercise, which Australia re-joined upon India's invitation, for the first time since it was kept out in 2007 (Pandey 2022; Singh 2023).

Adding to this, under their combined "maritime surveillance initiative" the Indian and Australian Air Forces undertook their first-ever "coordinated maritime patrols" in order to provide squadrons from both the forces with opportunities to hone their tactical skills and conduct information exchanges for strengthening combined capabilities (Australian Defence Force 2022). India and Australia's shared emphasis on the maritime domain is also evident on a multilateral level through the joint statement focusing on ensuring "peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific maritime domain, issued at the 2023 QUAD Leaders' Summit (The Guardian 2023). Deemed as a "thinly veiled swipe at China" (The Guardian 2023), India and Australia are indeed making use of the QUAD to not only reinforce their relationship with each other (and Japan), but to also keep the US engaged with the Indo-Pacific, while deterring China through counterbalancing.

The other important domain of cooperation has experienced growth in terms of bilateral cooperation is the cybersecurity domain, which has also been enshrined as a key concern under

the QUAD. At the Fifth India-Australia Cyber Policy Dialogue, India and Australia discussed strategic concerns, assessments of cyber threats, cooperative capacity-building in the Indo-Pacific through a Cyber Bootcamp, Tech and Cyber exchanges, latest telecommunications such as the 5G technology, along with exploring further private sector, academic collaboration, especially through the Australia-India Cyber and Critical Technology Partnership (Australian Government 2022).

The shared security-orientated goals and their fulfilment in the long run undoubtedly necessitates the creation of strong economic ties - reinforced through shared bilateral interests and agreements that help cement them formally - between India and Australia, especially as the two have struggled with doing so historically. With regards to India and Australia's goal of economic diversification, the *ECTA* has initially proven to be helpful, however a fully negotiated and ratified *CECA* remains important for the creation of a somewhat 'permanent interest' in each other's economies. According to the Australian Minister for Trade and Tourism (2023), the *ECTA* has allowed Australian businesses to benefit from the 85% lower tariffs on exports worth more than $12 billion. However, given that an expected outcome for India should also be an increase in the percentage of its exports to Australia, the fact that the export growth percentage decreased by 16.08% between the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-2022 and the FY 2022-2023, while the import growth percentage increased by 13.46% is concerning as it signals a trade deficit for India right from the outset of the recently revitalised economic relationship (Department of Commerce 2023).

With regards to complimentary interests/values, given that a rather sudden convergence of domestic and geopolitical interests, followed by the utilisation of shared conventional values for covering meta-narrative identities' operationalisation have to the revitalisation of Indo-

Australian strategic relations, both classical realist and constructivist standpoints warrant the creation of quasi-permanent interests. As discernible in the India-Russia and Australia-Japan strategic partnerships, quasi-permanent security and/or economic interests lock the partnering states together by giving rise to path dependency. A classical realist standpoint highlights that India and Australia have not only been chasing interests as power but have also been concurrently working to manage that power effectively using the 'Machiavelli way'. Their strategy for management of power is "varying as fortune and circumstances dictate", i.e. appropriately flexible for dealing with the geopolitical contingencies through material (economic and security gains) and non-material (temporary veil of values) while keeping a definite vision of long-term aims and values (Machiavelli 1961, p. 101; Skinner 1978, pp. 128–30, cited in Jansson 2018, p. 348, p. 353).

A constructivist standpoint provides a complimentary view by illustrating that India and Australia's foreign policies are intersubjective, cognitive conceptions of the "process in which identities and interests are endogenous to interaction" (Wendt 1992, p. 394, cited in Ogden 2018, p. 6), and are being harnessed to bolster the Machiavellian strategy above. Indeed, India usage of its 'multi-aligned' meta-narrative identity aimed at creating multiple strategic options without the need for convergence, and Australia usage of its 'Asia' identity, meant for strategically relocating Australia into the Indo-Pacific, without it having to give up on its foundational western ideas, have allowed both the states to materialise their converged interests on a surface level.

