



What Is the Indo-Pacific? Genealogy, Securitization, and the Multipolar System

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Abstract

Language is a clear indicator of political change. As China continues to rise and expand its influence in the South China Seas, threatened neighboring states will balance against it. One step in this process is the formulation of persuading language and concepts to accept the threat posed by China. This is demonstrated by the invention and use of the term Indo-Pacific, an area from the eastern part of Africa in the west to the United States in the east. This article traces the genealogy of the term Indo-Pacific as it relates to the securitization of this region given the rise of China. The article will first trace the genealogy of the term Indo-Pacific to then highlight the processes of securitization given changes in the structure of international relations.

Keywords Genealogy · China · QUAD · Securitization

1 Introduction

Language is a clear indicator of political change. As China continues to rise and expand its influence in the South China Sea, threatened neighboring states will balance against it. The Indo-Pacific, an area from the eastern part of Africa in the west to the United States in the east, is an invented concept that attempts to create a common identity across Asian states, beginning with Japan and India and extending to Australia, the United States, and Taiwan (Li 2021; Beeson and Lee-Brown 2021; Dar 2022; Karki 2022; Okakura 1956). The purpose is not solely to balance against China but to form a common bond to preserve the status quo, continuing the American unipolar order. This paper focuses on alliance dynamics, using *Indo-Pacific* as a case study in genealogy. Said differently, this article traces the genealogy of the term Indo-Pacific as it relates to the securitization of this region given the rise of China (Joseph 2023; Shah 2021). Genealogy is a method that seeks to isolate the

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Table 1 Chinese and QUAD foreign bases in the Indian Ocean region (Atta-Asamoah 2019)

Foreign country	Location of bases by state
Australia	Vanuatu (discussion stage)
China	Djibouti, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh
India	Seychelles, Madagascar
Japan	Djibouti
United States	Burkina Faso, South Korea, Diego Garci, Guam, Senegal, Singapore, Mauritania, Niger, Chad, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Seychelles, Botswana, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudan, Cameroon, Gabon

power-knowledge dynamic that creates and recreates political meaning. States may define or redefine terms to convey a political perspective. This might certainly be the case for the term Indo-Pacific. By applying genealogy, this paper uncovers the political necessity felt by states concerned about the rise of China to further understand the process of foreign policy development. States formulate language and concepts to accept the threat to the status quo as posed by China. The development of the term Indo-Pacific is a speech act conveying existential urgency to threatened states, but also highlights positive relations between threatened states including the histories of alliances and economic interdependence. The invention and use of the term *Indo-Pacific* reflect this security concern as well as the drive toward alliance formation (Page 2016; Yeo 2018; Atta-Asamoah 2019 (Table 1)).

This paper adopts the ontology of realist theories of international relations (states as a unit of study) while embracing post-structural epistemology (language and genealogy). In other words, it examines the state as the primary actor but emphasizes the importance of language in the mobilization of state resources in foreign policy. These theories oppose and critique one another, as realism omits language and discourse, preferring to focus on state behavior while post-structural rejects the state. By combining these theories, this article addresses the limitations of realism and post-structuralism. However, realism fails to address political change, because it fails to answer *why* questions, studying the evolution of ideas and perception through language. Realism may tell us *how* states balance with little reasoning except that states seek survival (Wendt 1997, 1999). Post-structuralism remedies this by studying the evolution of language reflecting individual perceptions and rejecting the state (Carta and Narminio 2021; Doty 1993; Said 1978). Post-structuralists consider the state as the source of insecurity, as artificial divisions, for instance, borders make the world unsafe. As a result, post-structuralism has been considered impractical in the real world (Tamas 2004; Eyben 2000). This may be due to its foundations in critical theory, specifically its focus on individual perceptions and the utter disregard for the state as an artificial governance unit that hinders human progress and fulfillment (Ibid). Realists argue that states are still the main actor in international relations and must always be the center of analysis (Waltz 2010). Indeed, states are the main holders of military power by which all other rules, regulations, and behaviors are created

(Waltz 1999). As a consequence, this article hopes to build on the strengths of both theories: accepting the state as the main actor while also discussing the centrality of language. Hence, this paper proposes a theoretical framework that combines realist ontology (the state) with a post-structural epistemological approach to explain (or understand) state alliance formulation within multipolarity.

This paper hopes to highlight the discursive efforts of states to create alliances. In this paper, the so-called Indo-Pacific region is manifested by the state's need to secure itself and its interests (Shishir and Sakib 2022). The first part of this paper discusses realist concepts such as the state, power, and international system. It establishes the international political context, specifically undergoing systemic transition, from unipolarity to multipolarity. QUAD states seek to preserve the status quo as underwritten by the United States and resist the rise of China (Beeson and Lee-Brown 2021). Second, the paper discusses the genealogical method, laying the foundation provided by Michel Foucault. Third, the paper combines the two approaches, showing function through the already established Securitization framework. The article then traces the genealogy of the term Indo-Pacific to highlight the processes of securitization given changes in the structure of international relations (Joseph 2023; Shah 2021). By studying the speeches and statements of leaders in concerned states, we might better understand these processes. In doing so, one might be able to understand the mechanisms that formulate foreign policy during times of systemic transition. Systemic transition forms the article's third part. It highlights the theoretical advances of Gilpin (1988) as well as Organski (1958) and Lemke (1997) as they focus on state security behavior. Gilpin succinctly highlights this process:

Over time, the power of one subordinate state begins to grow disproportionately; as this development occurs, it comes into conflict with the hegemonic state. The struggle between these contenders for preeminence ... leads to the bipolarization of the system ... [which then] becomes a zero-sum situation in which one side's gain is by necessity the other side's loss (1988, 595).

As the international system transforms from unipolarity to multipolarity, there will first be a linguistic response that attempts to convey ideational urgency. This urgency forms the crux of foreign base development, as states seek to project power. Such existential urgency can shape ideas and identities so much so a new regional concept could emerge. We are seeing this now in the form of the proposed Indo-Pacific space. Language thus has a material manifestation, driven by states, as states seek to balance against any perception of Chinese expansion in the so-called Indo-Pacific region. In many ways, powers that seek to balance against China must court one another and find common ground and protect material interests (Shishir and Sakib 2022).

