

## Emerging Indo-German Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Region

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### Abstract

China's precarious maritime claims in the Indo-Pacific region have led to its securitization by its neighboring states. Extra-regional states, too, fear the threatened rules-based international order in the region, as more than half of the world's maritime trade is conducted through these waters. Considering increasing instability and insecurity, many regional and extra-regional states are forging bilateral and multilateral alliances to counter China's assertion in the region to secure trade through these waters. The growing economic importance of the Indo-Pacific region and China's rise have pushed Germany to draft policy guidelines for interactions with the regional powers. Being a maritime power and having geographical proximity to the region, India attracted Germany to strengthen relations. Hence, India and Germany are ready to open a new chapter of economic and security ties in the region. This study uses securitization theory to analyze the emerging Indo-German cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. Moreover, the emerging Indo-German partnership paves the way for other European nations to increase their engagement with India against China's ascent. Germany's policy guidelines for the region and India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiatives (IPOI) have been analyzed to show the emergence of Indo-German cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.

**Keywords:** India, Germany, Indo-Pacific, securitization theory

### 1. Introduction

China's rise to a global economic superpower and its increased military capability pose a significant threat to world stability (Bergsten et al., 2008, 11). Its increasingly assertive maritime claims present various challenges to the Indo-Pacific regional order. These policies adopted by China confront the existing normative regional order of the Indo-Pacific region. They also pose threats to the interests of many countries in the region. In particular, the South China Sea, where the maritime interests of these countries have clashed since the last decade. Three reasons have broadly constituted this development of China in the region: first, the geo-

strategic importance of the South China Sea as a significant sea lane through which half of the world's maritime shipping passes; second, the potential reserves of oil and gas as a tremendous economic opportunity, which China wants to exploit ignoring the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS); and third, the islands such as the Spratly, Paracel, and Scarborough in the South China Sea on which China claims its sovereignty. Also, China has militarised these islands over the past twenty years. Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan, Vietnam, and the Philippines contest China's territorial and maritime claims in the South China Sea. Hence, the increasingly assertive Chinese politics have led to the deterioration of regional order and stability, which resulted in the securitization of China by its neighboring states (Chand & Garcia, 2017, 310).

The Indo-Pacific region consists of 65 percent of the world's population. It also accounts for 63 percent of the world's gross domestic product (GDP). Over 60 percent of the world's maritime trade passes through the region. Therefore, several nations' economic interests and future growth in the region and beyond are associated with the freedom of navigation and free trade flow through the Indo-Pacific region's vital Sea Lanes of Communications (SLOCs).

As an extra-regional state, Germany is economically interested in the Indo-Pacific region. Around 20 percent of its total trade is with the countries in the region. Most of this trade is conducted through maritime routes. Although India has no territorial claims in the South China Sea, it has become involved in the region after signing a bilateral cooperation with Vietnam for oil and gas exploration in the region (Choudhury, 2015, 418).

Germany is not immune from the impacts caused by the shift of geopolitical power structure in the Indo-Pacific region. The economies of the European nations and the countries of the Indo-Pacific region are connected through global supply chains. Major trading routes of the world pass through the Indian Ocean, the South China Sea, and the Pacific Ocean. The disputes and conflicts in the region adversely affect the order, security, and stability of the region, and hence, it has repercussions for Germany too. That is why the German government is looking to expand cooperation with the countries of the Indo-Pacific region for its economic growth and prosperity (Narayan et al.,2017) (Narayan et al.,2020).

## 2. Indo-Pacific

By the end of the twentieth century, the Asia-Pacific was a dominant geographical construct aimed at free trade under the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), including Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, and some major Pacific Rim countries. However, the beginning of the Twenty-first century eventually departed from the old geographical construct and embarked

upon a new ideological construct of the Indo-Pacific. It is a geographical and geostrategic construct comprising countries in the Indian Ocean, South Asia, the Middle East, and Eastern Africa. At a minimum, this conception brings India into a new regional framework (Beeson & Wilson, 2018, 79). The Indo-Pacific gained popularity when Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe used the term to describe the coupling of the Indian and the Pacific Oceans in a dynamic way as seas of freedom and prosperity, delivering his speech at the Indian Parliament in 2007 (Medcalf, 2013). Later, in 2011, Hillary Clinton spoke of the Indo-Pacific in the US pivot to Asia context. After a year, in 2012, Manmohan Singh emphasized the India-ASEAN engagement in the region. Recently, Modi used the term Indo-Pacific while delivering a speech at the IISS Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore in 2018.

