



## Power Politics in South Asia: The Role of Economic Dependency, Military Capability, and External Influence

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### ABSTRACT

This paper specializes in the politics of electricity in South Asia via way of reading the case have a look at evaluation of Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh qualitatively and comparatively. Based on semi-dependent interviews with ten or twelve worldwide family members specialists, coverage analysts, and students recruited with the aid of purposive sampling, in addition to systematic exploitation of number one and secondary reassets inclusive of coverage documents, strategic reports, and educational publications, the take a look at questions the aggregate of financial dependency, army capability, and outside have an impact on withinside the formation of local energy family members. Thematic and comparative evaluation as interpreted thru theoretical views of structural realism and dependency idea suggests that South Asia accommodates of a particularly stratified nearby order in which the hegemonic energy of India and the Chinese strategic penetration, American recalibration, and smaller country vulnerability asymmetry coexist. The effects display that monetary dependency isn't always handiest a structural barrier to nation autonomy, however additionally a strategic device utilized by the dominant powers; that navy abilities disparities are the premise of the safety dilemmas and fingers race procedures that destabilize the region; and that the outside have an impact on, basically via way of China and the United States, substantially adjustments the stability of strength in a way that complicates nearby-degree analyses. The studies provides novel comparative and empirically-supported know-how to the literature on South Asian global family members and progresses the particular coverage hints on the steadiness of the region.

### Introduction

South Asia is at a paradoxical intersection of the company of globalwide politics: the area of massive demographic weight, nuclear-armed countries, and actively evolved financial trends, however the one mired in steady instability, unresolved territorial claims, and especially asymmetrical strength distributions that obstruct cooperation and gas struggle. The electricity politics in South Asia can not be perceived and analyzed in a single analytical attitude simplest. They are straight away a end result of the cloth potential of the states, monetary resources, army establishments, and technological assets, the structural family members of the dependency of weaker states on more potent ones, and the sizeable presence of the outside forces, the hobby of which withinside the vicinity has best elevated with the aggravation of Sino-American strategic competition withinside the twenty-first century (Ganguly and Thompson, 2017). These dynamics aren't simply that that is found out in faculty. It is a circumstance to knowledge a number of the maximum a long way accomplishing protection and improvement problems of the present day worldwide order.

The South Asian politics of electricity may be studied through a triangular prism of Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh, and it could be taken into consideration mainly educational. These 3 states have not unusual place origins of colonization, geographical closeness, and historic involvement, however they may be positioned in a considerably distinctive contrasting positions within the local strength shape. India, the nation within the location that's the most powerful kingdom through almost all conventional measures GDP, navy spending, population, nuclear armory, and affect at the worldwide members of the family, is capable of impose a form of structural hegemony on its pals which has a giant effect on the selection of overseas rules and the developmental paths of the countries (Paul, 2010). Pakistan has been trapped in an prolonged strategic warfare with India and plagued through years of monetary fragility and has sought a counterbalancing coverage primarily based totally on its courting with China and its historical strategic courting with america. The least evolved and maximum economically prone of 3, Bangladesh manages its reliance on India, China and worldwide economic establishments over a studied strategic ambiguity that conceals a few underlying structural vulnerabilities.

The cutting-edge educational frame on South Asian worldwide family members could be very expansive even though with a few particular gaps. The structural realist faculty of notion has given a whole lot interest to the India-Pakistan dyad, specially the nuclear deterrence dynamic, Kashmir battle, and the safety catch 22 situation dynamic (Kapur, 2007; Tellis, 2016). Although analytically defensible because the center of the India-Pakistan competition is imperative to South Asian protection, this hobby has brought about the comparative forget of Bangladesh and different smaller South Asian states as items of comparative evaluation. Moreover, the literature has been lagging in the back of to include the transformative nature of the potentialities of the monetary and strategic ascent of China to the nearby order, specially the Belt and Road Initiative, in remodeling the monetary dependency relationships all through the place (Hillman, 2020). The elevated interaction of South Asian energy politics with the broader forces of Sino-American strategic contention is every other factor that has now no longer been nicely meditated within the contemporary local schemata.

The proposed look at aimed to fill-in such gaps through carrying out a qualitative, comparative case take a look at studies on Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh within the framework of semi-dependent interviews and nearby specialists and systematic assessment of number one and secondary documentary materials. The theoretical method become primarily based totally on structural realism, namely, the structural concept of Waltz (1979) and its in addition gildings through Mearsheimer (2001) and Paul (2010) in addition to at the dependency concept formulated within the way of life of the global political economic system (Cardoso and Faletto, 1979; Amin, 2009). This -stage theoretical shape allowed analyzing to take into account each the navy-strategic and the political-financial components of the South Asian electricity politics simultaneously, to mirror the interplay of the difficult electricity and the structural monetary inferiority that defines the global family members of the area.

