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The fear of being compared: State-shadowing in the Himalayas, 1910-62

On a winter day in 1955, a Tibetan carpenter called Kamasha arrived in a Himalayan village to repair a roof. An Indian official was distributing salt, tea and cigarettes. Noticing the government doctor treating villagers stricken with malaria, Kamasha introduced himself. Could he get treated too? The official, Sawthang La, eagerly obliged. The carpenter hailed from a Chinese-controlled area; this was an opportunity to chat with him. Later that day, the two men had a long conversation around a fire. The official learnt how the Chinese dispensed justice, the roads they were building, the entertainment they provided, and the goods on offer in Dzayül, just across the border (**Map 1**). Kamasha liked what he saw on the Indian side of the border—free healthcare and, especially, the government’s distribution of presents and the absence of tax. Chinese authorities too gave free treatment, and in several respects the situation had improved since their arrival; but unlike their Indian counterparts they did not distribute seeds and tools for free, and his people paid tax on grain. Those living across the border—in India—were more fortunate, Kamasha concluded. When Sawthang La sat down to write his diary, which his superiors would later scrutinize, the entry betrayed his delight. Kamasha’s positive impressions would make for “very good propaganda to the people beyond the border”—in Chinese-held territory (APSA 1955a, diary entry - 17 February).

Conventional understandings of Sino-Indian relations are unlikely to find space for a Tibetan carpenter and a low-level Indian official; yet their encounter underscores a key contradiction in international politics: while legitimacy and authority over people underpin effective sovereignty, international borderlands are often porous and heterogeneous. More than that, they offer borderlanders the possibility to evaluate state-making and nation-building projects against one another—and potentially to choose between them.

This article suggests that the notions of “shadowing” and “shadow states” can productively be deployed to conceptualize a certain form of international relations between contemporary states, many of which are recent constructions, when they share porous and inhabited borderlands. When neighboring states simultaneously seek to consolidate their hold over such regions, physical closeness fuels anxieties about being compared, apt to turn into a contest to prove themselves the superior state to the inhabitants—better than the other state. This fear of comparison, and the competition it generates, are particularly high in polities that are still emerging from colonial or imperial rule and face the difficult transformation into a nation. State-making and nation-building become competitive attempts at self-definition against the other polity due to the triangular relationship between state actors and borderland populations. Proximity and governmentality structure neighbouring post-colonial states’ relationship.

The eastern Tibet-Himalayan borderland where China and India meet has been a fertile ground for state-shadowing, especially in the 1950s-60s (**Map 2**). It was only from 1950 onwards that the two countries really began to expand in this mountainous region where the Chinese and the Indians had neither an easily enforceable border nor strong cultural, emotional, or historical claims to local inhabitants (Guyot-Réchard, 2017). As

independent India and the People's Republic of China (PRC) sought to consolidate their presence east of Bhutan, the other country's nearby presence hampered them. The "other side"'s existence gave Himalayan inhabitants like Kamasha the opportunity to compare Chinese and Indian state presence—from the threat they might represent to the trade, welfare and development opportunities they might bring—and potentially choose between them. China and India's proximity gave local people a measure of choice, of agency. As the two countries became each other's alternative, they became each other's threat.

This article uses China and India's mid-20th century Himalayan encounter to tease out the mechanics of state-shadowing. It participates in the push, advocated by Feminist Geopolitics, for a more holistic understanding of geopolitics, attentive to the connections and co-production of different geographical scales and to the role of everyday lives, practices and bodies (e.g. Katz 2001; Dowler and Sharp, 2001). This requires a methodology that transcends the archive of high politics to look at sources written at a variety of spatial scales—centering those written in the borderlands themselves but encompassing those connected to them at the central level. This is not straightforward. While access to Indian areas is getting easier, it is heavily constrained on the Chinese-Tibetan side. Moreover, sources written by borderlanders are rare—at the time, most belonged to oral cultures or were illiterate. Extensive oral history is difficult for political reasons. Indian archives are nevertheless there for the mining: local government collections; papers from retired officers, borderlanders, and political and cultural organisations; External Affairs archives relating frontier governance; newscuttings. The diaries written by Indian officials while on tour, which were frontier bureaucracy's cornerstone (Guyot-Réchard, 2015), are especially crucial. As Sawthang La's entry on Kamasha shows, these diaries can help us retrace state-society encounters. To reconstruct what happened north of the border, this paper cross-examines these Indian sources, replete with information on the Chinese side because of state-shadowing, with the scholarship on the PRC in Tibet, Tibetan memoirs and oral histories.

