

FROM GEO-ECONOMICS TO GEO-POLITICS: EMERGING MARITIME POWER-POLITICS IN THE INDO-PACIFIC OCEAN REGION

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Abstract

The Indo-Pacific Ocean Region is a relatively new geopolitical entity that has particular features involving several economic, strategic, and political interests linked with its spatial dimension. This research is aimed at the analysis of emerging patterns of maritime power politics, especially, the struggle to control the Indo-Pacific Ocean region. For this purpose, the theoretical framework uses a synthesis of three approaches, i.e., geo-economics, geostrategic, and geopolitical as variables and instruments of maritime power politics and two inside-out and outside-in methods which act as dynamics for the highly complex interplay of regional and extra-regional actors and stakeholders in the oceanic region. The research has used hermeneutical style to interpret and analyze the power politics of this newly-emerged maritime region in which India, Pakistan, the US, and China have emerged as the core actors with their national interests. The US interests in India are multifold, i.e., enabling India to act as regional hegemon, to control geopolitics of the region, and to counter Chinese ambitions to command and control the region; while the Indian approach has been proactive in nature and its aspiration to explore and exploit the “blue” dimensions is quite challenging for the rest of the regional and extra-regional actors.

Keywords: Indo-Pacific Ocean Region, Geo-Economics, Geo-Strategy, Geo-Politics, Maritime Power Politics.

Introduction

The new millennium was not only a numeral change from the 20th to 21st Century but also brought major changes to the concepts of power politics and its spatial dimension was also being emphasized. The focal shift from continental to maritime was visible in all regions but the epicenter of maritime power politics were the two maritime regions, i.e., the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. The emerging power politics in these regions has now become the reason for the inception of another geopolitical entity known as the Indo-Pacific Ocean Region (IPOR), which is gathering much prominence in the recent times. As a maritime entity solely constructed on the basis of commercial, strategic, and geographical realities, the emergence of IPOR has caused a

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paradigm shift to the already fluxed regional power politics with many stakeholders involved in that region.

This article is an endeavor to seek the plausible answer of the core argument that if geo-economics, geostrategic, and geopolitics are considered three instruments of maritime power-politics, how would have emerging patterns been affected by the interplay of a prominent actor in the IPOR. The undertaken research is hermeneutical in nature as it aspires to interpret and analyze particular happenings in order to command and control the IPOR.¹ There have been several perspectives gaining attention since the inception of this relatively-new entity, dominantly, focusing on geopolitics taken over by the realist paradigm like Abhijit Singh talking about the 'maritime pivoting' of the US;² whereas, geo-economics has been overlooked even though the contemporary era has witnessed strong instances of power projection short of war and other coercive means as evident by the seminal work of Blackwill and Harris.³ The emerging power politics of IPOR has complex dynamics due to changing the maritime environment which needs to be studied to analyze their relational impact on other actors in the region. These dynamics are based on the struggle for power, maximizing economic gains, and command and control in the maritime arena, which would cause serious implications for the future of this region in terms of peace and stability. Studying these dynamics can be helpful to reach any corollary regarding maritime power politics.

From Geo-economics to Geopolitics: A Theoretical Framework of Maritime Power Politics

This section describes the nature of power politics on land and in the maritime sphere and then it proceeds with establishing a theoretical framework based on the synthesis of approaches to analyze the maritime power politics. The concept of power politics is a major tenet of realism and according to the realist school of thought, states aspire to increase their power for their survival. Mearsheimer believes that power is, fundamentally, of two types, i.e., latent power and military power. The latent power is underpinned in the socio-economic conditions of a state in terms of wealth and human capital which plays an important role in increasing military power.⁴ The power politics has a point of departure here from the realist thought of Mearsheimer in the maritime domain as he considers oceanic waters a natural constraint to the power politics due to which great powers face certain obstacles in their military power projection.⁵