Four essential studies questions guided the have a look at; How do monetary dependency relationships impact the overseas coverage choice and strategic conduct of Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh? How does navy functionality differentials prepare the safety surroundings and the energy courting of South Asia? What position do outside powers, on this case, China and america play in South Asia and what are the consequences on nearby order? Which theoretical frameworks nice describe the complexity of the electricity politics of the current South Asian nearby device? These questions and their empirical and analytical solutions are the primary contribution of the have a look at to the South Asian global family members scholarship.

## **Literature Review**

### **Theoretical Approaches Structural Realism and Dependency Theory**

The theoretical foundations of the given have a look at are primarily based totally on parallel traditions within the global family members and worldwide political economic system. The first is structural realism, whose roots pass lower back to the seminal reformulation of classical realism with the aid of using Waltz (1979), the area of the number one determinants of kingdom conduct isn't always the traits or intentions of the character states, however the anarchic shape of the worldwide gadget. In an anarchic scenario, that is, within the state of affairs wherein there may be no advanced authority to settle conflicts and implement treaties, states can be preoccupied with their safety and survival, which ends up within the standard distribution of energy, armament competition, and strategic opposition. The unfold of fabric skills among the states is the important thing structural variable, which defines the region of every nation within the global hierarchy and defines its overseas coverage possibilities primarily based totally on it.

The offensive realist model of structural principle as evolved via way of means of Mearsheimer (2001) become that states are greater than inquisitive about survival, however in maximizing their relative strength, which creates a herbal hegemonic opposition pressure in multipolar structures. Paul (2010) has carried out this perception to South Asia with the aid of using formulating a idea of the uneven nearby device that explains the orders which might be marked via way of means of one

dominant local electricity, the Indian nation, and lots of weaker states with extraordinary resistance and lodging competencies. According to Paul, the strategic moves of South Asian states can in no way be comprehended outdoor of this asymmetry that generates structural incentives to the smaller states to locate extra-nearby balancing companions and the dominant nation to deter the formation of these companions.

The dependency principle, that's a manufactured from the Latin American structural culture and became later evolved withinside the world-structures concept (Wallerstein, 2004), is a further angle to the evaluation of the political economic system of South Asian energy members of the family. Whereas realism is inquisitive about army-strategic competition, the dependency idea attracts the analytical hobby to the structural monetary relationships binding the peripheral and semi-peripheral states to the middle economies, proscribing their improvement alternatives and perpetuating the styles of subordination that may be as consequential as real navy coercion. In a diffused clarification of structured improvement, Cardoso and Faletto (1979) reasoned that financial dependency did now no longer must be the alternative of monetary boom however might have an effect on the character of boom and its distributional consequences in a way that fosters structural vulnerability. In the case of South Asia, this version sheds mild on how India financial family members with its buddies, the infrastructure-associated lending of China and the phrases and situations of IMF and World Bank financing all shape the political economic system of the local dependence.

A wide variety of researchers have superior arguments that theoretical procedures to the South Asian politics of strength need to be included with a realist-political economic system technique. A complicated realism turned into advised with the aid of using Pant (2017), which protected monetary interdependence, home political restrictions, and ideological motives similarly to the structural elements that Waltz and Mearsheimer centered on. Ganguly and Thompson (2017) additionally held a comparable view that the India-Pakistan contention can not be sufficiently attributed to the structural thing and have to contain the historic grievances, identification politics, and countrywide home political actors. These pluralist theoretical orientations guided the analytical technique of the cutting-edge studies, which did now no longer see structural realism and dependency concept instead however as a complementary technique.

### **Regional Power and Economic Dependency**

The South Asian monetary dependency works in numerous routes- alternate asymmetries, economic flows, infrastructure financing and developmental assistance- which all integrate to prepare the political economies of smaller states in a manner that limits their autonomy with reference to each India and out of doors influences. The monetary imperialism of India over its associates isn't always most effective quantitative in phrases of its GDP, approximately eighty percentage of the whole South Asian nearby product, however structural, that's expressed in lopsided change members of the family, infrastructural dependencies, and financial leverage as an device of overseas coverage (Malone et al., 2015).

These dynamics may be explained, mainly with regards to the connection among Bangladesh and India. The export-pushed garment area which constitutes approximately eighty consistent with cent of the export sales in Bangladesh is intently related to the local in addition to international cost chains wherein intermediaries in India are significantly influential (Rashid, 2022). The domination of the upstream river structures in India, specially the Ganges and Teesta rivers, whose water flows into Bangladesh below Indian dams and barrages, bureaucracy a brand new aircraft of structural dependency with profound consequences to the rural area and water protection of Bangladesh. The Ganges Water Treaty negotiation of 1996 and the prolonged failure to seal a comparable treaty at the Teesta is one instance of the way the structural benefit of India may be transformed right into a negotiating asymmetry in bilateral bargaining.