2 Realist Ontology and Post-structural Epistemology? A Justification Through the Study of Alliance Formation and Threat Perception

This section proposes a theoretical model that combines realist ontology, the state, with an interpretive, linguistic understanding, post-structuralist epistemology. The aim is to trace the development of alliance formation against China by looking at the genealogy of the term *Indo-Pacific*. This alliance is generated from the concern states have about the rise of China and the emerging multipolar international system. Hence, to understand the emerging alliance of so-called Indo-Pacific states, this paper must first explore the realist ontological foundations of the state system.

2.1 The State, the State System, and Multipolarity

The state is the primary actor for realist theories of international relations (Waltz 2010; Carr 1978; Walt 1987). The state's function is survival within the anarchical, self-help international system. States must acquire power for them to survive as independent political units as there is no overarching authority that can enforce laws respecting the sovereignty of weaker states (Waltz 2010, p 109). Hence, states must acquire power to ensure survival. Power is based on approximations of “size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability, and competence” (Ibid 131). Power can be accumulated through internal balancing, building up military strength through weapons purchasing and development, or external balancing or alliances (Ibid 168). Walt (1985, 1987) argues that it is often difficult to distinguish between offensive and defensive weapons, and so ultimately, internal balancing can be perceived as a threat to neighboring states. Survival behavior thus determines the international order as states either balance or bandwagon against one another (Snyder 2002, p 165).

The international system is based on the distribution of capabilities across states. The international system is unipolar, bipolar, or multipolar based on how power is distributed. Since power is relatively distributed unevenly between states given the zero-sum nature of international relations, states are actively competing for power. If a state is growing in economic size, then it will seek to expand its military power to protect its economic interests (Zakaria 1998; Gilpin 1988; Carr 1978). This paper argues that China has risen to challenge the United States. Along with Russia's resurgence, the international system is multipolar (Brooks and Wohlforth 2016; Haass 2017). Indeed, the United States' unipolar liberal order is being challenged by Russia and China and QUAD states perceive this as a threat and a disturbance to the previous unipolar American order which preserved the status quo (Mochizuki 2022; Beeson and Lee-Brown 2021; Liff 2022; Morrison 2019). As revisionist powers, Russia and China are seeking to reform the international order together as they seek further power (Yuan 2022; Allison 2017; Pavlova 2018). This shift has been noted by scholars to show that the nature of global politics has changed significantly since the end of the twentieth century (Pieterse 2018; Woodley 2015). Given the paper's China focus, it is important to note that economic indicators all point to China overtaking the United States economically and politically (Ibid). As China

increases in power, it will continue to demand changes to the international order. Meanwhile, the United States has declined significantly in power due to its misadventures in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the 2008 economic collapse (Lebovic 2019; Chung 2017). So as the United States declines, China and Russia will rise and seek to alter the status quo to serve their interests and prestige, especially after periods of humiliation (for Russia: the collapse of the Soviet Union; for China, the Century of Humiliation) (Wang 2020; Sharafutdinova 2020). The international system is changing as great powers are competing with each other within their spheres of influence. Russia is in the middle of its Ukrainian invasion, an act that has directly impacted economic stability leading to discussions on deglobalization (Alam et al. 2022; Kagarlitsky et al. 2022). Simultaneously, China is pursuing dominance in the South China Sea with its illegal island building, and militarization of the so-called 9-dash line project (Li and Yang 2020). China specifically is seeking to change or alter the international order set up after the collapse of the Soviet Union, specifically to absorb Taiwan and the South China Sea within its complete control (Taylor 2020; He 2021). If China manages to successfully invade and annex Taiwan, Japan, and other neighboring states will feel threatened for their security and ultimate survival as sovereign states (Mochizuki 2022; Liff 2022). These two issues, along with other areas of confrontation (competition in Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East) all reflect the changing international system from unipolarity to multipolarity (Eisenman and Heginbotham 2019). The exact positions of QUAD states will be discussed in the empirical section.

Since China is rising and seeking to alter the international system to acquire further power, neighboring states, for example, Taiwan and Japan, perceive China as a threat. Walt (1985, p. 9) posits that threats from states are often perceived as urgent due to proximity to that state. There are four basic factors that states incorporate to determine the threat level. The first is power defined by military, economic, and other factors defined by Waltz (2010, p. 131). Geographical proximity is another major variable as well as offensive capability and intentions (Walt 1985, p. 9–15). The existence of these factors pushes states to formulate alliances. Since these factors are present concerning China, then states near China will come together to balance against China to maintain their existence as sovereign states within the anarchical International system. Alliances are thus a strategy of survival driven by the fear of other states and their power (Waltz 2010, p. 166; Walt 1987).

To understand the dynamic that drives alliance behavior, we must first delve into ways states perceive dangers and threats to their security. This is to prepare for the following sections on alliance formulation, specifically how states court one another. Such a humanist perception is not addressed by realist thought. This paper thus addresses a significant gap in the literature: how states formulate alliances, not just because of a perception of threat, but also because states draw on their unique understandings of state relations. As such, states advance their interests not simply to neutralize threats, but to shape and reshape identities to preserve their position.

2.1.1 Post-structural Epistemology and the Method of Genealogy: Tracing Today's Construct of the Indo-Pacific

Genealogy is a method, or a style, of historical/political interpretive thought that exposes and registers the significance of power-knowledge relations (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982; Kritzman 1988; Garland 2014, p. 372). It is not a search for origins, but a method of analysis (Garland 2014, p. 372) but rather “separates the original uses or meanings of a phenomenon and the later senses and purposes that it acquires” (Ibid). Generally, genealogy documents the transformation of a term or concept as it interacts with power. For example, Foucault leans on Jeremy Bentham's work on Panopticon prisons in the eighteenth century to understand the dynamic of societal control today (Foucault 1977).

