



India-Eurasia Ties: Strategies of New Regionalism

By Nivedita Das Kunda*

Emerging Partnership between India and Eurasia, framed under the label of new regionalism, its discussions have tended to investigate the institutions, policies, and economic relations that underpin such region-building approaches.

In particular, India's engagement in various regional contexts uncovers the role of othering as a central feature of the nascent processes of region-building. Encyclopedic definition of Eurasia is the landmass composed of the continents of Europe and Asia. Eurasia is also used in international politics as a neutral way to refer to the post-Soviet States.

India and Eurasian states preference for multipolarity and encouragement for the promotion of groupings like SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) RIC (Russia-India-China), BRICS (Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa), are intended to create groups where India along with other regional countries can discuss issues and concerns pertaining to the region.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to Russia's far eastern city of Vladivostok on September 5th to attend



Vladivostok: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin at the Zvezda ship-building facility on Sep 4, 2019. The facility, located in Russia's Far East is being expanded. (Photo: IANS)

20th India-Russia annual summit followed by 5th Eastern Economic Forum (EEF) showed that today India-Russia relationship has evolved into an equal partnership. India and Russia has reached new level of friendship and cooperation through mutual trust and understanding.

India values the political and diplomatic support it continues to get from Russia on vital issues. In today's complicated and fast changing geopolitical situation, both countries have wisely diversified their foreign policy

options, yet have been careful not to abandon a mutually beneficial partnership built up over decades.

India-Russia cooperation is going on smoothly and steadily in various sectors. Cooperation in the defence sector is still the strongest link. Even today around 50% of the defense equipment used by the Indian defense forces is of Russian origin.

During recent summit both India and Russia reaffirmed their intention to expand the scope of collaboration in various sectors and avail the opportunities for

expanding mutual capabilities. It seems now Russia's Far East will serve as a vital point for connecting India and Russia through maritime links. Now India has introduced its "Act Far East Policy," and through new maritime connectivity between Vladivostok and Chennai sea route, they will further develop maritime links between the two nations. India even announced \$1 billion line of credit for growing this significant regional project.

India is also looking forward to cooperate with Russia in the Arctic. India has been following the developments in the Arctic region with interest and is also ready to play a significant role in the Arctic Council being an observer nation. The geopolitics of Arctic is becoming complicated over the period of time.

It is the responsibility of the Arctic nations to support the conservation, management and governance of Arctic resources.

The competition for getting easy access to the Northern Sea Route for international trade and commerce is increasing over the years.

However, there is a need to address simultaneously the security concerns related to piracy and terrorism that has been increasing along with the prospect for the in-

creased trade and transportation.

On issues and concerns related to Arctic, India can even join Canada and both India and Canada can address certain vital issues related to Arctic.

Today the developments in Arctic presents an opportunity to speak out for ecological protection, a position that runs contrary to the resource scramble, a position that promotes resource use, conservation and precaution in the region, in view of the warming of the Arctic.

India by becoming observer is able to take part in various activities related to Arctic. As far as the Arctic is concerned, India is a signatory to the "1925 Treaty", concerning the Archipelago of Spitsbergen of the 'Svalbard Treaty'. India is among the 10 countries that have a research Centre in the Svalbard Islands in the Arctic for studying the warming and melting effects.

Amidst all these positive developments there is a hope that friendship and the strategic partnership between the regional powers will scale new heights and it will grow, thrive and blossom in the coming years.

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'Nationalism' Doesn't Have A Bad Rap In Canada

By Jordan Press

OTTAWA: On a historic Remembrance Day, a century after the end of the First World War, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau told a Paris crowd that decaying trust in public institutions will lead citizens to look for easy answers "in populism, in nationalism, in closing borders, in shutting down trade, in xenophobia."

The implication was clear: if nations turn in on themselves and treat outsiders as threats, we might again find ourselves in a bloody conflict with fronts all over the world.

But a series of surveys suggest the idea of being a nationalist, and nationalism in general, are viewed fairly positively by most Canadians.

What the data suggest is that Canadians don't see the concept of nationalism the way people do in the United States, where the term is often linked with white-nationalist groups, and then with white supremacy and racism.

Rather, Canadians appear to have constructed their view of nationalism on the idea of feeling connected to our country and ensuring that others feel connected as well _ even as we watch the term pilloried globally.

"It is used in different ways _ when people are talking about the Trump nationalism, they would say (it's) bad. But in Canada, they accept it because it is equated with certain communities and they see it as a way it's helping vulnerable populations find their place in Canada," said Kathy Brock, a political-studies professor at Queen's University in Kingston, Ont.

"Canadians have just acclimatized to this dual view of nationalism."

In the 1950s and 1960s, Canadians often reported feeling greater attachments to their particular communities or ethnic groups than they did to the country. In the intervening years, connection to country has strengthened while connection to community has faded, said Frank Graves, president of EKOS Research Associates, a polling and market-research firm. The opposite has happened in Europe, he said.

Research also suggests Canadians' at-

tachments to their ethnic groups have weakened over the last 20 years in favour of an attachment to country, Graves said, even as census data shows the country's population is becoming ever more diverse.

"We don't have a common ethno-linguistic homogeneity that produces a definition of 'the people.' It's more civic nationalism," Graves said.

"In Canada, national identity has been created through a dialogue between citizens and the state and the public institutions _ medicare, the Mounties, Parliament Hill. It isn't as much steeped in history or common race and identity, which probably inoculates it from some of the more disturbing expressions of nationalism."

Newly released survey data from the Association of Canadian Studies says that 60 per cent of respondents hold a somewhat or very positive view of nationalism, compared with about 45 per cent in the United States. The results were similar in both English and French Canada.