The maritime power politics can be explained by establishing a framework in which three theoretical approaches are used as variables as well as instruments of the maritime power politics, i.e. geo-economics, geostrategy, and geopolitics with the purpose to study effects of the interplay of regional and extra-regional actors on the patterns of maritime power politics. The first variable geo-economics is the approach that grounds in realism and neo-liberalism. Nonetheless, the nature of interplay among stakeholders in this region has become complicated as dynamics have transformed over time. Geo-economics is, therefore, one of the aspects of international politics that is most significant yet neglected even though it determines the nature of several actions

adopted by states for power politics. A sustainable economy is a fundamental prerequisite to practice power politics because, without a strong and developing economy, a state may not be able to attain or maintain the desired status in the international system. Even, political power and authority and military power would be merely a ludicrous-will for states in absence of a sustainable economy. The use of economic means has emerged as an effective instrument of power politics though the economy is not a focal point in realism. From establishing cordiality among states to issuing warnings to non-compliant states, the economic means⁶ have replaced direct military offense effectively as was once the only predicament.⁷ These benign means put more pressure than military endorsements, therefore, wielding more political influence for major actors of a particular region.

Economy and geography have inherent relations with military power and have been used as historical state-practice but Edward Luttwak was first in the post-Cold War era who used the term 'geo-economics'. He exclaimed that the nature of conflict and rivalry would be transformed in the coming days from military to economic as "...civilian innovation in lieu of military-technical advancement and market penetration instead of garrisons and bases."⁸ Luttwak's approach could not get much attention because the New World Order had brought a wave of liberalism, neoliberalism, and globalization which was contradictory to Luttwak's approach. But, with the spread of interdependence and global economic integration aimed at peace as a spill-over effect, the consequences and challenges started to emerge in the 2000s.

The use of interdependence approach as an instrument of peace lately proved questionable because economic activities and budding opportunities always involve broader interests of the stakeholders causing further challenges. This environment finally brought the concept of economic security to counter emerging threats and challenges including illegal global-flows, such as trafficking, smuggling, and piracy.⁹ The need to provide security to the economy and safeguard economic opportunities became a matter of concern for international relations experts, academicians, and scholars to ponder upon Luttwak's perspective of geo-economics. Therefore, geo-economics as an approach took its place within international relations discourse quite recently, yet robustly; hence, providing a connecting point of realist and neo-liberalist approaches.

The main theme of geo-economics is hinged upon geographical realities which are explored or exploited to attain strategic purposes of states through economic means. However, there has been a remarkable occurrence that is related to point in time. The role of geo-economics takes place vigorously whenever there is a power transition in the international system and that power-shift could affect existing order pointing at the relationship between power politics and geo-economics. This is a stage where the role and relevance of geostrategy, the second variable, takes its course as an instrument that is considered artful use of states' geographical location as well as the exploitation of resource profile to its fullest to achieve desired policy objectives. Although geostrategy is extracting benefits of location and maximizing gains through effective domestic and foreign policies, however, it is not limited to states' territorial existence. Rather, geostrategic interests of states can go beyond their boundaries and may involve farther

regions where their strategic and national interests lie, such as US strategy in Afghanistan, Middle East and lately in maritime regions across the world and China's foothold in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The bases established on foreign lands serve the purpose of states with extended agendas of command and control in particular regions in the name of serving their national interests.

The variable geopolitics by its meaning and definition has an absolute relevance with the study of power politics within the IPOR. Although this concept is not a new but quite important as it discusses the relationship between geographical entities and politics. According to Hagan, geopolitics is a contemporary rationalization of power politics. He asserts that the said concept had been found as a part of political discourse in different periods but could not get a proper place.¹⁰ Therefore, it can be established that geopolitical discourse involves world politics, states' behaviors towards each other, patterns of convergence, divergence, competition, and clashes, all in a spatial context and geographical realities. Therefore, geopolitics in the IPOR is linked with the realist paradigm of power politics by and large where states due to their insecurities and absence of overarching authority within the world system choose maximization of their power and gains in terms of a sustainable economy, military deterrence, and political influence. This interplay of states structures broader geopolitics whether on land or in oceans. The geopolitics is usually horizontal and can involve regional and extra-regional actors and thence, holds features of greater power politics essentially being classical realist paradigm.