Developed by Fredrick Nietzsche but transformed by Michel Foucault in his work, genealogy provides a sort of “history of the modern soul” to uncover power in its present context. The mentioned book's aim “is intended as a correlative history of the modern soul and of a new power to judge; a genealogy of the present scientific-legal complex from which the power to punish derives its bases, justification, and rules, from which it extends its effects by which it masks its exorbitant singularity” (23). In other words, genealogy attempts to understand today's power constructs through conceptual evolution at a common starting point.

Foucault draws up four general rules for his genealogical study on penal systems (the subject of *Discipline and Punish*). The first of the four is:

- (1) Do not concentrate the study of the punitive mechanisms on their ‘repressive effects alone, on their ‘punishment’ aspects alone, but situate them in a whole series of their possible positive effects, even if these seem marginal at first sight (23).

To paraphrase, Foucault wishes those that adopt this style to understand the good intentions of the punishment as a manifestation of state power. For instance, imprisonment is a demonstration of state power. While punishing an individual for a crime, one may hope to also reform them in this process. Prisons today hope to accomplish this through counseling and education programs.

The second general rule for Foucault:

- (2) Analyze punitive methods not simply as consequences of legislation or as indicators of social structures, but as techniques possessing their own specificity in the more general field of other ways of exercising power. Regard punishment as a political tactic (23).

To rephrase, punishment is more than a social construction. It might also be a product of power even in its most random and arbitrary form. Justice may serve the power interests of those responsible for dispensing justice. This makes it a tactic to not only employ power but to protect it through its institutionalization.

The third general rule follows:

- (3) Instead of treating the history of penal law and the history of human society as two separate series...make the technology of power the very principle of both the humanization of the penal system and of the knowledge of man (23).

Foucault is stating that the penal system is intertwined with humanity's progress as the implementation of power is specifically utilized to define what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior in our modern world. This is connected to the fourth general rule:

- (4) Try to discover whether this entry of the soul on the scene of penal justice, and with the insertion in legal practice of a whole corpus of 'scientific knowledge' is not the effect of a transformation of the way in which the body itself is invested in power relations (24).

Said differently, the method of analysis seeks to connect the penal system (and power relations) with the human experience.

The four rules of genealogy combined describe how states develop and use a narrative to justify certain behaviors and gain consent, not just from the population, but from other states. Concepts take new meaning, as actors focus on good intentions such as the promotion of freedom and democracy, even as states defend their material interests in terms of power (the realist formulation). Forwarding these "good intentions" is a means to justify productive punishment toward a specific political goal such as promoting the betterment of humankind resulting in a systems-wide transformation. The United States' invasion of Iraq in 2003 is another example worth discussing, as the United States used the concept of "freedom" to justify military action, saying it would ultimately create a safer world for democracy (Jervis 2005; Nuruzzaman 2006).¹

As a method, the genealogical approach is remarkably flexible and dynamic, especially since the field of politics and sociology today has become quite stringent in its methodological purity from a dedication to positivism (Cohen 2010). Other positivist approaches may not uncover mechanisms governing state behavior as they seek power within anarchy. A specific dedication to one theory ignores a wider range of possibilities to explain and understand global/international relations. Post-structuralist theories are also lacking, as the state is the main mover of international politics due to their enormous power, not simply its military power, but its ability to

¹ For a full transcript of Bush's justification of the invasion of Iraq, specifically his genealogical use of the concepts "freedom" and "democracy" please see "Transcript of President Bush's Address—CNN" http://articles.cnn.com/2001-09-20/us/gen.bush.transcript_1_joint-session-national-anthem-citizens?_s=PM:US (accessed 8/28/2012, 2012).

create reality for others based on its behavior. Yet, in International Relations, scholars are dedicated to their theories, shutting down discussions or debates with others that do not hold their specific ontological or epistemological position (Cohen 2007; Martill and Schindler 2020). Foucault may have called this dedication to positivism *disciplinary*, as it “requires enclosure, the specification of a place heterogeneous to all others and closed in upon itself” (Foucault 1977, p. 141). In this regard, academic rigor becomes a gatekeeper in that all who wish to succeed must adopt a specific style. Foucault himself once criticized academia for such approaches. He preferred not to rely on overwhelming citations (fewer citations are a staple critique used by many academic journal reviewers). He instead manipulated the conceptual tools created by others: “For myself, I prefer to utilize the writers I like. The only valid tribute to thought such as Nietzsche’s is to precisely use it, to deform it, to make it groan and protest (Foucault 1980, p. 53–54 [quoted in Garland 2014, p. 365–366]). In this light, this article will not trace the origins of the term Indo-Pacific but solely focuses on its usage. Usage determines the acceptance of the term and its specific contextual framing behind the term.

To summarize, genealogical studies hope to use discourse to study the productive aspects of the destructive aspects of power.² The aim is to trace the function of power, specifically its desire to change human behavior as part of an existential process of progress. While Foucault does say this in an overly complicated way (as per Chomsky’s critique [see Wilkin 1999]), it is clear that a power-knowledge dynamic is evident. The study of language and discourse is at the center of his analysis. Adding the state as the ontological unit of study hopes to add to securitization literature. States hold great epistemic power to transform language and the example of the Indo-Pacific allows us to understand this better.

3 Theoretical Framework: A Post-Positive Realism?

The framework proposed in this article builds on social constructivism. Social constructivism posits a social theory of international relations by combining post-structural theories of international security with realism (Wendt 1997, 1999). The genealogy approach traces the usage of language defined by states as they seek security. Genealogy reveals the centrality of language as part of state securitization framework; the process states use to further their security through discourse.

The proposed theoretical framework is unique as it combines conflicting theories: it accepts the state as the main actor of international affairs (realism) while studying its language. Post-structuralist theories tend to look at knowledge, language, and discourse in general. It does not accept the state as an actor preferring to look at

² Genealogy is a post-positivist methodology that traces the history, development, and transformation of meaning over time. This methodology is different from positivist content analysis or other qualitative methodologies given its post-structural foundation (see Smith et al. 1996). For instance, content analysis might examine *how* concepts within coding and classification, something that goes beyond the scope of this paper (Johnson et al. 2020).

the development of knowledge solely (see the previous section). Conversely, realism does not discuss language, discourse, or any post-positivist endeavors. Realism focuses on the state and its behavior within the context of self-help power politics within anarchy (Waltz 2010). Both theories/perspectives are opposed to one another. Yet, each has incredible merit, and an amalgamative approach results in a rich explanation/understanding of international politics within the multipolar context. One way to understand how these two seemingly oppositional theories complement one another is through the existing securitization framework (Buzan et al 1998; Shah 2021; Joseph 2023).