What these sources reveal is that the outbreak of war between China and India in 1962 stemmed as much from bottom-up dynamics where sovereignty over people was constantly renegotiated and undermined as from encounters and letters between "big men" like Nehru and Zhou Enlai. In the process, this article unpacks how the "friction of coexistence" structures interaction between neighbouring states and borderland societies—and highlights its potential impact on international conflict.

SPACE AND EVERYDAY INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Let us delineate state-shadowing more precisely. In Westminster political systems, the opposition's leadership each shadow individual members of the Cabinet, following their department's policies and questioning them closely in parliament. This "Shadow Cabinet" offers citizens an alternate choice of program and leadership, forcing government to try to keep one step ahead (Bateman, 2008). What the expressions of "shadow"—as an entity—and "shadowing"—as a process—encapsulate is the idea of an always discernible, readily available, and equally viable *alternative* political project, requiring constant adjustments for the other side. State-shadowing also taps into the more generic notion of "shadow" with its uncertain, and potentially unsettling, overlap

of meanings—a shifting, light-obstructing *presence* that can acquire an ominous quality, especially if intention is ascribed to it; but also, potentially, a reflected image.

Shadowing describes the mirroring, emulative, competitive relationship that arises between neighboring polities—especially new, post-colonial states—when each tries to control the terms of their relationship with borderlanders. Establishing control, legitimacy and authority over international borderlands’ inhabitants is an important aspect of effective sovereignty. Yet, and this at the heart of shadowing, the nearby presence of another state offers borderlanders with an alternative state-making and nation-building project. Neighboring polities become each other’s “shadow state”.

The concept draws on scholarship that radically questions essentialist notions of the state, which do not query its formation or link to society, but also of its absolute, bounded control over an unchanging territory and of the binary between the domestic and the international (Agnew, 1994; Lapid, 1999; Albert, Jacobson and Lapid, 2001). It is notably indebted to works that stress that the construction of a bounded geo-body (Winichakul, 1994) is a historically contingent phenomena, replete with struggles and cartographic anxieties (Krishna 1994; Billé, 2016). These notably stem from the gap between the ideal-type of sovereignty as the “unlimited and indivisible rule by a state over a territory and the people in it” (Agnew, 2005, p.437) and its reality as a contingent, unstable assemblage of heterogeneous practices, discourses and attributes, produced through connections that are not necessarily territorial and involve state and non-state actors alike (Ong, 2000; Sidaway, 2003; Elden, 2006; McConnell, 2009; Lunstrum, 2013). To speak of cartographic anxiety is to acknowledge the complex emotional ramifications of this gap for nation-states.

This is especially true border spaces, where “state meets society” in visible ways and the interplay between the local, the national and the international reveals itself (Zartman, 2010, p.1; see also Johnson et al, 2001). Borders “are often pools of emotions, fears and memories” (Paasi, 2011, p.62). For states, this is because state-making is a complex dialectic with non-state actors, always in need of re-enactment. Even demarcated from above, boundaries acquire salience because of the actions, discourses and aims of local inhabitants (Sahlins, 1989). Indeed, borderlanders’ resilient place-making practices can pose to states’ “sedentarist” logics (Malkki, 1992), notably through their actual or performative “longing for the other side” (Gupta, 2014, p.10). Marginality means the possibility of “working the state” (Vira et al, 2011, p.12), to make claims on it. Involving strictures, choices and opportunities (Eilenberg, 2012), the phenomenon is visible across various South Asian borderlands (Shneiderman 2013; Cons 2013; Gupta 2014).

It can be particularly strong in “contact zones” like the Eastern Himalayas, spaces of trans-cultural encounters where power relations are complex and intersect, and where multiple channels shape the production of knowledge so essential for governmentality (Viehbeck et al, 2017). Hence, everyday choices by state officials, inhabitants and traders alike can have geopolitical effects (Van Schendel & Baud, 1997). Kamasha and Sathang La’s encounter is at once the story of a low-level Indian official thirsty for information and keen to make an impression and that of a Tibetan carpenter distilling such information and (perhaps) playing along with that impression for his own purposes.