The Indo-Pacific region is security-driven, reflecting the intention of its proponents to counter the Chinese rise in the region. Although the definition of what constitutes the Indo-Pacific does not exist, many countries have adopted the terminology according to the constantly changing geopolitics in Asia, such as maritime disputes between China and other regional governments, the emergence of India and Japan as security providers, and increasing US-China rivalry (Wilson, 2018, 178).

The European Union (EU) considers itself a significant stakeholder in the Indo-Pacific because of trade with the countries in the region. China is the second largest trading partner of the EU after the US. Consequently, the EU developed a common approach to the region under 'EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific,' which focuses on deepening cooperation with like-minded partners to balance China's influence. However, it is interesting that the strategy is not anti-China. After Brexit, the EU is keen on searching for new markets, defending its economic interests, and deepening its economic engagement with the Indo-Pacific nations. French President Emmanuel Macron spoke about a French plan for the Indo-Pacific in 2018. The following year, the French Ministry of Defence published the strategy paper 'France and Security in the Indo-Pacific.' After France, Germany became the second European Nation to announce its Indo-Pacific guidelines on 1 September 2020 during its EU Presidency. (Narayan et al.,2017) (Narayan et al.,2023).

### 3. Securitization Theory

The principal goal of this paper is to examine how the securitization of China pushes Germany and India to increase their cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region. Securitization theory belongs to the broader premises of Critical Security Studies. It derives its legitimacy from the

Constructivist School in international relations. The theory deals with security as an outcome of a specific social process rather than an objective condition. Speech acts initiate the securitization process and bring politicized or non-politicized issues into the security realm (Williams, 2003, 513). In other words, security is not an objective fact but a socially constructed phenomenon. The Copenhagen School of Security Studies originally developed the theory of securitization, which included Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde. It involves mainly three components: first, a referent object that is perceived to be existentially threatened has a legitimate claim to survival; second, a securitizing agent initiates speech acts by proclaiming the object to be threatened; and third, functional actors shape the dynamics of the security sector (Buzan et al., 1998, 36). However, the securitizing move of the actor alone does not cause the issues to be securitized. It is decided by the audience to whom the actor performs the speech acts (Buzan et al., 1998, 25). Balzacq emphasizes the importance of the audience rather than the securitizing agent in the securitization process because the success or failure of securitization depends primarily on the securitizing actor's ability to connect with the audience's interests and sentiments (Balzacq, 2005, 184). Further, Salter argues the importance of the audience's cultural background and social context and advises the securitizing actor to pursue a specific audience (Salter, 2008, 325). Hence, securitization is neither an objective conception of a threat nor a subjective perception of a threat but rather an intersubjective process (Coskun, 2011, 10).

On the other hand, de-securitization happens when the securitized issues slip off the security agenda (Wæver, 1995, 57). In other words, de-securitization is when a threat is no longer perceived as a threat or not an existential threat. In such cases, no extraordinary measures are taken to manage the issues. Everyday politics deals with them (Salter, 2008, 324).

#### 4. The Securitization of China

The economic rise of China in the 21st century brings several opportunities and challenges to the nations in the region. Although China has recently become the major trade and investment partner for several countries of the Indo-Pacific, it also makes the countries highly vulnerable to economic compulsion. China's military modernization and assertive maritime claims also make them highly susceptible to their national security. The East and South China Seas are highly troubled by significant territorial and maritime disputes. China, Taiwan, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia, and Vietnam each claim sovereignty over the parts of the South China Sea. Also, China, Japan, and South Korea have had conflicts in the East China Sea. The Sino-US rivalry has recently added another chapter to the region (Chand & Garcia, 2021).