Maritime Power Politics: Instruments and Approaches

Maritime politics is more dynamic and impactful than continental politics. The most distinct-part of maritime power politics is the spatial dimension which enables states to think in a different context, i.e., a geographical location that acts as the linchpin. Hence, geography is a shared concept among geo-economics, geostrategic, and geopolitics and is singularly connected. Despite admitting the difference between their instrumental and operative logics for competition between major powers, Baracuhy exclaims: "(G)eo-economics and geopolitics are two sides of the same coin," nevertheless, both work simultaneously under geostrategy.¹¹ This article argues that not only geo-economics and geopolitics work but it is also the combination of geo-economics, geostrategy, and geopolitics that plays a significant and effective role within the realm of maritime power politics, therefore, giving it largely a realist outlook due to these three instruments.

Two conceptual frameworks can be developed through which operational dimensions of these instruments (i.e., geo-economics, geostrategy, and geopolitics) would be comprehended. These are basically two approaches, inside-out approach and outside-in approach, describing the function of maritime power politics. The inside-out approach within maritime power politics emphasizes enhancing states' inner capabilities through exploring and exploiting the economic base for sustainable development. It is geo-economics which is driven by geographical location, domestic productivity, enhancement of economic base, and sustainable economic growth in the

first place. As the inside-out approach acts as a cyclic relationship, geostrategy and then geopolitics follow geo-economics respectively. The states rimming seas and oceans are the actors or basic units which opt to utilize economic base and to attain sustainable growth and interestingly, this stage can involve economic interconnectivity too as a part of the strategy. As soon as the state's geo-economic approach becomes robust, strategic challenges and threats emerge which bring along geostrategy to the arena. This stage can come simultaneously or after some time but it takes place as the continuity to broader economic security and state's strategic interests come afore plausibly. This is a time when state usually gets involved in geopolitics due to its competing and clashing interests in the region.

A vibrant example of the inside-out approach in Asia is China. The country started its struggle for survival after its inception in 1949 with setting goals and worked upon its geo-economics. Its robust geo-economic policy proved quite successful and brought China on the path of sustainable development by exploring and exploiting its economic base and as part of its geostrategy, it started aggressive-policy towards China Sea to keep its maritime frontier secure and maintain its control in that region. China's posture as an emerging economy and a challenger to existing world order and balance of power has put it deep into geopolitics with regional actors like Japan, Australia and India and extra-regional actors like the US.

The second approach which describes the function of maritime power politics is an outside-in approach for which all three instruments, such as geo-economics, geostrategy, and geopolitics are used to attain goals or maintain power politics. This environment usually creates greater challenges than the inside-out approach due to external pressures from the international system. It explains the phenomenon of maritime power politics with the perspective of pressures, challenges, and threats coming from outside regional and international politics. It revolves around needs, national interests, and opportunities to maximize gains as drivers by the world towards that specific state or region. The outside-in approach allows external factors to play a strong role in the international political environment and influence state(s) to the extent that the process of policymaking is affected yet providing more opportunities to control that region. Within this approach, all three instruments can be operational simultaneously, or as required without suggested dimensions. This is another attribute of the structural realist paradigm as states are compelled not to ignore the international system while making domestic as well as foreign policies. The outside world and the international system exploit and develop such conditions that states would choose to act under the system.

Within Asia, Pakistan is considered as an example of the outside-in approach. Since the inception of Pakistan, the outside-in approach has been there overwhelmingly due to the Pakistan's foreign policy choices and Pakistan could not adopt independent policies due to the external pressures. But, since the new millennium, there can be seen a gradual shift in Pakistan's approach, particularly, reference to its maritime frontier. Pakistan started working on developing its Gwadar Port in 2001 and then the first-ever National Maritime Policy was approved in 2002 which could be claimed as the first

major-step toward geo-economic approach, however, it had focused at exploring its untapped maritime potential both on-shore and off-the-shore, as yet.