Securitization is a framework within Social Constructivism that describes the process by which states, and other actors, use language to construct perceptions of insecurity (Ibid). It uses states as an ontological starting point yet examines language, specifically tracing the method by which states deem issues existential threats. Actors holding positions of authority wield epistemic power to convince audiences that a certain threat exists. The threat must be significant enough to relate to the existential survival of a referent object (Ibid, 32). A referent object is any existential entity meaning that the very existence of humankind is at risk. For instance, Al Gore argues that climate change is an existential threat to human life (Warner and Boaz 2019); Ronald Reagan argued that drug trafficking poses an existential threat to youth and thus the future of nations and states (Crick 2012). Speech acts are at the center of securitization theory. Speech acts are the attempt to persuade the audience that a threat to a referent object is indeed real and significant (Buzan et al 1998, p. 32). Persons in authority are needed to enunciate the issue in a way that successfully convinces an audience that the threat is indeed real and pertinent enough to transform norms, spend tax dollars, and even accept changes in standards of living. Language communicates these political transformations. The existential nature of the threat promotes its urgency and, as a result, extreme measures outside the realm of normal politics and procedures can be taken to neutralize that threat (Balzacq 2005).

Genealogy and securitization are related here as speech acts, language that conveys the urgency of a particular matter. Genealogy shows how a concept may change if states seek to convince others of a particular nature, not simply to preserve or secure themselves, but to punish. In the case of the Indo-Pacific, states are seeking security by highlighting danger from the rise of China using language, reshaping geopolitics for that purpose. This paper utilizes realist ontology (the state) and the post-structuralist epistemological methodology (genealogy). The speeches, declarations, and statements enunciated by state leaders present a random sampling of concerns that define the current political struggle between states located in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Genealogy uncovers the process behind securitization by uncovering the linguistic aspects that make such a process possible. Post-structuralism, specifically genealogy, studies language as a vehicle for understanding international politics. Consequently, this article will transplant Foucault's approach described above to changes in international politics enshrined in the development of language, specifically the term Indo-Pacific. In short, this paper argues that the term Indo-Pacific is used to combine the national security concerns of states residing within the Indian and Pacific Oceans

by developing a common identity. Since states seek power to achieve security, a seemingly productive notion. While it does have negative connotations, the intention is the use of power to protect individuals and the democratic institutions that make up these states (Foucault's rules 1 and 2). This particular process is underscored by a natural inclination for states (and civilizations) making up this area to protect themselves as part of their civilizations' wider destiny (Foucault's rules 3 and 4). In many ways, the international system is based on these repeated patterns of behavior of actors seeking power. Power-seeking behavior is designed to have productive manifestations (achieving security) yet generate outcomes. These outcomes may have destructive consequences but are nevertheless forgotten. The concept of genealogy provides a precise look into power relations, as Garland (2014) notes: "genealogical analysis traces how contemporary practices and institutions emerged out of specific struggles, conflicts, alliances, and exercises of power" (372). It looks at the process of emergence and evolution of ideas (Ibid). The recent emergence and process of the term Indo-Pacific must be analyzed within the genealogical framework.

The previous section on the genealogical evolution of the term Indo-Pacific underscores the securitization of an entire geographical regional identity (Joseph 2023; Shah 2021). Hence, in this case, the referent object in the Indo-Pacific specifically continued access to the Indo-Pacific given the military and economic rise of China as a counter-hegemonic force. The United States, India, Japan, Australia, and other partners like Taiwan and the Philippines, are concerned that an expansionist China may deny or simply control all of the space in the Indo-Pacific region (Dar 2022; Karki 2022; Shah 2021). By studying speeches and statements (as shown in the previous section) as well as the development of the term Indo-Pacific, it is clear that actors are concerned enough to move this issue from normal procedures to extreme measures (Ibid, 24). As a result, speech acts mobilize resources toward a threat to a referent object to neutralize that threat. In this way, language impacts the material world as it shapes state security priorities and, therefore, behavior.

Tracing the genealogy of the Indo-Pacific identity illustrates the geopolitical necessity arising out of Chinese expansion. Airplanes, dogs, love, fun, and sadness, are words that explain a feature, but they also have a context behind them that form a mental image. It is the mental image of terms that provides insight into language. Language communicates these ideas from one person to another. It forms a bond that translates to material action informing reality. Similarly, Indo-Pacific communicates a desire to integrate state policies of various regional actors as they seek security against an expanding China. This paper studies the usage of the term Indo-Pacific looking at speeches and declarations by the United States, Japan, Taiwan, Australia, and India. By looking at the context of their use, and the meanings generated by such use, we might be able to get a better understanding of the geopolitical confrontation between these states and China. Analyzing previous statements in tandem with relatively new additions convey a sense of urgency or priority in global political narratives. Indo-Pacific is enough to convey specific realities that govern international relations: systemic transition and power politics. The following section will note how this term is used in a geopolitical context by studying the speeches of various states most concerned about the rise of China.

4 The Empirical Evidence and Theoretical Application: Exploring the Indo-Pacific Concept

Taking a genealogical approach, this section hopes to highlight the power-knowledge dynamic governing the evolving geopolitical space referred to as the Indo-Pacific. States are responding to the rise of China by bringing together various powers in the region through expressed linguistic urgency. This serves to consolidate existing alliances (robust relations with the United States) but also foment stronger ties, specifically between the other QUAD member states (Beeson and Lee-Brown 2021). Hence, we are seeing genealogy in action as states express their good intentions, justifying their use of power for the world's benefit through the Indo-Pacific concept. By studying the usage of the term, a better understanding of geopolitical struggle may be attained. This usage is governed by the security concerns of states concerned by increased Chinese influence in the region. To understand the usage of this particular term, the speeches, and statements of leaders in the United States, Japan, Australia, Taiwan, and India must be analyzed and contextualized. In many instances, China is not referred to explicitly, but only implicitly, as states are concerned that China may become more aggressive. A united front must be established to balance against China's power. This united front is made up of states of the Indo-Pacific region. The term is, therefore, used by states to form an alliance furnished by a common identity. States thus produce language to highlight their struggles to survive against a perceived enemy (Hayatu et al. 2017; Morozov 2018). The post-structural perspective provides a unique understanding of this process.