The monetary dependence of Pakistan has historically been geared closer to america and greater lately China in one of these way that mirrors its strategic region as a counter-degree to India. A principal initiative of the Belt and Road Initiative via way of means of China, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which involves commitments of approximately sixty two billion bucks of funding in Pakistani infrastructure, electricity and improvement of industries, has spawned a variety of scholarly dialogue concerning the character and outcomes of the deepening of the connection among China and Pakistan concerning monetary matters (Small, 2015; Hussain, By counting on dependency concept fashions, critics have opined that the CPEC financing fashions in phrases of Chinese nation-owned enterprises, loans which are in renminbi, and repatriation preparations which can be favorable to Chinese traders shape new dependencies that restrict the sovereign monetary selection-making of Pakistan. Advocates reply that CPEC is a strategic initiative to clear up the long-time period infrastructure scarcity in Pakistan and diversify financial relationships with the Western-managed worldwide monetary organizations.

### **Military Capability and Security Dynamics**

The maximum apparent and direct implication of strength asymmetry among South Asia is army functionality differentials. The Indian protection price range of approximately eighty one billion bucks in financial 12 months 2023-24 is a whole lot

large than the budgets of its South Asian associates and the traditional army electricity of India is overwhelming to all states within the place besides China. However, the nuclear deterrence makes the India-Pakistan navy equilibrium even extra intricate, because it creates a strategic stability on the existential danger despite the traditional asymmetry (Narang, 2014). The nuclear functionality and coverage of credible minimal deterrence in Pakistan, primarily based totally at the danger to apply nuclear guns in retaliation in case of traditional navy attack, had been nuclear strategists to research as a type of equalizing which partly offsets the traditional superiority of India, in addition to poses a huge hazard of escalation (Basrur, 2008).

The strategic evaluation of South Asian nuclear postures with the aid of using Narang (2014) found out that the approach of uneven escalation followed with the aid of using Pakistan turned into mainly essential to the stableness within the location. Pakistan targets at deterring the Indian technique of the Cold Start traditional navy doctrine of battlefield incursions deployed under the nuclear threshold with the aid of using retaining a posture that means decrease nuclear thresholds than India, along with improvement of tactical nuclear guns. Nuclear opposition has led to each states foaming on the mouth to broaden greater complicated and sundry nuclear arsenals, which has brought about a conventional safety predicament in which one aspect actions to enhance its deterrence capabilities, that's taken into consideration offensive through the other, and the end result is the improvement of an arms race.

The army stance of Bangladesh is knowledgeable through the structural place of the small nation beneath the shadow of Indian hegemony. Bangladesh has a instead humble navy force, whose middle mandates are inner safety, United Nations peacekeeping missions, wherein Bangladesh has continually ranked excessive a few of the exceptional participants within the world, and making sure that the country wide territorial integrity is upheld within the place wherein the asymmetry and nuclear shadow inhibits open warfare. The growing infiltration of Chinese navy assist and palms income has encouraged the strategic calculus of Bangladesh because it gives a brand new road of army gadget and diplomatic useful resource on the price of subjecting Bangladesh to the geopolitical pressure of Chinese local contention with India.

#### **Externality: The Great Power Competition, China, and the US.**

The presence of out of doors powers in South Asian politics has been an indicator of South Asian worldwide members of the family on the grounds that independence, that is indicative of the strategic significance of South Asia because the area of touch among continental and maritime projections of energy. South Asia performed a area of superpower competition at some point of the Cold War in which the US allied on the whole with Pakistan and the Soviet Union evolved a strategic courting with India-relationships that created institutional and normative legacies within the strategic tradition of each countries (Cohen, 2013). The restructuring of those relationships within the post-Cold War era, which has been increased through the liberalization of the Indian economy, the 2001 US-Pakistan strategic alliance within the War on Terror, and the evolution of China right into a international financial and army superpower, has created a greater complex and risky outside impact surroundings.

The growing have an effect on of China in South Asia is the maximum considerable structural transformation within the outside affect surroundings of the place within the ultimate 20 years. The Belt and Road Initiative in China has constructed great infrastructural and monetary connections with almost all South Asian states, producing monetary dependencies within the shape of diplomatic strength and, in positive instances, protection alliances. In Pakistan, the CPEC has taken the bilateral dating to the following degree wherein each governments outline it as an all-climate strategic cooperative partnership, which incorporates navy cooperation, intelligence sharing, and switch of protection era in addition to monetary funding (Small, 2015). Chinese funding in Padma Bridge infrastructure projects, and sale of hands to frigates and submarines in Bangladesh has evolved a dating that Bangladesh has tended to nurture with out traumatic India.