Kamasha was not merely “working the state”; he was working it against another state. In this, we can detect another phenomenon: the “art of neighbouring” (Saxer et Zhang, 2017). Sharing a border with other people, other cities, other states is an

inherently precarious relational process, fraught with mishaps, misunderstandings, and the unexpected. Coexistence and interaction require constant effort (Zhang, 2017). The notion underscores the friction of coexistence and comparison, a generative process that can produce mimetism and rivalry across the border—for instance between a Russian and a Chinese town (Billé, 2017). “State-shadowing” unpacks a central facet of such dynamics: how neighbouring between borderlanders and the state triangulates with the actions of “the state next door”, and what impact its friction can have on relations between states themselves.

Understanding how states tangibly meet matters, considering the number of countries that have emerged since 1945, often after formal or informal colonialism. For most, building themselves means wrestling with a complex and contentious past and the integration of their fluid margins (Chatterjee Miller, 2013; Abraham, 2014). It also means adjusting, or even redefining, relations with neighboring polities—many of which face similar challenges. The preceding polity encompassed diverse territories and people, often spread on either side of a now supposedly international border. Colonial or imperial penetration had been spatially uneven and its rule, often indirect (Cooper, 2004, p.269). With its princely states, provinces, and frontier areas, British India embodied this. Qing China, meanwhile, controlled areas like Kham through indigenous authorities and had an ambiguous relationship with Lhasa: the Dalai Lama was both the Emperor’s protegee and his religious tutor, and his government had much autonomy.

Decolonization precipitated the world’s “last enclosure” (Scott, 2009, p.4). In the process, the formal transfer of power (or, for China, the transition from the Qing Empire to Nationalist and later Communist China) has ushered in an era where the imperial and the national coexist within many states. Empire is not so much a structure as “a process of adaptive transformation in which people create, assemble, configure, reassemble, renovate and remodel imperial forms of power and authority under diverse, changing circumstances” (Ludden, 2011, p.133). Techniques and strategies inherited from imperial or colonial rule can be used for state- and nation-building (Bulag, 2010; Anand, 2012). For China, this analysis stems from the Qing’s reassessment as an expansionist empire comparable to European powers (Larsen, 2011).

The tensions, contradictions and anxieties attendant to the simultaneously imperial and post-colonial nature of many contemporary polities coalesce in their borderlands, often heterogeneous and fluid. There, simultaneous state- and nation-building projects are visible to one another *and* to local inhabitants. Borderland situations are at once a constraint and an opportunity for non-state actors. They offer local people the chance to look on the other side of the border, that of the neighbouring state, and assess the threats and possibilities presented by each. This can translate into a capacity to choose between these alternatives, by crossing over. Such opportunities to “look across”, and the benefits to be derived from them, are more accessible to people closer to the border and administrative centres, or whose livelihoods regularly takes them across, like Kamasha. They nevertheless concern, directly or indirectly, a significant number of people. Like other parts of the world, such as Southeast Asia, the Himalaya was historically characterized by people’s readiness to move when confronted to a polity unsuited or antagonistic to their needs (Tsomo, 2010; Grothmann, 2012; Scott 1976). Frontier authorities were deeply aware of this. Already a problem for polities like Tibet and Bhutan, this would remain a source of worry for the 20th century Chinese and

Indian states, dependent on people's presence to assert sovereignty in a mountainous terrain yet simultaneously determined to see Himalayan people as would-be citizens.

People's mobility should not necessarily be understood, as Scott (2009) proposes, as an absolute preference for statelessness. Rather, state evasion is one of multiple forms of engagement with the state, which also include accommodation and invitation—keeping in mind that when one lives “in-between states”, evading one polity often means moving to another. Under certain circumstances, state presence might in fact be acceptable, even welcomed. These dynamics of engagement partly hinge on the authorities' propensity to coercion and violence as also their capacity to provide certain goods (tangible or not) valued by borderlanders—neither aspect being set in stone.¹

State-society relations in borderlands are thus inherently fluid, an instability heightened by the possibility of mobility in borderland contexts. This shapes the range of actions state authorities can undertake towards borderlanders. While overt coercion is possible, it is not necessarily the most efficient way to tie people to “their” side of the border, being costly and likely to increase the neighbouring state's attraction (APSA 1962e, p.53). Instead, states may try to use *incentives* more powerful than those present on the other side—including trade, education, healthcare, cultural protection, and infrastructure. Delineating these relative incentives means understanding, assessing and comparing the nature and the components of the state-society relationship on the other side.