The driving factor for the development of the term Indo-Pacific is geopolitical. It underscores a conflict over interests and influence, used to promote good intentions to promote a political goal resulting in a fundamental transformation, in this case, a more robust and securitized Asia. Driven by the feelings of insecurity, states hope to push back or punish, to use Foucault's language, China for its increased, and perceivably negative, influence in the international system for two reasons. The first is China's predatory loan behavior demonstrated by its One Belt, One Road initiative (Jeganaathan 2017; Hurley et al 2018; Brautigam 2011). This project has been criticized as 'debt-trap' diplomacy (Al-Fadhat and Prasetyo 2022; United States Congress 2019). The One Belt, One Road initiative plans to unite much of the Indo-Pacific space, through Central and Southeast Asia, to Africa, and Europe. The second is China's military buildup in the region, specifically its island-building strategy in the South China Sea as well as the building of foreign bases in East Africa and along the Indian Ocean coast (Shishir and Sakib 2022; Dar 2022; Karki 2022; Page 2016; Yeo 2018; Atta-Asamoah 2019). China's String of Pearls strategy is significant, as it describes the strategy of building and maintaining hubs in states like Pakistan, Oman, Yemen, Djibouti, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Singapore, and Myanmar (Ismail and Husnain 2022; Marantidou 2014, 16; Ashraf 2017). The term Indo-Pacific is a response to these developments, as states are concerned for their survival predicated on free and open trading routes in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. The motivation is the defense of the status quo, against China's challenge to the American unipolar order (Brooks and Wohlforth 2016; Haass 2017). The desire then is to

formulate a strategy to balance against or resist China's power and influence. Indo-Pacific thus hopes to organize state power toward this end. Tracing the beginning of the term is essential to genealogical pursuits.

The term Indo-Pacific was first described (but the term was not explicitly stated) in a geopolitical context by Shinzo Abe's speech entitled "Confluence of the Two Seas" (Li 2021, p. 2). Before that, it was used by Karl Haushofer, a geographer, to describe the environment of the Indian and Pacific Oceans as it related to colonial divisions between western and Japanese powers (Li 2021, p. 1). In the mentioned speech, Prime Minister Abe addresses the Parliament of India. He describes the historical connection between Japanese and Indian societies today and in the past, telling stories about the friendship of Swami Vivekananda and Tenshin Okakura, anti-colonial intellectuals that saw their cultures as not only unique but superior to the western world (Gordan 2014, p. 47). These two were nationalists, not in a separate Indian and Japanese sense, but proposed an Asian identity, seeing "Asia is one" unit (Okakura 1956, p. 6). It is interesting that a hundred years later, Abe would resurrect these scholars to illustrate the interconnection of Japanese and Indian identities. However, the reasoning is revealed at the speech's end: "Now, as this new "broader Asia" takes shape at the confluence of the two seas of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, I feel that it is imperative that the democratic nations located at opposite edges of these seas deepen the friendship among their citizens at every possible level" (Abe 2007). Back to the speech's opening, Abe quotes Vivekanda, highlighting the unifying factor of the Pacific Ocean: "The different streams, having their sources in different places, all mingle their water in the sea" (quoted in Abe 2007). Abe is essentially highlighting the common destiny and identity of contemporary India and Japan by highlighting the importance of a free and navigable ocean.

By illustrating common democratic values, Abe is also implicitly warning of China's rise. This speech was an important marker for international security relations. Abe here attempts to forge an identity with India as a way to balance against China. He points to the authoritarian nature of China's political system, but also specifically notes the need to preserve the status quo, keeping the seas free of China's control. Keeping with genealogy, Abe hopes to promote democracy and the freedom of sea navigation by underscoring the unique historical experience between Japan and India. This goal is in opposition to China's ambitions over total control of the nine-dash line space. Hence, Abe is shaping the contemporary geopolitical narrative relying on an interpretation of the past, i.e., the relationship between the two scholars, to furnish an alliance. Genealogically then, Japan's good intentions have a wider meaning even while identifying China as a major threat to the international order. In a 2016 speech titled "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy," Abe further would again discuss the Indo-Pacific, but this time the term would be used explicitly further strengthening the expressed desire to create a new regional identity to push back against China (Satake 2019). On this occasion, Abe's speech took place in Kenya in Africa. The significance of these locations is key as it consolidates the geopolitical sphere Abe is seeking to securitize (see next section for further details). Genealogy exposes the method behind securitization, sketching the process that makes persuasion conceivable. In this case, it is the development of a new geopolitical space that engulfs two vast oceans.

Japan is not the only state pushing for the Indo-Pacific regional identity. In 2018, the United States renamed its “Pacific Command” to “Indo-Pacific Command” clearly highlighting the central importance of these two regions into one (Copp 2018). General Jim Mattis led this change saying “America’s vision is shared by most nations in the region. For every state, sovereignty is respected, no matter its size and it’s a region open to investment and free, fair, and reciprocal trade not bound by any nation’s predatory economics or threat of coercion, for the Indo-Pacific has many belts and many roads” (Mattis 2018). Mattis here is implicitly talking about China when he mentions the Belt and Road initiative. Hence, the rise of China is driving the conception of Indo-Pacific. The concern first launched as a speech act (Buzan et al. 1998) by Prime Minister Abe is now institutionalized by the United States: this is the power of securitization and speech acts in progress. For a speech act to work, there must be an audience that agrees (Ibid, 32). In this case, the audience is states that feel threatened by an expanding China. This includes Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, and India. These states border either the nine-dash line in the South China Sea (first three) or have competing border disputes (India). The following discusses these leaders’ contextual use of the term Indo-Pacific as it relates to the wider genealogical discourse set about by initial interlocutors. Mattis above describes the American perspective: China is threatening its position in the international system. One major signifier of the United States is the threat posed to the status quo. The status quo is the system as it is with the independent states already in existence (Gilpin 1988). There is the perception that China is seeking to overturn the order, beginning with incorporating independent states into its territory. Taiwan might be the first of these states.