The strategic method of the USA towards South Asia has been re-calibrated within the ultimate ten years by and large due to the identity of China as a systemic competitor and the following advertising of India as a strategic accomplice of extensive weight. The casual manner of institutionalization of the US-India strategic dating with the assist of the Defense Technology and Trade Initiative, the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement, the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement, and the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement has installed the de facto protection partnership of sizable depth, even with out the formal alliance treaty (Pant, 2017). This has been offset via way of means of a next cooling within the US-Pakistan courting, specially after the invention of the presence of Osama bin Laden in Abbottabad in 2011 and the withdrawal of US coalition aid funding. This converting American calculus is a part of the purpose why Pakistan is turning into increasingly more depending on China as its strategic patron.

## **Geographical Institutions and Institutional Limits to Co-operation**

In 1985, The South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) changed into shaped as a local monetary and political integration model, loosely primarily based totally at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. Its fulfillment in exercise has been, however, appreciably restricted via way of means of the India-Pakistan competition, which has crippled the institutional equipment of the organisation time and time once more and made the established order of the significant local exchange integration or collaborative protection preparations impossible (Malone et al., 2015). SAARC summits were boycotted, behind schedule or even cancelled with steady frequency and formal exchange agreements made with the aid of using the company have simplest given partial effects in regard to monetary integration, because it became to start with proposed to be. South Asian regionalism pupils have defined SAARC as an institutional manifestation of structural constraints to local cooperation that electricity asymmetry and strategic competition location on local cooperation, instead of being a actual device of nearby governance.

The relative fulfillment of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), which includes Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal and Bhutan, however now no longer Pakistan, has been visible through a few commentators as a demonstration of Indian choice of regionalism that marginalizes Pakistan and strengthens its centrality. The upward thrust of BIMSTEC as an operational lively opportunity to SAARC indicates how the structural dominance of India can have an effect on the institutional structure of South Asian regionalism, to appoint multilateral systems as an tool of energy attention however now no longer simply inclusive South Asian regionalism.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design and Epistemological Orientation**

The case examine layout used on this look at became a qualitative comparative case observe that mentioned the dynamics of strength politics in South Asia with the aid of using evaluating 3 country wide instances of Pakistan, India and Bangladesh and their dynamics of relationships. The preference of the comparative case examine technique because the maximum appropriate one to fulfill the studies goals allowed carrying out the comparative evaluation of the instances keeping the contextual intensity and historic specificity, that's the distinction among qualitative inquiry and the variable-targeted evaluation (Yin, 2018). The studies turned into carried out withinside the interpretivist epistemological paradigm because it recognizes that the political realities of South Asian strength relationships aren't a priori however are produced, fought over and reproduced via the discursive and cloth practices of kingdom and non-kingdom actors whose interpretation is in itself analytically crucial facts.

It changed into primarily based totally at the comparative layout, which depended on the approach of dependent, targeted assessment (George and Bennett, 2005), which imposed a fixed of analytical questions, which had been centered on financial dependency, navy functionality, and outside have an effect on, at the 3 instances of the international locations. This approach allowed carrying out a scientific contrast and being touchy to the ancient, political, and structural specifics of every situation. The desire of Pakistan, India and Bangladesh as instances changed into theoretically inspired, because the international locations are located at contrary ends of the energy hierarchy in South Asia, and their members of the family to the 3 dimensions of analytical hobby beneathneath examine are different. The Indian hegemonic function withinside the place, the counterbalancing coverage utilized by Pakistan, and the small kingdom repute of Bangladesh this is striving to manipulate numerous dependencies concurrently constitute the primary structural formations of South Asian strength politics.

### **Sources and Data Collection**

The evaluation used complementary varieties of information, firstly, number one empirical statistics acquired at some point of semi-based interviews, and secondly, secondary information received primarily based totally on systematic opinions of coverage files, strategic reviews, scholarly literature and reputable statistical reassets. Eleven contributors had been selected the usage of purposive sampling a few of the populace of worldwide family members scholars, overseas coverage analysts, former diplomats and protection officers and nearby safety specialists who've validated their understanding in South Asian geopolitics via semi-established interviews. The respondents had been observed in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and withinside the diaspora groups amongst teachers of various nationalities withinside the United Kingdom and the United States, presenting a huge variety of countrywide and institutional factors of view at the studies questions.