India and Australia appear to be paving the way for a strong partnership using the rhetoric of conventional values, while providing the breeding conditions for a 'reciprocity of silence' - a linchpin of India-Russia strategic partnership, as per which both India and Russia choose to

abstain from commenting on or take a neutral stance on contentious issues to prevent their relationship from getting strained or deemed as morally unjustifiable at home and abroad. Recently, on India-Canada fallout due to Canada's accusation on India for its involvement in the killing of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, chief of the Khalistan Tiger Force (KTF), a separatist outfit banned in India, Australia had cautious response (Chaudhury 2023; Parashar 2023). India's will to take up risks for protecting its "rising global clout", corroborating the increasing adjustment of its "strategic restraint" Australia's urgency to create stronger ties with India, (along with retaining commitments to Canada, its Five Eyes partner), compelled it to take a neutral position to protect its interests through the rhetoric of values (Parashar 2023; Wyeth 2023; Hall 2023). Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong simply stated that - as per Australia's principle position, it believes that the rule of law, sovereignty of countries should be "respected", and Australia's views on the matter reflect the same (Chaudhury 2023; Wyeth 2023). Similarly, in the case of the Russia-Ukraine war, Australia refrained from publicly condemning India's abstention from UN votes for punishing Russian aggression and in fact expressed its "understanding for India's position" (Dziedzic, Dias 2022).

Moving beyond the above surface-level trust-building following the revitalisation of relations, on a deeper level, India and Australia's adoption of meta-narrative identities has the potential to prove problematic for the sustenance of the current momentum and all-round consolidation of strategic relations. India's multi-aligned meta-narrative identity explains its receptiveness for Australia and revitalised strategic relations. Nonetheless, the long-term consolidation of relations is dependent on whether or not Australia is willing to create benefits for India - helping it in economically de-linking itself from China, increasing its security-related partnerships (required for exercising strategic autonomy) - without jeopardising its foundational idea of 'non-alignment'. Similarly, while Australia's Asia meta-narrative identity overtly pushed it to

strengthen relations with India, the cementing of relations relies on India's ability to provide similar benefits - particularly by helping it in diversifying its economy and ending its sole dependence on China - without endangering its Western foundational ideas.

Consequently, India and Australia's utilisation of their meta-narrative identities has forced them to take on approaches for economic diversification that are bound to be counterproductive for the consolidation of their economic relationship. While India's de-linking approach has included increased protectionism and self-reliance measures, Australia's obvious approach has been to strengthen economic ties with India through the *ECTA* and convince it to reconvene the *CECA* negotiations for extensive liberalisation of trade. Evidently, a lot of "sensitive areas" for India have been excluded from the *ECTA* - these include agriculture, dairy, intellectual property, state and labour owned enterprises, competition policy, designated monopolies, digital trade and medium and small enterprises (Sen 2022).

Yet, Australia's set to negotiate for inclusion many of the above areas in the *CECA*, believing that the *ECTA* under-achieves in relation to the interests of its exporters, while acknowledging that the negotiations are guaranteed to be hard for India since it has refrained from taking on related commitments in the FTAs it has with its pre-existing trading partners (Joint Standing Committee on Treaties 2022, p. 159; Sen 2022). Furthermore, thinking about creation of security-related options and benefits, especially by using their operational idea of the FOIP, India and Australia's bilateral efforts continue to be dwarfed by multilateralism and if relations are to develop further, the strategic partnership ought to have an "independent identity" instead of just being an "offshoot of the Quad" (Banerji 2022).

As a result, the revitalised India-Australia strategic partnership inevitably requires a 'cushion' or a contingency plan to help both the states in engendering quasi-permanent interests, beyond the economic domain. Such a plan can be charted by drawing on the important lessons provided the India-Russia and Australia-Japan strategic partnerships, as they accurately exemplify the necessity of interest-based co-constitution for enduring, resilient relations based on compromise and trust. Harnessing the India-Russia strategic partnership's experience for creation of security-oriented quasi-interests, India and Australia must focus on leveraging India's emerging abilities to innovate and manufacture for the evolution of joint defence research and development projects, instead of just having defence dialogues, exchanging information and coordinating policies on regional affairs as per the 2009 *Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation*.