President Tsai Ing-wen of Taiwan is probably the most concerned for her state given the rise of China. She uses the Indo-Pacific identity as a free and open region threatened by authoritarian expansionism. Specifically, no other state has been threatened by China like Taiwan, as regular verbal threats of invasion are coupled with violations of Taiwanese airspace by Chinese fighter jets. In a recent statement, Chinese President Xi Jinping stated he desired unification with Taiwan, saying: “Solving the Taiwan question and realizing the complete reunification of the motherland are the unswerving historical tasks of the Chinese Communist Party and the common aspiration of all Chinese people,” and that “All sons and daughters of China, including compatriots on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, must work together and move forward in solidarity, resolutely smashing any ‘Taiwan independence’ plots” (Xi quoted in Tian and Lee 2021). On April 13, 2021, China flew 25 warplanes into Taiwanese airspace (including J-10 fighters), the largest breach to date (Baker 2021). These violations and verbal threats send threatening messages to Taiwan; that they may soon be invaded by a great power. China’s threatening messages to Taiwan necessitate a response. Taiwan sees that its strong relations with the democratic world, especially with members of the Quadrilateral Defense Dialogue (QUAD), an alliance of Pacific and Indian Ocean powers: the United States, Japan, India, and Australia (to be discussed in a later section) (Beeson and Lee-Brown 2021; Taylor 2020). To unite these states into a common identity, and to include itself as an Indo-Pacific state for its own

defense, Tsai must use and adopt the existing language. She specifically must use the term Indo-Pacific. Indo-Pacific consolidates the alliance in the region because it combines democratic states by highlighting the disruptive authoritarian ambition of China. In the following speech act, you might see how she centers Taiwan as a major pillar of American-led global order, specifically locating economic and democratic aspects of American hegemony as major assets to the wider world:

The Indo-Pacific is the world's fastest growing region. It offers myriad opportunities in areas like trade, research, manufacturing, and education. The stability of this region offers reassurance to the development of the global economy and international security. And it has a pivotal role to play in defining the course of the twenty-first century.

The Indo-Pacific's emergence is also accompanied by newly developed tensions and systemic contradictions. The rise of a more assertive authoritarianism is the driver of such friction and poses the most serious challenge.

Emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic, authoritarian regimes are now more convinced that their alternative model of governance is better adapted than the liberal democratic order.

Despite this worrisome trend, Taiwan continues to thrive and be part of the solution for an international community that is still trying to find its post-pandemic footing, while tackling hurdles such as climate change, emerging diseases, non-proliferation, terrorism, and secure supply chains.

With the revival of QUAD and the EU's proposed EU-Asia Connectivity Strategy, which advocates for a sustainable, comprehensive, and rules-based approach to connectivity, Taiwan is well positioned to serve as an indispensable partner in democratic renewal and in sectors such as biotechnology, renewable energy, and the semiconductor industry (Tsai 2021).

Tsai here is connecting Taiwan to the QUAD to position itself as the center of the Indo-Pacific. She mentions Indo-Pacific as it relates to the rise of China, and not only links Taiwan to QUAD states but to every important sector of the global political economy including "climate change, emerging diseases..." etc., (Ibid). Genealogically speaking, Tsai is linking Taiwan's survival with the survival of not just the QUAD, but the entire international liberal democratic order. She is warning her partners that if Taiwan falls, autocratic models of government may proliferate having global effects (given her mention of the EU's interests in the region, energy, and semiconductor industry, an industry that Taiwan holds a virtual monopoly over (Cherney 2021). Taiwan is making a convincing case to its allies: focus on preserving democracy by opposing dictatorship, as this would not just benefit Taiwan, but all humankind. This is a clear demonstration of Foucault's rules 1–4 of genealogy: advocating good intentions by bringing world attention to China's aggression to prepare for a possible world war.

Taiwan seems to be the center of the confrontation between the United States' liberal order and China. Additionally, Japan is a state concerned about the possibility of a Chinese invasion of Taiwan. Deputy Prime Minister Tara Aso had voiced his concern about this possibility, stating that any invasion of Taiwan by China could be an "existential threat" to Japan, that (in full context) "If a major incident occurs in

Taiwan, it's not at all unusual to consider it an existential threat" Further, "in such a case, Japan and the United States might have to work together to defend Taiwan" (quoted in Feng 2021). Aso also stated explicitly that if such an invasion were to take place and nothing was done, it was quite possible that "Okinawa could be next" (Ibid). In sum, Aso, a representative of the Japanese state argues that all efforts should be made to protect Taiwanese sovereignty from China. States are positioning themselves to balance against China relying on genealogy to consolidate the alliance.

Taiwan is not the only state concerned about China. India, a significant member of the QUAD alliance has also been in direct conflict with China. In 2020, there was a series of skirmishes on the India-China border Ladakh border (Tarapore 2021). Chinese incursions over the Line of Actual Control in the area almost brought the two states to war. This transformed the relationship between the two states from one of cooperation in the BRICS conglomeration to distrust, leading to closer ties with the United States. India is now a QUAD member and Modi is seeking deeper ties with member states. At the 2021 QUAD summit, his remarks were brief and constructive:

Excellencies, we are united by our democratic values and our commitment to a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific. Our agenda today—covering areas like vaccines, climate change, and emerging technologies—make the Quad a force for global good. I see this positive vision as an extension of India's ancient philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, which regards the world as one family. We will work together, closer than ever before, for advancing our shared values and promoting a secure, stable, and prosperous Indo-Pacific (White House 2021b).