The interview manual had 5 thematic areas, which blanketed how the members compare the present nation of South Asian electricity family members, how financial dependency impacts the overseas coverage conduct of the 3 case observe states, how army functionality differentials and nuclear opposition have an effect on the safety of the place, the character and implications of Chinese and American have an effect on in South Asia, and the way the members determine the destiny of the

vicinity and cooperation. Interviews took a period of among sixty and 100 and ten mins and have been both thru stable video conferencing or face-to-face relying on the selection of the player and the logistical considerations. All the interviews have been recorded and transcribed phrase-to-phrase with earlier consent.

The secondary reassets used had been coverage files and strategic idea papers issued through the governments of Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh, reviews issued via way of means of multilateral corporations including World Bank, Asian Development Bank, and United Nations Development Programme, strategic assessment posted via way of means of establishments together with the International Institute of Strategic Studies, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, and the Carnegie Endowment of International Peace, and peer-reviewed educational literature primarily based totally at the satisfactory journals in worldwide This corpus of documentaries became examined collectively with interview records, which allowed the triangulation of records inside information reassets and made certain that empirical propositions had numerous evidential foundations.

### **Analytical Strategy**

Thematic evaluation became the primary form of records evaluation that become executed according with the stairs defined through Braun and Clarke (2022). The first codes had been derived inductively the usage of the transcripts of interviews and documentary substances, after which based into higher-order issues through repeated analytical evaluate. The comparative factor of the evaluation became operationalized with the assist of cross-case thematic contrast, i.e. whether or not the issues discovered in one of the country wide instances had been repeated, changed, or now no longer gift withinside the different instances and making analytical conclusions primarily based totally at the located styles of similarity and differences. Hypothetical views of structural realism and dependency concept had been utilized in a deductive level of subject matter interpretation, which allowed each empirically primarily based totally and theoretically knowledgeable evaluation.

The rigor and trustworthiness were created with the aid of using numerous collectively complementary strategies. Triangulation became additionally carried out with the aid of using combining interview data with documentary substances with the aid of using making sure that empirical claims made in information kinds have been consistent. The presentation of findings became executed the usage of thick description which includes the outline of specific instances, events, and methods in a noticeably specified way that permits readers to decide the transferability of the findings. Member checking turned into executed on a pattern of the contributors who examine summaries of findings that involved their fields of specialization. The whole studies turned into carried out beneathneath a reflexive studies stance in which the researcher significantly analyzed his or her country wide and institutional positioning and the results that the equal may want to have at the analytical selections taken.

### **Ethical Considerations**

The institutional assessment board gave the vital approval concerning ethics earlier than the fieldwork began. All the interviews have been voluntary, and the knowledgeable consent turned into written and signed via way of means of a player earlier than the interview. Due to the political sensitivity of the studies issues, mainly the talk at the nuclear postures, strategic intelligence and the bilateral diplomatic tensions, unique care become exercised in order that the members will be completely knowledgeable of the viable effects in their involvement and additionally their confidentiality maintained strictly. All studies outputs contained pseudonyms of the individuals and excluded or generalized any biographical facts that could cause oblique identification. There become no request to reveal any labeled or different personal records with the aid of using the members and the interview manual turned into consulted with the felony suggest earlier than the fieldwork to make sure that the studies did now no longer exceed the bounds of the feasible criminal and moral regulations.

### **Findings and Analysis**

#### **Economic Dependency as Structural Power: Asymmetries and Instrumentalization**

In all classes of contributors, the monetary dependency proved to be maximum extensive and structurally enduring issue of the South Asian strength politics- a end result that confirms and on the equal time complicates the structural emphasis on navy functionality as the primary energy foreign money. The topics constantly narrated financial dependency now no longer as a passive factor of the nearby surroundings however as an alternative as an instrumentally engaged element of the country coverage, which the sturdy states use to restriction the autonomy of the vulnerable states and vice versa.

One of the Pakistani coverage analysts who labored withinside the Planning Commission defined that the financial dependency of Pakistan is performing on planes. On the bilateral degree, the excessive degree of structural integration of the Pakistani economic system with the Chinese economic system, which incorporates CPEC, China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement and improved volumes of exchange, had located positive dependencies at the coverage autonomy of Pakistan,

despite the fact that they had been themselves strategically tremendous in phrases of countering Indian hegemony. The analyst determined that Pakistan, being capable of anticipate stances on topics of hobby to China which include Xinjiang, Taiwan, and territorial claims via way of means of China withinside the South China Sea had its financial ties with Beijing critically confined. It is a truth this is corroborated through the evaluation proposed through Small (2015) of the conditionalities inherent withinside the courting among China and Pakistan which he defined as a shape of controlled dependency wherein Chinese financial involvement buys Pakistani strategic alignment.