Besides the South and East China Sea, China keeps increasing its presence in the Indian Ocean through its notorious debt diplomacy. It has been developing ports in major littoral countries such as Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) project opens the door to the major world markets. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (2015) connecting Xinjiang with Gwadar port in Pakistan gives access to the Arabian Sea, while the China-Myanmar Corridor gives access to the Bay of Bengal. These corridor projects are aimed at easing China's Malacca dilemma. More importantly, they link the land and maritime dimensions of the BRI. China's built ports in the Indian Ocean are of dual-use. Along with its base in Djibouti, China aims to establish a naval base in Pakistan, facilitating its expansion in the Gulf and Africa. China's intention in the Indian Ocean threatens India's trade and security, as China engages in several land conflicts with India in the North. Hence, India views China as its biggest adversary. Also, fifty-five percent of India's trade happens through the South China Sea; hence, it supports freedom of navigation in international waters (Sibal, 2020, 65).

Germany and China have long been observing their diplomatic relations. Berlin classified its relationship with Beijing as a strategic partnership for global responsibility in 2004. Later, in 2014, both upgraded their relationship to a comprehensive strategic partnership. Germany and China have been holding intergovernmental consultations at the level of cabinet ministers and heads of government since 2011. China is Germany's most important trading partner in Asia. It was the largest importer of German goods in 2017 (Taussig, 2019, 22). China is also the world's largest market for German automobiles. However, their relationship has recently become complicated as China's economic and military power has grown rapidly. Germany is increasingly concerned about China's military advancement and highly ambitious infrastructural development. (Awasthi et al.,2019) (Babu et al.,2023).

Consequently, Germany embarks on shifting its policy regarding Chinese investment. It has taken major steps to restrict the acquisition of German companies, particularly its strategic industries, by Chinese state-owned companies. Germany's 2018 government coalition agreement underlines the rising concerns regarding China. The document warns the German government not only to view opportunities but also to examine the threat emerging from China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Although Germany still prioritizes its economic relationship with China, it is now hedging in the Indo-Pacific by forging deeper economic and security ties with Indo-Pacific nations like India and Japan.

Such developments have contributed to the successful securitization of China, not only by the regional states but also by the extra-territorial states like India and Germany. Consequently,

China and its assertive maritime policies have become the referent objects of securitization. The securitizing agents are China's neighbors and extra-territorial states like India and Germany. The audiences, in this case, include both domestic and international. Finally, successful securitization depends upon the coherence between securitizing agents, their speech acts, and the audiences' views on how the securitizing moves were embraced. Identifying and assessing the securitizing speech acts made by China's neighbors and extra-regional states, who are securitized, and by whom and why can be known. Ultimately, the audience poll data can inform whether securitization succeeds or fails.

China's securitization can be observed by the speech acts made by its neighbors and extra-regional states. Although the list of speeches targeted at China is far from exhaustive, speeches from heads of state governments and other cabinet members responsible for initiating the securitizing processes have been mentioned.

## 5. Germany's Guidelines for Indo-Pacific

The Federal Government of Germany adopted its Indo-Pacific policy guidelines '*Germany-Europe-Asia: shaping the 21st century together*' on 1st September 2020. With its policy guidelines, Germany wants to work with the Indo-Pacific countries to promote rules-based order in the region.

For the first time, the Federal Government of Germany officially adopted the terminology 'Indo-Pacific,' which indicates a strategic shift in German Foreign Policy caused by the region's increasing geopolitical importance. Germany's policy document on the Indo-Pacific was welcomed by its Asian partners, such as India, Japan, and Australia.

Germany's Indo-Pacific guidelines are developed from the understanding that the region's increasing instability affects Germany's prosperity and security. Broadly, three factors resulted in German and European renewed engagement towards the Indo-Pacific. First, the Indo-Pacific is an engine of global growth; the Indo-Pacific countries accounted for almost 70 percent of the global economic growth in 2019. Also, the combined economy of Asia was larger than the rest of the world's economy. Second, the imbalance of power in the Indo-Pacific; China's global political rise has led to the imbalance of power in the region. Its territorial and maritime expansion challenges the rules-based order and stability in the region, as China has territorial disputes with many of the Indo-Pacific countries in the South China Sea. Germany also faces several challenges emerging from China's political system and its power projection in the Indo-Pacific. The dependence of the European Union (EU) on China, an attempt to unilaterally change the multilateral liberal order, and a threat to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific are