The focus for India, like other states, is focusing on bringing states together in the spirit of cooperation. However, there is a unifying destabilizing factor that is driving the QUAD alliance: the threat from autocratic powers. Mentioning democratic values and commitments to free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific is a clear jab directed at China. While China is not named, it is clear given geopolitical claims that China is seeking to control significant portions of the region. Again, the concept Indo-Pacific is referred to as a method of preserving democracy against China. QUAD states are preparing for a possible war with China, using language promoting democracy to achieve that goal.

Finally, Australia, like India, has felt the ramifications of China's opposition to its policies. Australia has banned Huawei, a Chinese technology firm with ties to the Chinese Communist Party. It has been accused of spying (France 24, December 17, 2020). As a consequence, China banned Australian goods like barley, wine, coal, and iron (Ibid). This, alongside other QUAD concerns, has led Prime Minister Scott Morrison to advocate for coordinated action to protect Australian and allied interests in the region. In a speech titled "Where we live", Morrison underscores the same themes repeated by other QUAD states: that Indo-Pacific states hold a common identity. Beginning with an appeal to the Indo-Pacific region:

Today I want to talk about our plan to foster an open, inclusive and prosperous Indo-Pacific, consistent with our national interests. I would like to set out the principles, consistent with our national values, that will guide my government's engagement with the Indo-Pacific region (Morrison, June 25, 2019).

From this, Morrison describes how Australia has significant interests in the region. He uses “our” to emphasize a common identity with other QUAD members. He then shows that there is significant disruption emanating from discord between the United States and China. He reminds China that it has much to gain from cooperation with the United States and the rules-based liberal order than overturning it:

Now, China is a significant power, with vast military, global interests and the biggest economy in the world in terms of purchasing power parity. It is important to acknowledge that this success was made possible by the active and strategic engagement of the United States and the wider global community. First, through enthusiastic bilateral exchange and then by supporting access to the global rules-based trading system through China's accession to the WTO in 2001, gave it much better access to the markets of 154 member economies...In 1980, China's trade with the outside world amounted to less than \$40 billion. By 2015, it had increased one 100-fold, to \$4 trillion (Ibid).

Before concluding, Morrison restates his commitment to cooperation and the global order, warning that all parties have much more to gain than in overturning the international order:

It is a fundamental building block of our engagement with the Indo-Pacific. A South Pacific that is secure strategically, stable economically and sovereign politically. It is where Australia can make the biggest difference through our initiatives including the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific, our labor market programs and undersea cable projects, for example. A strong, stable region keeps us more secure and enables our economies to grow and our peoples to prosper (Ibid).

Like other actors discussed, Australia is relying on genealogy, directly addressing China and arguing that it would be much better to assimilate with the unipolar order rather than outwardly challenging it. Morrison is criticizing the current confrontation between the United States and China by highlighting the opportunities lost to continued cooperation. By invoking Indo-Pacific, Australia is refocusing attention to its own area as an avenue for security's sake. Morrison is not only reminding actors of what could be if they put aside competition, but also sending an implicit warning to China.

4.1 Theoretical Synthesis and Summary: Genealogy and the State

In these examples, it is clear that states of the Indian and Pacific Oceans feel a common threat by China and are developing a common identity to establish an alliance. However, these threats are not addressed explicitly but rather said implicitly, sometimes not even mentioning China by name, preferring to only describe specific attributes that are obvious to most people studying the region. The United States believes its liberal order is being challenged by the United States. India and Australia have felt the negative impacts of opposing China. Japan, the state that created the term in a geopolitical sense, believes it is the next on the list to be invaded after Taiwan. Indo-Pacific attempts to push these states closer together to balance against an aggressive China. On their own, these states may feel less powerful, but together may provide some balance to the region. Hence, genealogically, Indo-Pacific is fundamental to security-seeking actors in the region that perceive China as an existential threat to their interests in terms of survival. It is clear that states are relying on perception, drawing on the language of emergency and existentialism over the security behavior expected by realism. Alliances are thus not simply a mechanism that states use to pursue security, but also reflect a process of identity creation.

Before the securitization process of the Indo-Pacific region is discussed, it is important to further apply and summarize Foucault's four rules of genealogy (post-structural epistemology) as it relates to the state (realist ontology) and the Indo-Pacific concept as an identity. The first is to understand the productive intentions of power. It is clear that Japan and the United States are trying to balance China's expansionary policies in the region. It may provide some stability to China's predation in the region. However, there is a clear contradiction in this. As states try to balance power, they are inviting further expansionary measures as a means to counter the initial balancing attempt. In other words, as states attempt to secure their interests from an aggressive power, they invite further increases in power. This forms the quintessential security dilemma (Herz 1950). Foucault's second rule studies how that power is employed and institutionalized through language. The term Indo-Pacific has the power to change and alter state behavior and foreign policy approaches and has led to significant increases in power presence in the region (Davidson 2014; Scott 2019). Combining these two rules, the QUAD may try increase their own security and developmental strategies in the areas thereby assisting underdeveloped states in the region (Taylor 2020). It is clear that without the rise of China, QUAD powers may not maintain an interest in this particular region.

Foucault's rules 3 and 4 are also related to this as China and allied powers battle for influence in the Indo-Pacific. For instance, the US BUILD Act directly confronts China's One Belt, One Road initiative. This Act was proposed under the Trump Administration with the direction of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. He states: "The Act provides opportunities for American companies to compete overseas and create jobs here at home, a critical component of the President's national economic strategy. BUILD strengthens the U.S. government's development finance capacity, offering a better alternative to state-directed investments and advancing our foreign policy goals" (quoted in Runde and Bandura 2018, CSIS). State-directed investments here is a direct challenge to China's model of state-led economic strategies

(Jeganaathan 2017). The American strategy is meant to balance against China's efforts and help deliver economic opportunities to citizens of Indo-Pacific states. The aim is to decrease economic dependency on China (Jacobs and Rossem 2016). The more developed lesser developed states in the region become, the more likely the human condition would be improved as the focus is placed on delivering aid and employment to those living in developing states (Hurley et al 2018; Brautigam 2011). Thus, the more productive manifestations of twenty-first century great power politics assist in human development and economic development and this reflects genealogy. From this, political-economic outcomes are not merely part of a destructive great power competition as in the past, but it relies on global leadership, hegemony, and the question of who might be able to deliver development. Since genealogical studies the productive aspects of the destructive aspects of power, the aim is to trace the function of power, specifically its desire to change human behavior as part of an existential process of progress. In this particular case, the term Indo-Pacific has several intrinsic functions.