An global family members pupil at Bangladeshi establishments has furnished an nearly equal rationalization of ways the Bangladesh authorities treated its financial dependencies, explaining the method of the authorities as a twin dependency control technique in which a dating with India and China turned into being pursued and struck on the equal time so as to preserve most coverage flexibility. The student discovered that leverage via way of means of India over Bangladesh in phrases of water useful resource control, get right of entry to to change and infrastructural connectivity became huge and frequently used while Chinese monetary participation; specially withinside the infrastructure and production sectors, gave Bangladesh an opportunity improvement finance and diplomatic aid which in part counteracted Indian leverage. This interplay is in keeping with the broader dialogue of Hillman (2020) concerning Belt and Road financing as a strategic device withinside the improvement of political members of the family in South and Southeast Asia with the aid of using China.

The Indian respondents additionally had a drastically special view of financial dependency, in that they regarded the financial members of the family among India and its pals as much less strategic leverage equipment and greater as a function of presenting local public items in keeping with Indian role because the herbal chief of the location. An Indian overseas coverage analyst of a main Delhi-primarily based totally suppose tank defined Indian investments in infrastructure improvement in Bangladesh consisting of the creation of rail and street networks and its hydroelectric family members with Nepal and Bhutan as manifestations of a so-referred to as community first coverage supposed to sell improvement and balance withinside the location. Critics, each nearby and withinside the instructional literature, have doubted that this developmental body offers enough popularity to the coercive factors of the Indian monetary members of the family with its buddies, mentioning examples of the Nepalese blockade of 2015-sixteen and the common suspension of Indian transit centers as examples of the way India is ready to apply monetary equipment as a strategic instrument.

### **Military Capability Differentiations and the Nuclear Shadow**

The dialogue at the variations in army functionality installed the primacy of the India-Pakistan nuclear courting to South Asian protection politics and proven a few huge subtleties withinside the manner actors with various country wide and expert affiliations conceptualized the interplay among navy functionality and political electricity. Respondents who had revel in in strategic research and protection coverage had been surely unanimous in describing the South Asian nuclear opposition because the maximum vital and dangerous structural issue of the nearby protection surroundings, with traditional navy benefit of India and the nuclear compensating coverage of Pakistan that ended in an intrinsically risky deterrence dating.

One of the senior Pakistani protection officers described the nuclear posture of Pakistan because the end result of a rational strategic calculation to opposite the traditional superiority of India that changed into overwhelming, and he stated it became an equalizer of ultimate resort, now no longer the only that were preferred. The professional commented that the tactical nuclear guns advanced with the aid of using Pakistan, which has been extensively mentioned however in no way showed as such, represented a sure operating hobby with reference to the Indian Cold Start doctrine, which, consistent with the Pakistani army, changed into supposed to offer the gap wherein traditional punishment might be administered in constrained quantities beneathneath the nuclear threshold. This turned into, argued the reliable, an escalatory common sense, in that it demanded Pakistan to make threats of nuclear use at decrease degrees than India became thinking about in its posture, which created a risky hole among what the 2 facets notion the nuclear pink line changed into. This dialogue is regular with the instructional rationalization of uneven escalation pose and destabilizing impact of Pakistan provided with the aid of using Narang (2014).

Indian members disputed this definition of Cold Start as an offensive doctrine aimed toward evading deterrence, alternatively it became a protective operational belief geared toward giving India a small set of reaction abilities in reaction to Pakistan-primarily based totally terrorist moves with out inflicting a complete variety of nuclear retaliation. This conflict of that means among Indian and Pakistani individuals withinside the intentions of the doctrine of Cold Start is precisely the kind of false impression and miscommunication that the researchers of the safety dilemma (beginning with Herz (1950)) have singled out as a key contributor to the hands opposition and unintended escalation.

The navy stance of Bangladesh turned into evaluated through the individuals withinside the experience of its practical specialization toward the peacekeeping and now no longer the traditional deterrence withinside the experience of the aid quandary in addition to the strategic selection made beneathneath the affect of the nearby surroundings. Several interviewees

mentioned that the upward thrust of Bangladesh as certainly considered one among the most important members to United Nations peacekeeping carrier fulfilled numerous strategic roles: they produced tough foreign money sales that in part finance army modernization, they created expert army competencies and global legitimacy, and that they projected Bangladesh as a high-quality participant withinside the worldwide gadget in a way that wins the goodwill of international relations and improvement aid. The growing presence of China because the important fingers provider to Bangladesh, which include submarines, frigates, and fight aircraft, became pronounced via way of means of more than one gamers to motive Indian strategic tension and be a likely catalyst to Indian aggressive army guide.