some of the challenges that Germany addresses in its policy guidelines. Third, Sino-U.S. rivalry: China's economic rise and military modernization have caused great power rivalry in the Indo-Pacific. It started with the trade war between China and the US during the Trump administration. China's maritime claims in East China and South China seas undermine the rules-based order and pose a threat to the sovereignty of many countries in the Indo-Pacific. China threatens not only the sovereignty of Indo-Pacific countries but also attempts to influence the politics of extra-regional states through its 'wolf warrior diplomacy.'

Germany agrees with Australia, the US, and France that the Western policy toward engaging China has completely failed. Also, every German interest mentioned in the Indo-Pacific policy guidelines indicates to China, nonetheless obliquely and with positive language. Germany has repeatedly expressed that its Indo-Pacific guidelines are not against China and is careful enough to manage its resistance towards Chinese hegemony in the region. Also, the title of the Indo-Pacific document is guidelines, not strategy, which indicates that Germany does not want to endorse a confrontational attitude towards China (Grare, 2020). Berlin has refused to take any side in the Sino-US rivalry. Heiko Maas says China is not only Germany's partner but also a competitor. Germany also believes China to be a systemic rival, particularly in its political system. The communist rule in China opposes the Western-promoted political system based on democratic principles and values worldwide.

Nevertheless, some states still practice communist rule, and China wants to lead it. Hence, Germany has reviewed its Foreign policy towards China. Germany and the EU started looking at strengthening cooperation with like-minded partners in the Indo-Pacific region, such as India, Japan, and Australia, to diversify their dependence on China. On 19 April 2021, the European Council agreed to draft an EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. Later, in September 2021, it came up with a Joint Communication that provided a rationale for the EU strategy in the Indo-Pacific region. The document defines the Indo-Pacific as a vast region extending from the east coast of Africa to the western coast of the US, including the Pacific Island States. The EU members and the Indo-Pacific nations account for more than 70 percent of the world's trade in goods and services. They also account for more than 60 percent of foreign direct investment inflows. The total trade exchanges between Europe and the Indo-Pacific are higher than other regions worldwide. The Indo-Pacific region is the second largest market for EU exports, and four of the EU's ten biggest trading partners come from the region. The EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific emphasizes the need for cooperation in seven priority areas: sustainable and inclusive prosperity; green transition; ocean governance, digital governance, and partnership; digital connectivity; security and defense; and human security. China is the

second largest trading partner of the EU. The trade between the EU and China has increased since China became a member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 2001. Today, the EU has become China's biggest trading partner.

However, China's trade and investment policy and recent assertive maritime claims in the South China Sea have caused a change in European perceptions of China's Belt and Road Initiative. The EU's Joint Communication 'EU- China- A Strategic Outlook' 2019 defines China as a cooperative partner, a negotiating partner, an economic competitor, or a systemic rival. Also, China's disrespect for human rights, for example, the repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang, contributes to the changing strategy of the EU in the Indo-Pacific (Maizland, 2021). Recently, the Chinese Communist Party's misinformation during the outbreak of COVID-19 antagonized European countries. The EU's Joint Communication highlights the geopolitical dynamics of the Indo-Pacific region, which has led to territorial and maritime conflicts. It states that the increasing military build-up and its projection in the South China Sea, East China Sea, and the Taiwan Strait directly affect the European economy and security. It also believes that authoritarian regimes threaten democratic principles and human rights. The disruption in the supply chain management during the Covid crisis forced the EU to review its policy towards China. Hence, the European Union focuses on strengthening cooperation with other countries in the region who believe in democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. Multilateral cooperation with ASEAN is the core of the EU's strategy in the Indo-Pacific, as ASEAN is mentioned 31 times in the EU's joint communication (Lin, 2021). Most of the principles drafted in the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, like connectivity, economic and maritime cooperation, and sustainable development goals, are reflected in Germany's Indo-Pacific guidelines and the EU's Indo-Pacific strategy. During Germany's Presidency of the Council of the European Union in December 2020, the EU and the ASEAN elevated their relationship to a strategic partnership. Together, they want to promote rules-based international order in the region to ensure a stable and prosperous trading environment.