Two Approaches and IPOR

In the contemporary era, the evolution of rather novel entity of the IPOR from two distinct oceanic regions, Indian and Pacific, can be studied as a struggle for holding maritime control and command in the wider arena. This construct is, therefore, not natural but more of a geopolitical nature which will serve several actors' interests, either economic, strategic, or political, all being attributes of maritime power politics. There can be witnessed the active presence of the inside-out and outside-in approaches. Intrinsically, the emergence of the IPOR is the portrayal of these two approaches. At the level of the Indian Ocean, India due to its aspirations of recognition as regional hegemon as well as its desire to expand control and command over the entire region in terms of power and economy can be studied as an example of the inside-out approach; whereas, with reference to the US-longing to expand its influence over the Indian Ocean, Indian acceptance of newer maritime entity shows the outside-in approach. Hence, it shows the simultaneous interplay of approaches potentially serving the interests of both sides. On other hand, the US within the Pacific Ocean has always been desirous to extend its command and control across the world considering it legit due to its belief of "American Exceptionalism" and want to remain as Global Policeman,¹² which too can be studied as an example of the inside-out approach.

Historically, the Indian Ocean Region and the Pacific Ocean Region were two separate regions with distinct features. On one hand, the Indian Ocean has been the center of political and economic activities for ages. The seaborne activities within the Indian Ocean are believed to be of extreme strategic significance due to its connectivity with different countries and regions, especially, economic connectivity for states and acting as a hub of global flows which include utilizing marine resources, merchandise trade, and oil and gas (energy) trade. As it is a quite vast region and active as well, it provides geographical connectivity through several chokepoints to the other seas and oceans. The connectivity through these chokepoints is not only a source of reliance but also a possible way to constraining-flow of sea traffic which could become a big issue for states relying on global flows or other regional and/or extra-regional stakeholders having interests in the Indian Ocean.

China relates the concept of geo-economics with the security of vital sea-lines as China's seaborne trade is used to pass through the Strait of Malacca because China was emerging as an economic giant and had been consuming around 80 percent of energy flow, greater than several other countries. The mere thought that any issue, accident, or even intentional blockade, especially, of energy flow could prove a deadly blow to its economy brought China to the verge where this reliance was considered decisively as strategic susceptibility and dynamic for China's national security. Chinese President Hu Jintao, in 2003, discussed this issue in his address to leaders of the Chinese Communist Party and named this phenomenon as "Malacca Dilemma" while emphasizing on seeking alternative strategy-building to address this issue.¹³ After

China's recognition of the Malacca dilemma as its vital national security threat, power politics within this region was transformed into a vigorous game of command and control among stakeholders where China emerged as a strong challenger to the international status quo. The launching of the Belt Road Initiative (BRI) by Chinese President Xi Jinping, in 2013, was the event that faced suspicion from different regional actors yet simultaneously provided an array of opportunities for several developing countries to engage in economic integration.¹⁴

On other hand, the Pacific Ocean Region (POR) emerged as the focal point of world politics for major conflicts as well as cooperation during World War II. The power politics of POR has distinct features which cannot be overlooked. One overwhelming feature is the presence of the US as the sole superpower and responsible for the world order. The US has been the most dominant regional actor of Pacific putting almost 25000 small islands into identity-crisis by making them undervalued while creating an issue of centre-periphery in terms of political, economic, and strategic importance.¹⁵ Australia, which is situated between the two said maritime regions, whereas, the third major feature is the emergence of economic powers on the Asian continental side of the Pacific known as Western Pacific.¹⁶ The real shift in the region took place after the end of the Cold War as soon as these economic powers held strong grounds which made this region a center of global flows of the economy, goods, technological advancement, and energy.