Emphasised within Australia's *India Economic Strategy to 2035* – "Australia has much to gain from engaging with India in science and innovation… Pairing Australia's research and development base with India's scale and record of frugal innovation could be a productive partnership" (Varghese 2018, p. 274). As evident in the India-Russia strategic partnership, having strong security relationship that is not just about having a 'buyer-seller' approach to military technical cooperation and instead about mutual development of defence abilities has helped both India and Russia in transcending beyond short-term economic gains and navigating through the rather weak, volatile economic facet of their partnership with trust, rigour and resilience. Indeed, such can be the case for India-Australia strategic partnership in the face of a difficult to negotiate *CECA*.

Next, based on the Australia-Japan strategic partnership, another way of providing a security-orientated impetus for solidification of India-Australia strategic relations is by moving beyond

the MLSA towards signing an RAA. In addition to opening avenues for smoother defence technology sharing, joint development, further enhanced military interoperability the RAA reinforces Australia and Japan's ability to systematically deter shared security challenges in the region, while "emphatically" steering clear from representing the "consummation of alliance" by excluding any legally binding clause that necessitates "mutual military assistance" encompassing the employment of force in specific situations (Wilkins 2022). Thinking about the RAA's viability for India and Australia, not only does the strategic intent, core purpose of an RAA sit right with India's urge to maintain its strategic autonomy while gaining a plethora of like-minded partners, it also provides Australia with an opportunity to further substantiate its 'Asia identity'. More specifically, with regards to the inclusion of greater Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) aspect in the Australia-Japan RAA, the signing of an India-Australia RAA including a similar aspect would enable both the states to combine and fortify their aims under the Maritime Cooperation Declaration and MLSA for building a shared framework towards maritime risk-taking on basis of increased surveillance and implementation capabilities, in turn contributing to their FOIP approaches.

Further to this, given that people-to-people links in general are a way to build, sustain a strong, mutually advantageous bilateral relationship imbued with trust, and in the case of India and Australia the strongest link between the states, they need to be developed further to reduce the gap in mutual positive perceptions. While various measures to leverage Indian diaspora in Australia and increase the mobility of Indian students to Australia have been undertaken on the lines of the *ECTA*, much needs to be done to develop complete understanding of Indian and Australian cultures. The imperativeness of having strong people-to-people linkages is best exemplified by the utilisation of societal and cultural initiatives in the India-Russia strategic partnership. Like the initiatives taken by India and Russia to ensure that people-to-people links

effectively multiply collaboration, Indian and Australian foreign ministries can form a Joint Working Group on culture, which could effectively engage NGOs in both the states for conducting public diplomacy sessions, information dissemination drives, conferences, panels that highlight the historical events that shaped Indian and Australian foreign policy traditions. The same can also be done to spread awareness about Indian music and ayurveda. Adding to that, both can also introduce the practice of 'reciprocal festivals', as in the India-Russia strategic partnership, in terms of not just film festivals celebrating Indian films, for instance, the Indian Film Festival of Melbourne, but also film festivals celebrating "India-centric Australian film content" to aid the comprehension of the Indian screen sector in equiveillance to British and Hollywood films (Sharma 2022, p. 27).