Being the only EU member with its naval presence in the Indo-Pacific, France has been strengthening its maritime security ties with the countries in the region. France was the first EU member to develop the Indo-Pacific strategy in 2018. When Germany developed its Indo-Pacific guidelines in September 2020, it read Germany- Europe- Asia: shaping the 21st century together. The Federal Government of Germany aimed to promote a European Indo-Pacific strategy with its policy guidelines and offered an opportunity for deeper cooperation at the European Union level. Two major goals of Germany's Indo-Pacific guidelines also reflect the EU's regional commitments. First, the structures of international cooperation, particularly with



ASEAN, must be strengthened. Germany wants to work with the Indo-Pacific countries in traditional and non-traditional security fields, such as climate change, green energy, sea piracy, human trafficking, human rights, cyber security, rule of law, etc. Second, the EU's dependence on China must be diversified. The German government wants to diversify the EU's dependence on China by enacting EU free trade agreements with many Indo-Pacific nations.

## 6. India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI)

India, a leading proponent of the Indo-Pacific conception, has played an important role in promoting rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region. In 2018, at the Shangri La Dialogue in Singapore, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered a speech and announced India's vision for the Indo-Pacific. He clearly stated that openness and inclusiveness, along with ASEAN centrality, constitute the heart of India's Indo-Pacific vision.

Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) is a maritime initiative of the Government of India. It is based on India's 'Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR)' initiative, announced by Indian Prime Minister Modi in 2015. It encourages the regional states to cooperate towards a stable and prosperous maritime domain. SAGAR also focuses on making the maritime domain secure and sustainable for the states in the region. India has embraced the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) concept, initiating maritime projects like SAGAR and IPOI.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) at the East Asia Summit in Bangkok in 2019. The IPOI is a non-treaty-based initiative that aims to create a safe, secure, and sustainable maritime domain in the Indo-Pacific region. It includes seven pillars, namely, Maritime Security; Maritime Ecology; Maritime Resources; Capacity Building and Resource Sharing; Disaster Risk Reduction and Management; Science, Technology, and Academic Cooperation; and Trade Connectivity and Maritime Transport, to make the region stable and prosperous. The Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative aims to synergize greater coordination among the already existing institutional structures in the region.

The same year, India established an Indo-Pacific division in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). This division will integrate the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS), the Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region, and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) initiative of the USA, Australia, Japan, and India. After a year, an Oceania division was also created in the Ministry of External Affairs to strengthen India's diplomatic focus in the region (Saha and Mishra, 2020, 3).

Although maritime security is the primary goal of this Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), the rest of the pillars take a comprehensive maritime domain approach to make the region more

secure, stable, and sustainable. India has widened the agenda for the Indo-Pacific. It has shown that the Indo-Pacific region is not about containing China but creating a prosperous and peaceful order. However, China's aggressive regional maritime policy can not be ignored. India has no issues including all regional and major extra-regional stakeholders to make the Indo-Pacific Oceans initiative a reality. Indian Prime Minister Modi's 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, and Sabka Prayaas' equally applies to the Indo-Pacific cooperation agenda and is manifested in India's Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) initiative (Mishra, 2021, 3).

India is mentioned 57 times in Germany's Indo-Pacific guidelines, while ASEAN 66 times (Singh, 2020). India, being a maritime powerhouse in the Indian Ocean, plays a vital role in the emerging security framework. At the press briefing on the occasion of policy publication in September 2020, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said that the Himalayas and the Strait of Malacca are far away but remain important for Germany's and Europe's prosperity.

In her 2017 paper, Garima Mohan urged Germany to strengthen the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). She also advocated for greater maritime cooperation with India (Mohan, 2017). For the first time in 2017, the German government held a Conference of Ambassadors to the Indian Ocean Rim (IOR) in Colombo and invited then-Indian Foreign Secretary Jaishankar to address it. During the German Chancellor Angela Merkel's visit in 2019, Germany and India held up freedom of navigation under the principles of UNCLOS. Recently, during the 6th Indo-German Inter-Governmental Consultations held in May 2022, Indian PM Modi and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz emphasized a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific policy. Both governments also agreed to promote rules-based international order in the region for mutual economic growth and prosperity.