### **External Force: The Sino-American Competition and South Asian Neutrality**

The intervention of the outside powers withinside the South Asian energy politics changed into mentioned through individuals as having entered right into a qualitatively new degree with the upward push of Sino-American strategic competition as the brand new axis of globalwide geopolitics. Respondents of all country wide backgrounds and expert agencies mentioned this variation as innovative to South Asian local politics, setting up clean lines on alignment and sparking opportunities of strategic manoeuvre which smaller states may want to take benefit of, however additionally setting them at extended chance of entrapment in top notch strength politics.

An worldwide family members pupil of Pakistan termed the function of Pakistan withinside the converting Sino-American contention as that of pressured alignment in place of strategic choice. After being progressively sidelined in its courting with america, because of the breakdown of the post-2001 partnership, Pakistan have been left with restrained alternatives that have been credible to in addition entangle itself in a dating with China. The pupil claimed that this structural dependence did now no longer come free, as examples of ways Pakistan has taken aspects with China on contentious subjects, which include its failure to touch upon the persecution of Uyghurs, a plight that has touched a chord in Pakistan because of its positioning as a crusader of the Muslim reason, reveal the political value of monetary dependence. This is in step with the evaluation of the constraints imposed at the Pakistani diplomatic freedom via way of means of Chinese financial involvement withinside the US as provided via way of means of Rashid (2022).

Indian respondents talked of the converting courting among India and United States in very widespread methods with out being cautious approximately the language and institutional systems of strategic independence inherited via way of means of the Nehruvian culture of non-alignment. One of the previous Indian diplomats said that India and the Quad, the quadrilateral safety speak of Australia, India, Japan and america, become a convergence of hobbies, now no longer an alliance, as India become visible to have sure of its pastimes in not unusualplace with the ones of democratic partners, specifically the Chinese maritime claims withinside the Indian Ocean and the Indo-Pacific. This framing additionally allows India to revel in the safety advantages implicit withinside the in addition alignment with the US and on the identical time preserve the rhetorical and normative distance required to maintain ties with Russia, Iran and Global South.

The outside control in Bangladesh became tested through the individuals for example of strategic hedging that smaller states inside uneven nearby structures must hire to hold significant freedom. A Bangladeshi student talked of the coverage of the authorities as a aggressive engagement, i.e., organising higher financial and protection relationships with China with out neglecting the character of the relationships with India because of the geography, history, and monetary integration. The pupil has talked about that Bangladesh had controlled to steady Chinese funding in crucial infrastructure, ports, business zones and electricity technology with out officially helping the Chinese local safety agenda, and had controlled to keep a running courting with India with out helping India on its debatable positions on such troubles because the National Register of Citizens in Assam, which endangered the criminal popularity of hundreds of thousands of Bangladeshi migrants in India.

### **Theory Reflections: Realism, Dependency, and The Limits of Single-Framework Analysis.**

The empirical proof of the look at offers robust proof to the structural realist and dependency principle framework in addition to the weaknesses of every while they're used independently of the complexity of the South Asian strength politics. The cognizance at the distribution of cloth talents as the primary determinant of nation conduct that structural realism emphasizes is essentially vindicated with the aid of using the outcomes on army functionality differentials and nuclear politics, in which the common sense of strength balancing, safety dilemmas, and arm opposition are performed out with nearly textbook clarity. The empirical proof of the structural asymmetry current among India and its acquaintances that might have ended in balancing conduct through weaker states, as Waltz (1979) could predict, is the reality that Pakistan is allied with China, Bangladesh is growing Chinese alliances, and Sri Lanka, Nepal, and the Maldives are shifting in the direction of China-orientated hedging strategies.

The comparative loss of recognition at the political financial system of energy, however, of structural realism, to the styles of financial dependency figuring out political family members with out connection with army strength, confined its explanatory

potential in a place in which monetary leverage, infrastructure dependency and change asymmetries are as determinant as navy abilities of strength difference. The position of dependency concept isn't anyt any much less tremendous than to open our eyes to those dimensions of political economic system, to expose how the monetary members of the family prepare political inequalities in the sort of manner that they can't be decreased to navy force, and but which isn't anyt any much less decisive to the independence of weaker states. Such combos of theoretical approaches, as proposed via way of means of Pant (2017) and different writers withinside the current South Asian IR literature, are extra analytically efficient than both of the 2 frameworks used on its own, because the multi-dimensional nature of the nearby order wherein each financial and navy forces are concurrently at stake.

## **Discussion**

The effects of the existing studies offer a theoretically stronger and multi-layered clarification of South Asian electricity politics that enhances the contemporary literature of scholarship in some of substantial ways. To start with, through focusing the comparative evaluation on monetary dependency and navy functionality in addition to outside have an effect on, the observe has proven that electricity in South Asia works thru an analytically separate, however nearly coextensive, channel of political economic system energy. This may be nice exemplified via way of means of the instance of Belt and Road infiltration of the location through China that has converted the dependency association of actually all South Asian nations in a way that can not be defined through conventional protection-centric interpretations of the India-Pakistan antagonism.