With regards to education, the most important aspect of the India-Australia strategic partnership, both India-Russia and Australia-Japan strategic partnerships impart crucial insights. Apart from the obvious need to further enhance university-led research collaborations, given that Australian universities have only recently renewed 450 "formal partnerships" with Indian Universities, through the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) (in comparison to 1,700 "formal cooperation agreements" with Chinese universities) (Universities Australia 2023; Coade 2022), the scope of the current SVCC, in tandem with the CAIR, can be broadened. This can be done by boosting its ability to function as a facilitating body; by actively including it in international education deliberations, giving it the power to lead cultural exchanges, as with the Australia-Japan Cultural Mixed Commission, and to teach a wide of Indian languages such as Gujarati, Marathi, Urdu, Sanskrit, in collaboration with Australian universities, akin to India-Russia cultural collaboration through the JNCC.

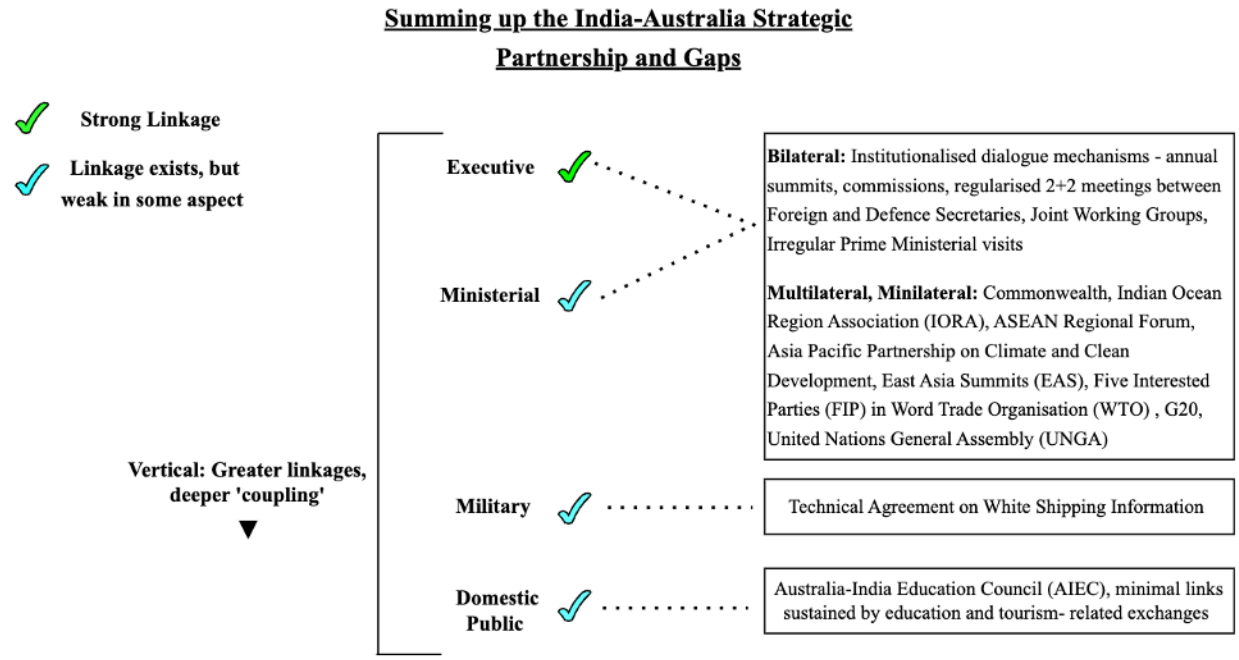

Figure 7.1.1: Vertical Linkages Before 2020

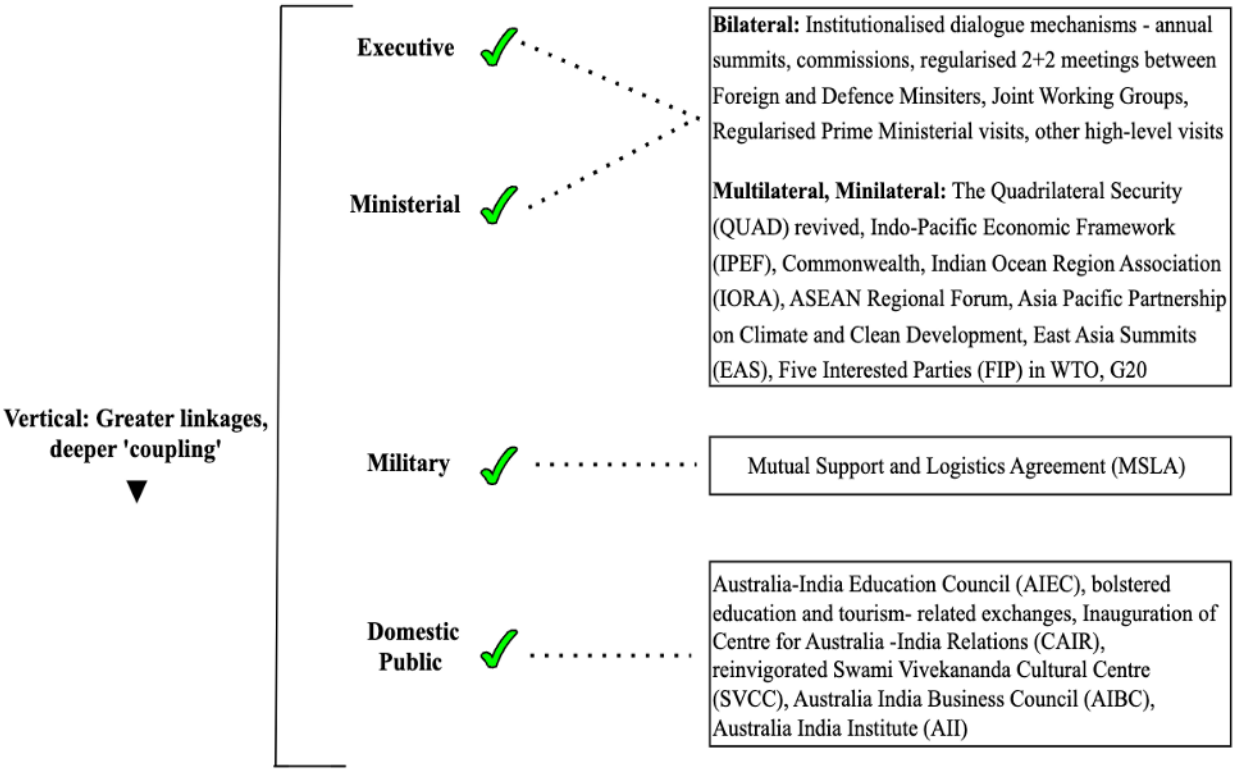

Figure 7.1.2: Vertical Linkages After 2020

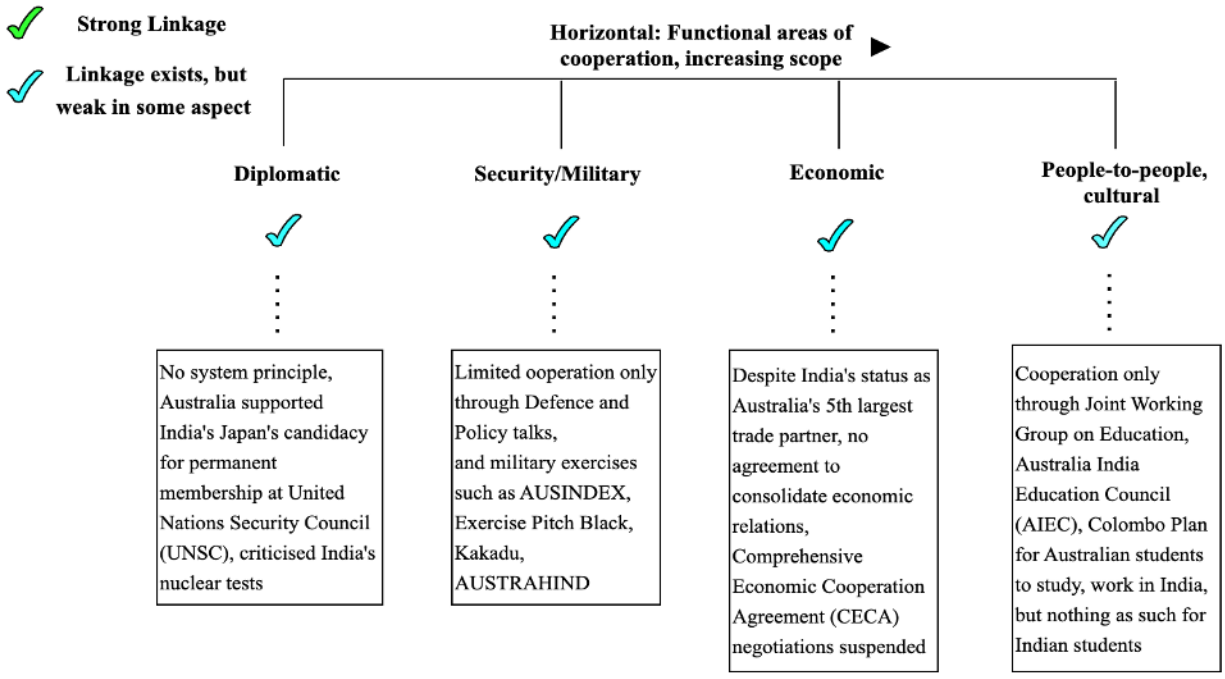