## **7. The Emerging Cooperation between India and Germany**

### **7.1. Marine Pollution and Climate Change**

One of the biggest challenges facing the Indo-Pacific region is the fight against marine pollution and climate change. Germany and the European Union want to find solutions to these problems with the Indo-Pacific countries within the framework of the International Climate Initiative. Recent examples are an oil spill near Mauritius and a tanker fire near the Sri Lankan coast. The EU's actions in the Indo-Pacific aim to reduce biodiversity loss, marine pollution, and other forms of environmental degradation. Climate change is an area where Germany and India strongly converge their views and interests. Germany advocates for a substantial reduction in emissions and supports the efforts of the EU to achieve climate commitment with

India in the region. Germany expands its support for the Pacific Island states regarding climate and security risks. It has increased its Green Climate Fund. India is also highly dedicated to the commitments made in the Paris Agreement of 2015.

## 7.2. Sustainability and Green Transition

Sustainability and green transition have been of priority in European Union policy to combat climate change and environmental degradation. The European Union works on multilateral cooperation's sustainable, comprehensive, and inclusive policy principles. Green Transition is the signature policy of the EU. The EU has just concluded its first Green Alliance partnership with Japan and seeks other alliances with countries following COP26 in Glasgow. Germany wants to be part of the International Solar Alliance (ISA), which India and France have initiated. Recently, Germany has ratified the ISA. Germany and India will develop an Indo-German Green Hydrogen Roadmap together, supported by the Indo-German Energy Forum (IGEF). In the sixth Intergovernmental Consultation Joint Declaration, Germany welcomed India's announcement to join the InsuResilience Global Partnership. Germany joined the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) in February 2020. Both countries are committed to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development goals.

## 7.3. Connectivity

The European Union is an important player in the field of connectivity. It aims to create transport networks among neighboring countries, which helps build a common market for goods and services. The European Council adopted an ambitious plan to connect Europe and Asia in 2018. It was developed in four dimensions: digital, energy, transport, and people-to-people links. The strategy was intended to improve trade and investment criteria under the existing framework. In 2019, the European Union established its first connectivity partnership with Japan in the Indo-Pacific, followed by the EU-ASEAN Joint Ministerial Declaration in 2020 and the EU-India Comprehensive Connectivity Partnership in 2021.

## 7.4. COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed the weakness of the healthcare system worldwide. Therefore, Health has become a key focus area in which Germany and the EU want to cooperate with the partner countries in the Indo-Pacific. The EU continues to work with the Indo-Pacific countries to ensure an effective multilateral response to COVID-19. The European Union provides low and middle-income Indo-Pacific partner countries access to the COVID-19

vaccine through the COVAX facility. They work closely with India in the field of pharmaceutical ingredients. Germany and India have suffered problems after disruption in the supply chain during the COVID-19 crisis. Therefore, they want to work together on the Supply Chain Resilience Framework. Last year, Germany increased its project funds for human rights projects in the Indo-Pacific. Both Germany and India want to strengthen their cooperation in medical products regulation and have signed a Joint Declaration of Intent between the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) and the Federal Institute for Drugs and Medical Devices of the Federal Republic of Germany (BfArM) and the Paul-Ehrlich-Institute of the Federal Republic of Germany (PEI) during the sixth Intergovernmental Consultation in Mai this year.

### 7.5. Multilateralism

Many threats and challenges emerge from the geopolitical rivalry between the US and China in the Indo-Pacific. Considering such emerging challenges, the European Union focuses on strengthening multilateral cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. The new strategy of Germany and the EU is based on addressing these challenges by multilateral engagement with the countries in the region. Germany has always been a proponent of multilateralism. Following the principles of multilateralism, Germany continues to strengthen bilateral and multilateral engagements with the countries in the Indo-Pacific. With the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Germany is increasing cooperation in maritime security, disaster, and risk management in the Indian Ocean Region. It also works on implementing the strategic plan (2021-2025) of the Mekong River Commission. Germany also wants to help India institutionalize the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC). In the sixth Intergovernmental Consultation (IGC) Joint Declaration, Germany and India emphasized working with such Regional Organisations.