Emergence of the Indo-Pacific Ocean Region

The ancient concept of connecting geographical entities being socially constructed reality has not been a static concept. The emergence of IPOR is one of the most recent examples of social-construction with sheer uniqueness of focus shift from continental land to the maritime arena. The US has previously been identifying that region on the basis of continental connectivity giving it name Asia-Pacific including Southeast Asia, which was rimming the Western Pacific Ocean. The US was not ignorant of the importance of Asia¹⁷ due to resource-rich heartland and had established numerous military bases in different states to secure its national interests. Since the US connectivity with Asia is largely through the Pacific and Indian Oceans and both oceans have become economic backbone due to larger volumes of global flows, the US could not ignore the Indian Ocean and regional states, especially India, despite the fact that the Asia-Pacific region had been quite dominant in the US strategy since WW-II.¹⁸

As the international politics has been in constant flux, the US started reshaping its strategic relations in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) soon after 9/11 and signed a series of agreements including the Indo-US Civil Nuclear Deal (2005) with India making it a strategic partner for broader interests of the US in the region. Since 2007, the very concept started coming to the fore by academicians and practitioners during a conference about maritime cooperation between India and Japan and the term was coined by Gurpreet S. Khurana referring to maritime space from Western Pacific to the entire Indian Ocean including its oceanic boundaries till littorals of the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea and in the Mozambique Channel till Eastern Africa.¹⁹ Japan also supported

the term as Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe submitted about Indo-Pacific as broadening of Asia by including the IOR with Western Pacific Rim states and exclaimed it as “the dynamic coupling as seas of freedom and prosperity.”²⁰

The term ‘Indo-Pacific’ got recognition by the US in 2010 by US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton²¹ when she showed the willingness of the US to work in collaboration with the Indian Navy in the Pacific Ocean by saying, “..because we understand how important the Indo-Pacific basin is to global trade and commerce.” This concept was accepted readily in India as it was giving India a great opportunity to play a far extensive role in international politics than regional politics. Based on this approach, India designed its naval doctrine focusing more on Blue Water Navy from Brown Water Navy.²²

Dynamics of Power Politics in the IPOR

The power politics in IPOR has a holistic approach based on two structural distinctions. The first is the one which is reflected through the US approach that includes the Pacific Ocean and the Indian Ocean as one entity. This concept has essentially been extended on the cardinal principle of US foreign policy known as ‘Monroe Doctrine’ in which the first part enables the US to protect its national interests in self-preservation in the southern hemisphere, and the second part of that principle has to bring necessary constitutional amendments to facilitate the implementation of the cardinal principle in every era.²³ The inclusion of the whole of POR and IOR into the IPOR is a sheer manifestation of the US approach in that region having specific dynamics. The other structural outlook is Indian reflection considering the IPOR consisting of the western Pacific side and the IOR. Both considerations have particular dynamics involving three instruments, i.e., geo-economics, geostrategy, and geopolitics, which are giving way to change in power politics of this maritime region in retrospect of converging, diverging, and clashing interests of regional as well as extra-regional actors and stakeholders.

Expanding Command and Control in the IPOR

The desire to hold command and control of the IPOR is the prime dynamic of stakeholders including regional and extra-regional actors. The robust involvement of the regional actors in power politics of the IPOR and quite vigorous presence of the extra-regional naval forces in the region, however, not a recent phenomenon for parent regions, i.e., the Indian Ocean Region and the Pacific Ocean Region, have marked this maritime region as the most complex and threatening to peace and stability. Therefore, the most dominant stakeholders in this regard are extra-regional and regional naval forces present in the Indian and Pacific Oceans separately.²⁴ These naval forces are small, medium, and large according to their states and their capabilities. The presence of all these naval forces within the region and their interference rather exploitation of regional issues and emergent challenges make the IPOR further vulnerable. The strategic challenges as well as visible competition of modernization of naval fleets and merchant navies in compliance to states’ urge to embrace Blue concepts, as in Blue

Water navies and Blue Economy which have been emerging as a result of this interplay, are largely those which are putting security and stability of the IPOR at risk by and large through expanding their influence, control, and shifting paradigms of mutual interaction, i.e., diverging, converging, competing, and/or clashing interests.