Figure 7.2.1: Horizontal Linkages Before 2020

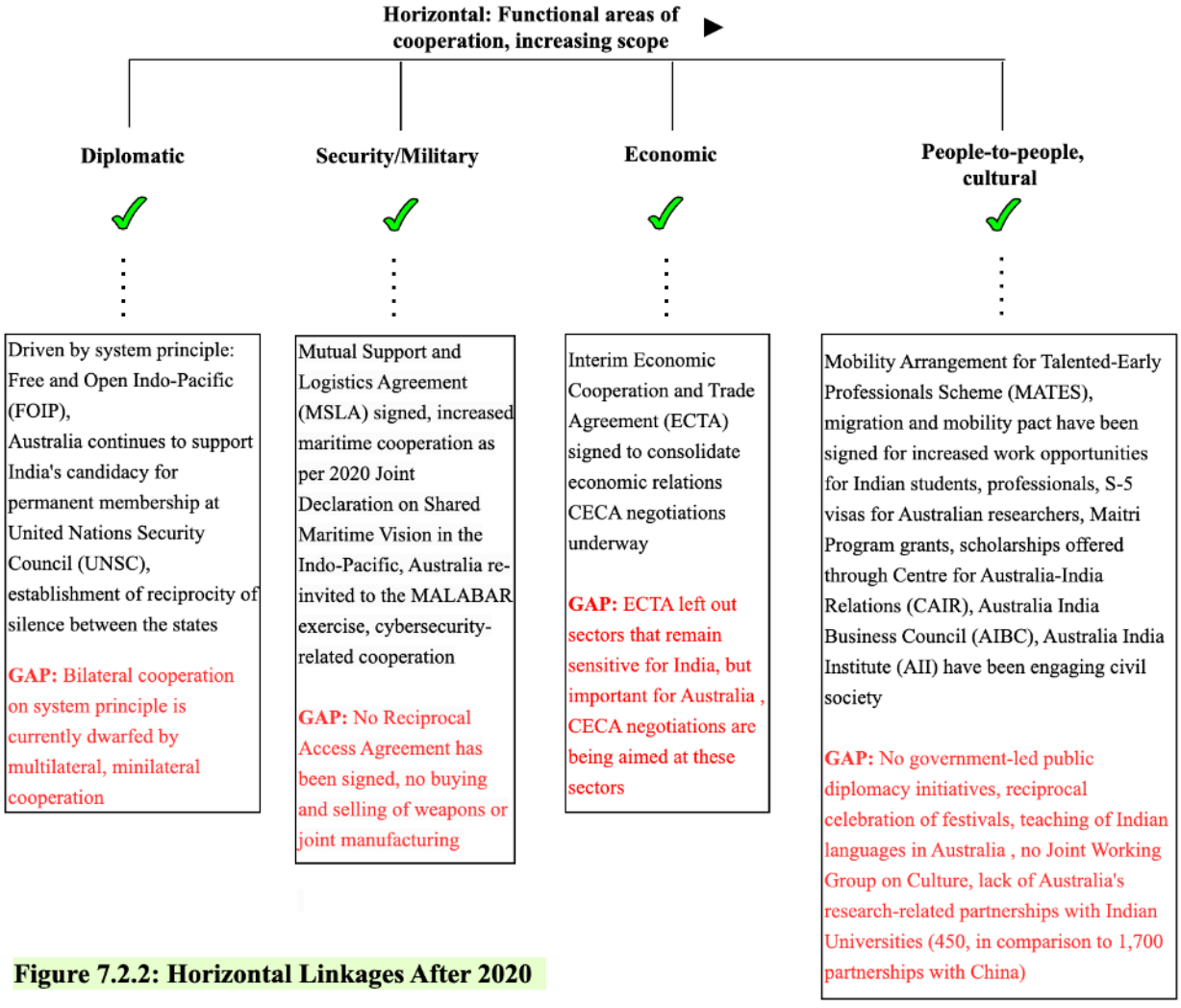

Figure 7.2.2: Horizontal Linkages After 2020

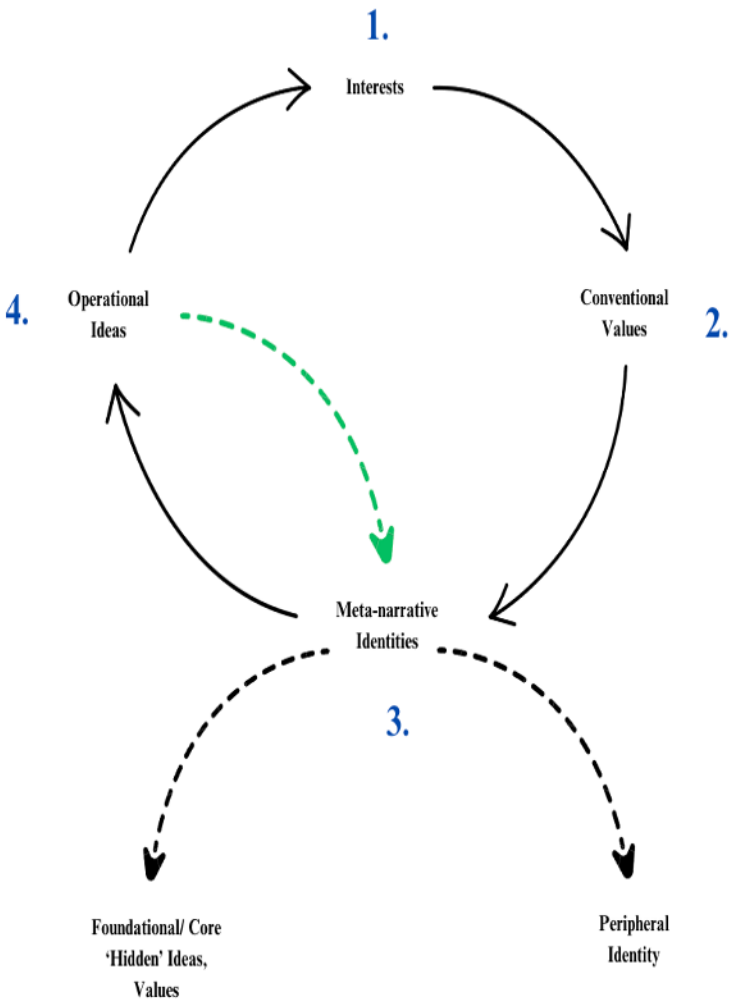

Figure 7.3: Interests-Values Interplay

1. Interests:

India's interests: Need for increased influence in IOR, economic benefits through diversification, deterring China by increasing its strategic options, increasing defence capabilities