### 7.6. Defence and Security

Germany and the European Union seek to promote rules-based regional order in the Indo-Pacific. They want to secure Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOC), enhance capacity-building mechanisms, and ensure naval presence in the region under the framework established by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Both the European Union and the Indo-Pacific countries face almost similar security challenges. Hence, Germany and the EU have expanded their defense and security engagements with the partner countries in the region under the framework of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The EU Naval

Force Somalia (EU NAVFOR) Operation Atalanta with India and other countries in the Indian Ocean marks the naval presence. The EU's Critical Maritime Routes in the Indian Ocean (CRIMARIO) is a capacity-building project. India is one of the pilot countries in the EU project Enhancing Security Cooperation in and with Asia (ESCIWA), which includes cyber security, counter-terrorism, maritime security, and crisis management. Germany and the European Union want to cooperate with partner countries on nuclear safety and non-proliferation of atomic, biological, and chemical weapons.

## 8. Conclusion

During the past few years, the Federal Republic of Germany and the Republic of India initiated their securitizing move after China's military power projection in the South China Sea. Their securitizing speeches and practices took concrete shape in their policy documents. However, the Indo-Pacific discourse dominated the Asia-Pacific discourse in the last decade of the 21st century. India endorsed the newly established discourse of Indo-Pacific in 2018 when Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi used it in his speech at the IISS Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore. In September 2020, Germany officially adopted the new discourse and used it several times in its policy guidelines. The beginning of the securitization process already assumes an inextricable link between order and security. Germany's Indo-Pacific guidelines and India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) constitute the first texts of the securitization discourse.

In contrast, the speeches of Germany's and India's governing political elites form the securitization move. These delivered speeches and policy documents rhetorically use the phrase 'rules-based international order' in the Indo-Pacific, threatened by China's ambitious maritime policy. China's creation of artificial Islands in the South China Sea and its militarisation threaten the freedom of navigation and the marine environment. The discourse of Indo-Pacific and rhetoric of rules-based order in the region were the dominant themes in Angela Merkel's government. And it continues to be the primary area of concern for the coalition government in Germany after Olaf Scholz became Chancellor in December 2021. During his visit to Japan, the German chancellor Olaf Scholz emphasized intensifying their engagement in the Indo-Pacific region.

Both governments' rhetoric of rules-based international order reflects an attempt at securitization in the Indo-Pacific region since all major elements of the securitization process can easily be found in the analyzed speeches and policy documents. China's global rise and its recent military power projection threaten the freedom of navigation. China's assertive maritime

policy also threatens the sovereignty and territorial integrity of many of the countries in the Indo-Pacific. The existential threat to the rules-based international order, i.e., the rule of law, freedom of navigation, and human rights, has frequently been mentioned in speeches and policy documents.

Determining whether the targeted audience has accepted the securitization move is very hard to decide as the role of the audience is complicated. However, Balzacq believes that when the speech acts are performed in the context, there is a greater possibility for the audience to be convinced. Underlining the limitations of the Copenhagen School, Balzacq finds the audience to be more important than the securitizing actor. Therefore, looking at who is securitizing 'what' and 'when' and how threats are constructed becomes important. From the rhetoric of rules-based international order by political elites of Germany and India, it is clear that they use the grammar of security to raise the issue of China's ambitious maritime agenda in the Indo-Pacific, which can cause a severe threat to the peace, security, and stability in the region. The Pew Research Centre's Global Attitudes Survey of 2020 shows that negative views of China have reached its highest among the world's developed economies. 71 percent of the German population has unfavorable views against China after the COVID-19 crisis (Silver et al., 2020). China's ambitious policy, its military projection, and human rights violations constitute its unfavorable views across the world.

Hence, Germany and India's common securitization of China causes increasing engagement and cooperation in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The convergence of their interests has led to a powerful partnership, where the like-minded partners Germany and India seek to strengthen economic and maritime security relations to promote the rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific.

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