There also appears to be an association between Canadians' views on nationalism and their views on multiculturalism.

"In contrast to the European idea of nationalism, having that ethnic component to it, most Canadians don't see nationalism as ethnically driven. They see it more as a form of patriotism," said Jack Jedwab, the association's president. "It doesn't intersect as much as it does in the European context with anti-immigrant sentiment, or a sentiment against diversity."

The Leger Marketing survey of 1,519 Canadians on a web panel was conducted for the association the week of Nov. 12. Online surveys traditionally are not given a margin of error because they are not random and therefore are not necessarily representative of the whole population.

A day after his Nov. 11 comments, Trudeau was asked how he defined nationalism and where he saw it in Canada.

"In Canada, we've demonstrated many times that identities are complimentary," he said. "I'm an extremely proud Quebecer, I'm an extremely proud Canadian and like most Canadians, they don't see a contradiction in that."

Experts say the more negative forms of

nationalism are nevertheless simmering in Canada. Jedwab's survey data suggest that respondents who have positive views of nationalism are somewhat more worried about immigration and security along the U.S. border than those who have negative views of nationalism.

Part of what fuelled U.S. President Donald Trump's political rise, and his populist rhetoric, was financial worry _ or what Graves described as the idea of the every-

man versus the corrupt elites. Brock said Canada has thus far avoided similar concerns about class and finances, particularly coming out of the recession a decade ago, and a similar rise of nationalist rhetoric.

"Now, we're facing some really serious economic challenges and if they come to pass, then we could see a different manifestation of this," she said. "So I don't think those (polling) figures are necessarily set in stone."

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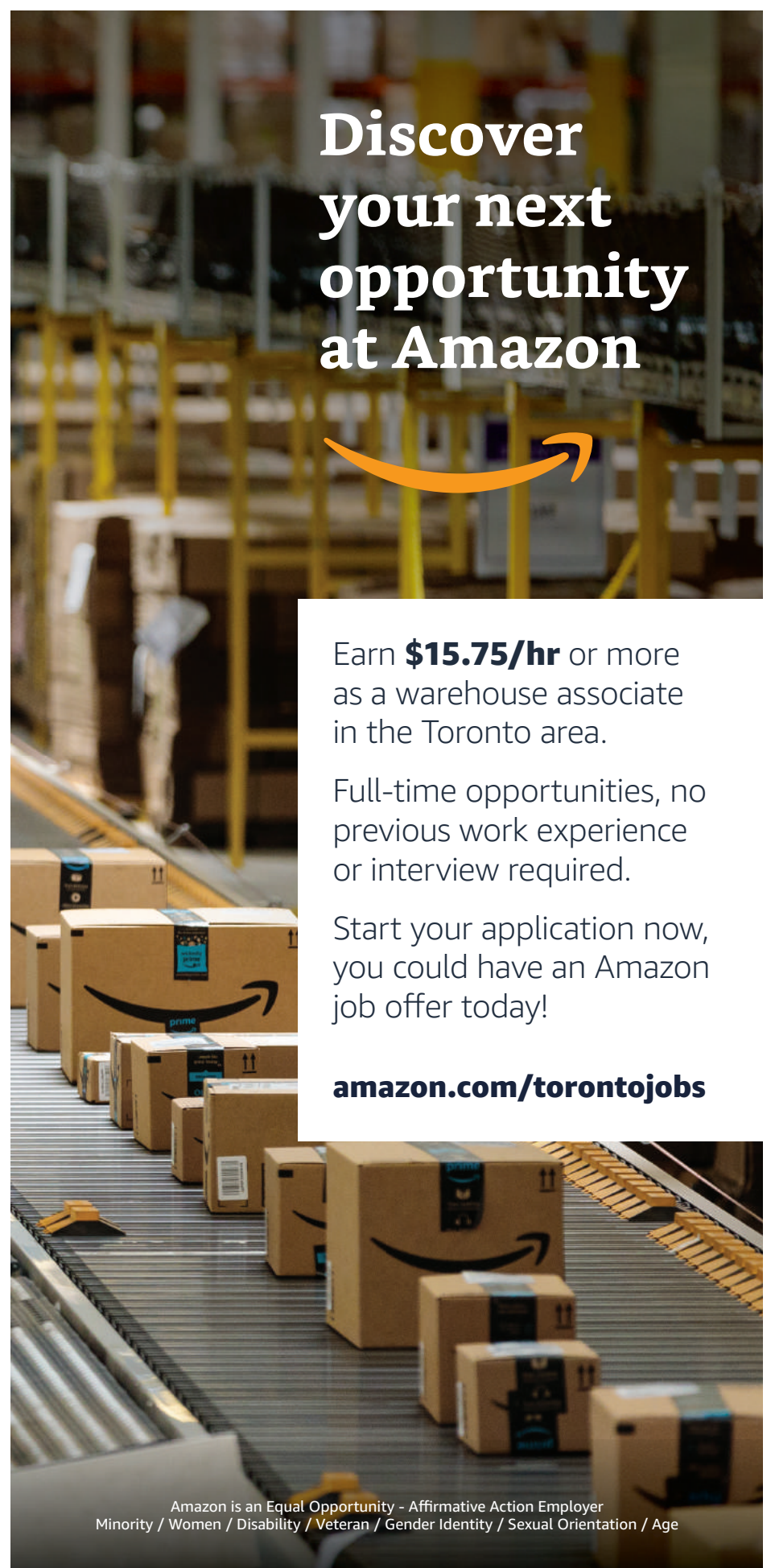


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Billy Ray Cyrus holds up a Canadian flag at the end of Canadian Country Music Awards in Calgary, Sunday, Sept. 8, 2019. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Jeff McIntosh