The problem is that shadowing occurs on both sides of the border—increasing the opportunity, and indeed the benefit, for borderlanders to look across. Driven by the fear of comparison, state-making becomes a competition to provide more, better, quicker than one's shadow state, heightening neighboring states' perception—for this is about perception, as much as reality—of each other's undermining efforts in the process. A key mechanism in this cycle is the “information order” through which states acquire and interpret knowledge to understand and control the situation (Bayly, 1996). Even as borderlanders' ability to look and go across undermines efforts to establish sovereignty, their movement enables the collection of information necessary to successful shadowing—as Kamasha and Sawthang La show. Human mobility is thus both threatening and necessary for shadow states.

In short, by enabling visibility, comparison, and mobility, borderlands highlight and expand the “exit options” to the aspiring “state-nation” (Stepan, Linz and Yadav, 2011). Grounded in the dialogical relationship between neighboring states and the people living on both “sides” of international borderlands, shadowing is a shorthand for how neighboring states come to monitor one another, adapting and reformulating their activities to offer more than each other. With shadowing, state-making and nation-building turn into processes of mutual observation, replication, and competition to prove themselves the better state—in other words, into anxious attempts at self-definition against one another.

In what follows, I chart the course, structure and consequences of a shadow-state relationship, using Sino-Indian relations in the Himalayan regions between Bhutan, Tibet, Assam and Burma between 1950 and 1962 as my case-study. I first lay down the environmental, societal, and historical context that fostered state-shadowing and

¹ Power relations internal to local societies matter too. In the eastern Himalayas, they included relations between different groups, individuals and villages but also with Tibetan and Bhutanese polities.

discuss its early manifestations. I then dissect the dynamics, some structural and others contingent, that generated fully-fledged state-shadowing between Chinese and Indian officials in the 1950s. The third section explains the circumstances that led to its rapid escalation after 1959. The final section reinterprets the 1962 Sino-Indian War to show that interstate conflict can be both an outcome and an instrument of state-shadowing.

GENESIS (1900-1950)

Two key ingredients have informed 20th century India and China's shadow state relationship: the distinctive geography of the land where the two countries tangibly meet and the discrepancy between China and India's sovereignty claims and the ground reality, which was one of minimal or even imaginary control until quite recently. The eastern Himalayas combined a rugged, forested, and extremely humid environment (the rainy season is abundant and lasts for the better part of the year) with a small but extremely diverse population. Tibetan Buddhists such as the Membas, Monpas and Tibetans generally lived on the edge of the plateau; non-Buddhist, Tibeto-Burman-speaking groups (Mishmis, Bangrus and Bokars, for instance) inhabited lower altitudes (**Map 3**). However, shared socio-economic ties and cultural practices often blurred the boundaries between supposedly different groups, and connected them to wider hinterlands. Identities and belonging could form complex assemblages, where regional and kin loyalties tempered religious or ethnic affiliations. Constant, small-scale movement was prevalent: people moved in search of land, to escape famine, feuds, or epidemics; others to marry or join relatives, to trade, to practice their religion, to escape war and political strife. Some were pushed south by others, others fled punishment, or were captured and enslaved (Blackburn and Huber, 2012). Socio-economic ties and seasonal migrations to escape harsh winters or seize work and trade opportunities heightened this fluidity (Dorjee Thongchi, 2014). Himalayan people depended on the plateau for salt, wool, ornaments or weapons, exchanging them against available surpluses. Local trading networks co-existed with long-distance caravan routes, particularly for rice and salt (Blackburn, 2003-2004). The eastern Sino-Indian borderland was thus characterized both by a difficult terrain *and* by a socio-cultural diverse, mobile population.

Present-day Chinese and Indian authorities claim their sovereignty over the region is immemorial (or at least long-standing), but their concrete presence there is in fact recent (Rodriguez, 2014). At the start of the twentieth century, the region largely escaped Western frameworks of sovereignty and "international" relations. This was a world of active interaction between ethnic, linguistic, and cultural groups, where politics and authority followed complex logics. Different actors could share ownership or use of a place, its produce and its people. Authority tended to be located in socio-economic relations, in control over people, rather than over territory (Misra, 2011; Samuel, 1993). From a Tibetan perspective, the region was a geographic and civilizational periphery (Shneiderman, 2006). The uneven reach of the Dalai Lama's government diminished the farther one got from Lhasa. Areas like Monyül paid tribute or were administered by Lhasa officials; others were outside its influence (Huber, 2011, p.261). Meanwhile, although the British Raj's control of Assam affected them, most of the eastern Himalayas remained un-administered.