Second, the comparative evaluation exposes sizeable variant withinside the 3 instances which make it tough to make undifferentiated characterizations of South Asian strength politics. The 3 international locations, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, are characterised via way of means of various structural positions as nearby hegemon, nuclear counterbalancer and small kingdom hedger which produce special strategic logics, distinct members of the family to outside powers, and specific susceptibility to the coercive energy of economic system and army. Such variations are analytically essential and almost extensive: the coverage prescriptions to the stableness of South Asia which can be appropriate to 1 structural role is probably beside the point or counterproductive to another.

Third, the truth that outside have an impact on is now being framed as passing to a qualitatively new level beneathneath the situations of Sino-American strategic competition, is an essential locating in phrases of the evaluation of South Asian regionalism and stability. The heightened opposition most of the remarkable powers withinside the Asian Pacific has raised the geopolitical hobby of the alignment choices of South Asian states, faded the political feasibility of real non-alignment, and brought new pressures and incentives which conventional styles of South Asian local evaluation, evolved in an surroundings of unipolar or post-Cold War dominance, are ill-prepared to analyze. The reality that the modern-day have a look at has included this worldwide structural context in a location-precise comparative evaluation is a methodological contribution to the South Asian worldwide members of the family literature.

The effects also can be echoed and improved with the aid of using theoretical synthesis of Pant (2017) and Malone et al. (2015) withinside the present day South Asian IR literature. The observe gives empirical aid to the declare of the want to depart at the back of unmarried-variable or unmarried-framework tactics to information the dynamics of South Asian electricity politics with the aid of using displaying empirically that monetary dependency, navy functionality and outside impact are analytically wonderful but nearly interrelated elements of South Asian electricity politics.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has given an in depth qualitative and comparative description of energy politics in South Asia and has proven that the worldwide members of the family withinside the vicinity are characterised via way of means of the joint and interacting results of financial dependency, the variations in navy capabilities, and the outside affect, which can not be nicely analyzed through any unmarried theoretical framework and can not be represented through the research that focus on the India-Pakistan dyad. The comparative framework of 3 instances, which includes Pakistan, India and Bangladesh has allowed a greater specific and structurally differentiated description of South Asian energy politics that takes into attention the particular positions, rules and weaknesses of states at diverse stages of the local hierarchy. The synthesis of structural realism and dependency idea as jointly structured kinds of evaluation has been analytically fruitful, permitting the look at of concurrently the navy-strategic and political-financial system elements of a nearby order of uncommon complexity and weight.

## **Recommendations**

The studies proceeds to provide some of sensible coverage and scholarship suggestions. On the nearby international relations level, rebuilding and noticeable reform of SAARC or the established order of opportunity multilateral institutional

bureaucracy that contain each India and Pakistan is vital to organising institutional mechanisms thru which the members of the family of financial dependency found on this examine may be extra open, extra mutual, and greater politically acceptable. The bilateral dependency asymmetries that the buddies of India are uncovered to and might bring about extra balanced financial interdependence could be reduced thru nearby change integration, specially via the boom of the South Asian Free Trade Area.

The nuclear race in South Asia desires sparkling diplomatic focus, in particular due to the recorded disparity withinside the Indian and Pakistani perceptions of nuclear threshold and the escalatory outcomes of the Pakistani tactical nuclear guns program. As a partial technique to the damaging misperceptions, cited on this paper, confidence-constructing steps, along with hotlines, pre-notification agreements in army exercises, and formal dialogue of nuclear doctrine, must help, notwithstanding the truth that the formal palms manipulate treaties that the political pressures of the India-Pakistan competition make unrealistic withinside the quick run.

Concerning the outside impact, South Asian states could have the benefit of evolving greater regular and institutionalized systems in handling ties with each China and america with out dropping the monetary and protection benefits of interaction. The method to aggressive engagement defined with the aid of using interviewees on this paper has provided a paradigm of hobby to a broader variety of analytical and coverage practitioners because it suggests that even smaller states in uneven local systems have a vast enterprise withinside the opposition of the extremely good powers while they may be pursued in a strategically clean and diplomatically normal way.

Future research need to recall the extension of the comparative case observe framework to Sri Lanka, Nepal, and the Maldives to the states to which the revel in of Chinese debt international relations and Indian strategic strain offers similarly comparative leverage to check the outcomes of the contemporary look at. Longitudinal research tracing how electricity members of the family in South Asia are converting with the deepening of the Sino-American opposition could additionally upload numerous price to a frame of labor this is presently inadequately untemporalized.

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