To further understand the genealogical rules and mechanisms governing the formulation of the term Indo-Pacific, it is important to trace the power-knowledge dynamic that first led to the securitization of the Indo-Pacific in the first place. Speech acts are epistemologically essential to this genealogical analysis as speech acts enunciate existential emergency over the stated region. By maintaining the state as the major ontological actor defining power relations for the world, we better understand the power behind the language as demonstrated in the term. The material world is shaped by this process of language as the following section establishes the link between language, foreign policy, and military capability.

Securitization and speech acts are designed to prioritize specific referent objects. In this particular case, the geopolitical area and balance against Chinese expansionary foreign policy. The term Indo-Pacific is designed by actors to develop alliances and increase military power. Three indications highlight the impact of language on the material world. The first to be discussed is the formulation of the QUAD alliance. Following this is a brief discussion of QUAD Malabar naval exercises and the proliferation of foreign military bases in the Indo-Pacific. This is the most significant development to date. Here, I QUAD aims to balance against China's expansionary policies across the Pacific and Indian oceans in the spirit of maintaining democratic values and open seas (Ibid). In a joint statement titled "The Spirit of the QUAD" (Whitehouse 2021a) member states issue their *raison d'être*; the first two points being clear to address motivations:

1. We have convened to reaffirm our commitment to QUADrilateral cooperation between Australia, India, Japan, and the United States. We bring diverse perspectives and are united in a shared vision for the free and open Indo-Pacific. We strive for a region that is free, open, inclusive, healthy, anchored by democratic values, and unconstrained by coercion. We recall that our joint efforts toward this positive vision arose out of an international tragedy, the tsunami of 2004. Today, the global devastation wrought by COVID-19, the threat of climate change, and security challenges facing the region summon us with renewed purpose. On this historic occasion of March 12, 2021, the first-ever leader-level summit of the

- QUAD, we pledge to strengthen our cooperation on the defining challenges of our time.
2. Together, we commit to promoting a free, open rules-based order, rooted in international law to advance security and prosperity and counter threats to both in the Indo-Pacific and beyond. We support the rule of law, freedom of navigation and overflight, peaceful resolution of disputes, democratic values, and territorial integrity. We commit to work together and with a range of partners. We reaffirm our strong support for ASEAN's unity and centrality as well as the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. Full of potential, the QUAD looks forward to the future; it seeks to uphold peace and prosperity and strengthen democratic resilience, based on universal values (Ibid).

These two statements are a diplomatic attempt at identifying China as a threat to the international order. Specifically, China is claiming all of the South China Sea in its so-called nine-Dash Line declaration (Gao and Jia 2013). This violates the interests of neighboring states like Japan and Taiwan and threatens the free passage of international shipping. To recall, major QUAD interests include maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific. This conflict of interest is at the center of state behavior in the region.

The stated conflict of interest destabilizes the region as competing states perceive one another as acting against their state interests. China has responded by building, and then militarizing, artificial islands within their nine-Dash Line claim (Daugirdas and Mortenson 2015). As a result, the QUAD has initiated two major policy changes to coordinate a response: Malabar naval exercises and the expansion of foreign military bases in the Indo-Pacific. The Malabar naval exercises serve to coordinate QUAD states since 1992 (Rajaopalan 2021). These exercises began with two participants, the United States and India; it has expanded to all members of the QUAD. Malabar carries out these naval exercises every year since its inception as an annual exercise. Its main function is to bring together QUAD states and their various warships to develop a framework to deter China. Inherently, functions to facilitate the coordination of resources if a war were to break out. China itself has voiced its concern that this exercise is specifically designed to contain it (Ibid; Kobierski 2020). Since the QUAD states and China have conflicting interests in the region, Malabar represents a threat to Chinese security which is why they reject it.

Another clear connection between speech acts (language) and the material world (military capability) is the proliferation of foreign military bases in and around the Pacific and Indian Oceans (the Indo-Pacific region). The following table shows the location of QUAD member military bases in the region, but notes China's as well:

From this analysis, it can be concluded that geopolitical positioning has led to major military investments in the region. Hence, the genealogical approach illustrates that state behavior is driven by the language of emergency. Thus, the genealogical circumstances that brought about the term Indo-Pacific have led to major changes in the material world.

The rise of China has led to the securitization of the Pacific and Indian Oceans. Major states in this region have come together through the creation of the term Indo-Pacific to counter China's expansionary measures. Language has thus had a major

impact on world politics through the shaping and reshaping of threat and threat perception. By studying the usage of Indo-Pacific, it seems that there is a clear connection between identity building, alliance formation and the rise of China. If China were to disappear as a major power, it is possible that the term itself would disappear from use.

5 Conclusion

The term Indo-Pacific is about the formation of a common identity to facilitate alliance creation. Alliances have a long history, and their formulation using the Foucauldian approach could be a fantastic genealogical project. Sending the correct signals is a major foundational aspect as Prime Minister Abe did in 2007 by describing the long history of Japan-Indian relations, especially concerning nationalist scholars Vivekanda and Okakura. Nothing drives an alliance more than the proximity of threat and developing those alliances requires performance. Since alliances are a form of external balancing to attain security, then states might use language to signal their specific security concerns. By creating a regional security complex and thus combining security concerns (Buzan 1983), states can focus their efforts on creating policies necessary to attain survival. Genealogical studies are, therefore, necessary to understand the linguistic component manufacturing material outcomes, i.e., internal and external balancing. This paper focuses on military matters, and the following centers on military coordination, looking at military exercises across Indo-Pacific by the QUAD and also the expansion of foreign bases by its member states. By mashing together two great oceans, an alliance between India can also furnish placing the balance of power firmly in the QUAD camp and possibly deter China from further aggression. International security is at the center of this policy, but because of China's development strategies, 'prosperity' is also on the priority list for QUAD partners.

Declarations

Conflict of Interest The author declares that he has no conflict of interest.

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