Global Flows

One of the most overwhelming factors is the states' dependence on global flows of energy, trade and commerce, technology, information, and communication, which acts as an important dynamic behind power politics within the IPOR. When studied as a single entity, the region comprises the most active and vital arteries of these global flows. Both parent regions already had the status of the busiest routes, historically. There had been significant nodes of global flows known for centuries which have gained further commercial importance in the contemporary era. These old and new routes are of imperative interest for the whole world as these routes or Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC) are core sources and would make the IPOR hub of global flows. From both Americas in East to Western and Northern Indian Ocean for the US to Western Pacific to Western and Northern Indian Ocean for India, every sector of states' growth and sustainability is dependent on the uninterrupted supply of these flows making the emerging region more significant and challenging.

Regional Power Equation and Containment of China

One major dynamic behind the formation of the IPOR, making it prime maritime region, is the desire to counter China in the region. China's steady rise in terms of a sustainable economy, military, and political influence creating undercurrent for the US and India by and large by emerging as the challenger yet bringing world order into potential transition providing enough reason to form a counterstrategy. Scott does not believe that Pakistan could cause the slightest threat to Indian security,²⁵ whereas, China factor would be shared-dynamic among the US, India, and their allies present behind the IPOR power politics. China has been challenging the international status quo and world order, particularly, in the regions of the US interests. Especially, Chinese naval strategy and its planned transformation from "near seas" to "far seas"²⁶ which later became the basis for China's "two-ocean strategy"²⁷ aimed at expanding command and control to the IOR and POR has raised concerns for the US and its allies having shared strategic objectives, like India, Japan, and Vietnam. For issues like China's involvement in the South China Sea, expansion of China's influence through its projects of economic connectivity under the Belt-Road Initiative and states' aspirations to become part of China's economic plans are enough reason to trigger mistrust and intensify anxieties across the IPOR.²⁸ For India, China has been the cornerstone of Indian national security policy as both states have been locked into historic enmity over the territorial issue. Therefore, being a common concern, India and the US have focused to contain China together in the maritime domain.

The US is adopting a similar approach as was done during the Cold War to contain Communism but the point which is largely missing in the US calibration is a

stark different reality of today that this time conflict is not based on ideology or arms race rather economic growth and connectivity which has common approval by majority states in the IPOR. Though China is also upgrading its military forces with special focus on its navy, PLAN (People's Liberation Army Navy) as well as supporting Pakistan in the IOR as its partner in the BRI projects and establishing a military base at Djibouti, the basic motive is to provide security to SLOCs of China's vital economic interest.

On other hand, from Asia-Pacific to Indo-Pacific, the region has been a linchpin to the US foreign policy but in general, the US has been focusing more on hard politics. Particularly, the Obama administration's "Rebalancing to Asia" strategy-2011 saw Asia-Pacific as a new hub for power politics²⁹ moving away from Asian heartland. With President Trump's holding office in January 2017, "Rebalancing to Asia" strategy was disowned, however, India remained there in the US foreign policy as a cornerstone, reliable strategic partner, and capable of regional leadership.³⁰ Trump administration has a greater focus on Indo-Pacific in its "America First" doctrine emphasizing regional security and enhancing economic activities for prosperity in the IPOR but no integrated and coherent economic policy actions have been taken by this administration. Rather, the undertone of the doctrine by Trump sounds more threatening and harsher. Particularly, in reference to Southeast Asia where there are sustainable economies, hard politics feels inept. On the contrary, China's vision and economic plans based on shared-benefits as well as responsibilities and economic interconnectedness among countries and regions have created an environment of acceptance of the Chinese approach. However, the Cold War environment being created by the US-India duo and their joint efforts to contain China in the region is rather a greater threat to peace and stability.