Australia's interests: Economic benefits through diversification, repositioning itself in Asia, preventing US disengagement in Indo-Pacific, increasing defence capabilities, deterring China, democracy promotion

2. Conventional values/principles for legitimising association: Rule of law, democracy, pluralism, common historical experiences

3. Meta-narrative identities:

- India:
  - Core: Non-aligned
  - Peripheral: Multi-aligned

- Australia:
  - Core: Western nation, allegiance to the US, and the UK, Anglo-Saxon political tradition's foundational ideas of economic, political freedoms
  - Peripheral Asia identity

4. Operational Idea: Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)

8. CONCLUSION

All in all, the juxtaposition of India-Australia strategic partnership's interests-values interplay analysis, along with the overall examination of its inception, implementation and evaluation phases, with similar analyses of the India-Russia, Australia-Japan strategic partnerships, has not only revealed that India and Australia have used their meta-narrative identities for revitalising their relationship, but has also illustrated the necessity of creating quasi-permanent interests for their long-term interest-based co-constitution. At the core of India's meta-narrative identity is its 'hidden' core value of non-alignment, based on its foundational idea of discrediting the colonial claim of India needing the empire's paternalistic leadership due its primitive nature - This idea pushes it seek equality in terms of mutual benefit and strategic autonomy - also manifested as protectionist trading policies. Its 'visible' peripheral identity is constituted by 'multi-alignment', which allows it to maximise its strategic options by steadily advancing convergences through partnerships (not alliances), while remaining non-aligned. Australia's hidden core values, is characterised by economic, political freedoms premised upon its colonial experience as a 'settler-colony', viewing Anglo-Saxon illustriousness as important for championing democracy, liberalism globally aiding development. As a result, Australia not only values security alliances, especially those tied to its historical ally, the US, but also promotes western liberal notions of progress, particularly a market economy centred around free trade.

The clash in their respective 'hidden' core values, identities is imminent and is evidenced by the omission of India's sensitive sectors from the *ECTA*, and Australia deliberate push for opening up those sectors through the *CECA*. Furthermore, while the relationship is rapidly developing, bilateral ties have continued to be dwarfed by multilateral, minilateral ties. What this means is that if Australia continues to push India to liberalise its economy in line with its Western

orientation, i.e. removal of all trade-related barriers, and if India continues to protect its sensitive sectors in line with its protectionist tendencies, thereby preventing Australia from maximising its economic benefits imperative for its economic diversification, the relationship is bound to be caught up in a deadlock.

Herein, India-Russia and Australia-Japan strategic partnerships have provided valuable insights into how India and Australia might navigate through complex interplay of interests and values for creating a long-term, resilient partnership. Drawing on India-Russia strategic partnership, India and Australia should leverage India's evolving innovation and manufacturing abilities to lead joint defence research and development projects, as opposed to just having defence-related dialogues. Additionally, given that people-to-people linkages lead to positive mutual perceptions and thereby legitimise pursuit of strategic endeavours, India and Australia should create a Joint Working Group on culture to facilitate public diplomacy initiatives, reciprocal celebration of festivals, teaching of Indian languages, yoga, ayurveda, and festivals which highlight India-centric Australian film content. This would lead to greater understanding in the public of the similarities, differences that inform both the states foreign policy outlooks. The Australia-Japan strategic partnership elucidates that India and Australia should sign an RAA which excludes any legally binding clause on mutual miliary assistance - doing so would open avenues for India and Australia's smoother military technical cooperation, joint development and enhance military interoperability, while helping India in maintaining its strategic autonomy, and Australia in augmenting, reiterating its 'Asia' identity. Indeed, these insights if implemented would act as 'cushions' should India and Australia fail in successfully negotiating, signing the *CECA*.

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