Implications for Regional Actors

The IPOR has become an arena of complex maritime power politics due to the involvement of several actors and stakeholders from both parent regions. The Pacific Ocean has an existence of a superpower along with several great and middle powers active in that region, however, the Indian Ocean does not have any super or great power existing innately in the region yet the IOR has presence and role of these powers in form of military and naval bases and a few overseas territories/islands of the great powers like England and France are also situated there in the IOR. The IPOR makes quite extensive maritime region with several actors, such as Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Japan, China, Australia, the US, several islands of IOR and POR and many small states, all are direct or indirect actors in the IPOR. Another factor which is increasing opportunities and challenges both is the involvement of extra-regional actors in the region like Russia or NATO countries. The Indian and Pacific Oceans have long been hubs of economic, strategic, and political activities, nevertheless, the IPOR would be hosting major power struggles between/among the states. The presence of extra-regional actors in the system and power politics could cause grave implications like insecurity, exploitation, threats and challenges, and compliance of other stakeholders' agendas and desires.

Regional and Intra-Regional Cooperation and Competition: Prospective Dimensions

The emergence of intense maritime power politics has given birth to complex patterns of cooperation and competition in the region. India and the US are in strong strategic partnership and collaboration and on the issue of Iran in the Strait of Hormuz, the US has been quite stern, whereas, India has strategic and economic relations with Iran. China's economic interconnectivity is another factor putting forth opportunities for further cooperation and competition and is involving a number of states. Therefore, there might be opportunities for reshaping of more alliances and trending among states for cooperation and competition. Another dimension that might be explored is the establishment of an international cooperation organization purely based on the IPOR for harvesting extensive benefits.

Conclusion

The emergence and acknowledgment of the IPOR have brought forward a unique combination of challenges and opportunities for maritime power politics. Therefore, this study explicates the interplay of three instruments of maritime power politics – geo-economics, geostrategy, and geopolitics – and two approaches, i.e., inside-out and outside-in by establishing the theoretical framework and proves that using a realist approach is not sufficient to evaluate the maritime power politics in the IPOR until synthesis of approaches is used by giving due space to geo-economics.

The IPOR has now been proved as a hub of power politics with the potential to bring substantial change to the maritime order with the emergence of competitive and clashing trends, security-related challenges, and intensified militarization of this maritime region which has previously been dominated by the US. It has given birth to several contingencies and the region has been converted into a potential theatre for strategic and operational planning and interactions. Particularly, China's increasing role and involvement in maritime politics, its heavy investment on naval capabilities and to provide security to its new economic ventures in the IPOR and beyond have compelled India to enhance its strategic standing, whereas, all these developments have increased instability and insecurity in the region. Since world focus has shifted from continental politics to maritime arena, the US interest in India is multifold in which enabling India to act as regional hegemon, to control geopolitics of the region, and counter Chinese ambitions to command and control through its "two-ocean strategy." Indian approach has been proactive in nature and its aspiration to establish its command and control over the IPOR through sustainable development in the 'blue' dimensions is quite challenging for the rest of regional and extra-regional actors. The interaction of the three identified instruments of geo-economics, geostrategy, and geopolitics as well as two approaches have guided the research to analyze emerging maritime power politics and its dynamics to predict the future of the IPOR and beginning of a transitory process of existing world order.

References

- ¹ The hermeneutics finds its roots in the ancient Greek mythology to interpret the biblical texts. In the later years, this approach was started being used as seeking explanation of different human behaviours, philosophical underpinnings, events, and their impact on other things. "Hermeneutics as the methodology of interpretation is concerned with problems that arise when dealing with meaningful human actions and the products of such actions, most importantly texts. As a methodological discipline, it offers a toolbox for efficiently treating problems of the interpretation of human actions, texts and other meaningful material... interpretation is a ubiquitous activity, unfolding whenever humans aspire to grasp whatever *interpretanda* they deem significant." For detail, see "Hermeneutics," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, first published on June 22, 2016, accessed on March 20, 2019, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hermeneutics/#HypoDeduMeth>.
- ² Abhijit Singh, "Mapping the 'Maritime Pivot' in *Geopolitics of the Indo-Pacific*", eds. Pradeep Kaushiva and Abhijit Singh (New Delhi: Knowledge World, 2014), 21.
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- ⁴ "Great powers need money, technology, and personnel to build military forces and to fight wars, and a state's latent power refers to the raw potential it can draw on when competing with rival states." For details, see John J. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001), 55.
- ⁵ Mearsheimer, *Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, 58.
- ⁶ These economic means include economic sanctions, establishing alliances, trade agreements, foreign direct investments, banking systems, enterprises, joint ventures, economic incentives, and subsidies.
- ⁷ Sören Scholvin and Mikael Wigell, "Geo-economic power politics: An introduction" in *Geo-Economics and Power Politics in the 21st Century: The Revival of Economic Statecraft*, eds. Mikael Wigell, Sören Scholvin, and Mika Aaltola (Oxon: Routledge, 2019), 1.
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- ¹⁰ "[T]he relation which subsists between man and his geographical environment has been subject to speculation at least since the time of Greeks. The answers to the question have varied from time to time as well as the emphasis which attaches to that relation. The Greeks and the Romans treated of this matter, and the subject was revived by Jean Bodin in the sixteenth century. Later Montesquieu attempted to formulate a systematic theory of the influence which environment exerted on political practices. Carl Ritter in the early part of the nineteenth century wrote a gigantic work attempting to trace the relations between man and his geographic position." For details, See Charles B. Hagan, "Geopolitics" *The Journal of Politics* 4, no. 4 (November 1942): 478-490.
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- ¹² "Roosevelt declared that the United States might "exercise international police power in 'flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence.'" For details, see "Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, 1904" in *Milestones: 1899-1913*, Office of the Historian, accessed on May 10, 2019, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/roosevelt-and-monroe-doctrine>.
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- ¹⁴ Lauren A. Johnston, "The Belt and Road Initiative: What is it for China?" *Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies* (2018): doi. 10.1002/app5.265.
- ¹⁵ Reiko Hayakawa, "Self-Determination for the Communication Policy in the Pacific Islands," in *Self Determinable Development of Small Islands*, eds. Masahide Ishihara, Eiichi Hoshino, Yoko Fujita, 179-202 (Singapore: Springer, 2016), 180.
- ¹⁶ Since 1950, the rise of East Asian economies started which included Japan and four Asian Tigers or Dragons named as Taiwan, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Singapore which adopted route of industrialization as their robust economic policy. During same period, Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia from Southeast Asia adopted economic approach, though not as vigorous as four Tigers; however, it earned a significant place to these countries as four Tiger Cub Economies of the region. Nonetheless China joined that economic growth club much later in the late 1970s. See Paulina Restrepo-Echavarría, and María A. Arias, "Tigers, Tiger Cubs and Economic Growth," blog , May 25, 2017, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, accessed on January 22, 2019, <https://www.stlouisfed.org/on-the-economy/2017/may/tigers-tiger-cubs-economic-growth>.
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- ²⁵ Scott, "Blue Water' Navy," 9.
- ²⁶ Nan Li, "The Evolution of China's Naval Strategy and Capabilities: From "Near Coast" and "Near Seas" to "Far Seas" *Asian Security* 5, no. 2 (June 2009): 144-169.
- ²⁷ Robert D. Kaplan, "China's Two-Ocean Strategy," *China's Arrival: A Strategic Framework for a Global Relationship* (Washington: Centre for a New American Security, 2009).
- ²⁸ Saeed, "Asia-Pacific to Indo-Pacific," 510.
- ²⁹ Wu Zhengyu, "The Crowe Memorandum, the Rebalance to Asia, and Sino-US Relations," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 39, no. 3 (2016): 389-416.
- ³⁰ The White House, "National Security Strategy of the United States" (Washington, D.C.: White House, December 2017), 46.