Twice, in the 1910s and during World War Two, British Indian and Chinese authorities

sought to expand their presence there, but state retrenchment soon followed—first due to the fall of the Qing and World War I, then to the Chinese Civil War and Indian independence (**Map 4**). In short, until recently India and China’s sovereignty over the eastern Himalayas mostly amounted to “cartographically existing authority”, asserted through maps yet seldom on the ground (Lin, 2004). Significantly, however, these short-lived attempts to give sovereignty a concrete shape were already competitive.

Effective Chinese and Indian expansion had to wait until 1950-51, when the newly founded PRC annexed Tibet. Over the next few years, Chinese authorities strove to displace the Dalai Lama’s government peacefully, working with its elites, delaying socialist reforms, and promising development and cultural respect. These hearts-and-minds policies betrayed the vulnerable posture of PRC authorities in Tibet, but also their nationalist belief in the need to incorporate it (Weiner, 2012). Tibet’s “peaceful liberation” caused newly independent India to commit to incorporating the so-called North-East Frontier Agency (NEFA) (Guyot-Réchard 2017). The PRC had never recognized the McMahon Line, the boundary set through a 1914 Indo-Tibetan agreement. Alarmed, Indian authorities launched waves of expansion into the regions they cartographically claimed over the 1950s—most notably in 1951, when they took over Tawang, officially south of the McMahon Line but under Tibetan control (NEFA Secretariat 1951a; Elwin Papers, 1954) (**Map 5**).

From the outset, state-shadowing’s reverberations made themselves felt—along with state anxiety concerning the behavior of borderlanders. For most of the 1950s, Indian authorities worried less about an invasion than about the possibility that the inhabitants might look towards the PRC, undermining India’s sovereignty (Guyot-Réchard 2017). Political and military leaders thought the eastern Himalayas impassable. Moreover, Jawaharlal Nehru hoped that Beijing’s silence regarding the McMahon Line meant acceptance (Raghavan, 2006, p.3884). The real problem, thought Indian leaders, was that locals had “no established loyalty to India” and that NEFA presented “unlimited scope for infiltration” (Das, 1971-74, pp.135-41). In Monyül (**Map 1**), Tibetan lamas reportedly proclaimed that Monpas were inseparable from Tibet (External Affairs 1952, Reviews for January 1952). This fueled long-held fears among Indian authorities, who viewed ties between the Himalayan slopes and the Tibetan plateau as an inherent threat to their authority and legitimacy—especially since trade and monastic affiliations were key channels of power in the region (IOR 1945, Report for 1944-45).

Indian authorities were even more worried that, should the opportunities offered north of the border prove greater, NEFA’s inhabitants might leave. They had many historical precedents for this. Several NEFA communities had settled there to escape Lhasa officials’ heavy taxation or cruelty, some as recently as the 1940s (NEFA Secretariat, 1954, Extract from Sawthang La’s diary). People’s capacity to escape a state that did not suit their needs had fueled tensions between Tibetan and Bhutanese authorities historically: time and again, Lhasa had tried to stop the Monpas’ “bad habit of deserting their homes on even a minor cause of complaint” to settle in Bhutan (External Affairs, 1943, Surkhang Depon’s order, 1826). Early 20th-century bouts of Sino-Indian competitive expansion had underscored that Himalayan people carefully gaged what one state brought relative to another. When the Qing had briefly conquered Kamasha’s valley in 1910, resistance had been scarce: Chinese imperial rule was comparatively less oppressive, taxation-wise, than Lhasa’s. Some locals had hinted they would be still happier under British India, whose representatives taxed even less (Bailey, 1945, p.98).

NEFA authorities were therefore acutely conscious of the PRC's nearby presence, especially after the People's Liberation Army (PLA) appeared in Monyül and Dzayül in late 1951 (External Affairs, 1952, Fortnightly review of Sino-Tibetan intelligence, late December 1951). In response, they appointed a special official: Tibetan Agents. Collecting military intelligence was but one of these Tibetan-speaking officials' responsibilities. They were particularly there to consolidate relationships with the inhabitants, watch their movements across the border, and track Chinese welfare and development initiatives (NEFA Secretariat, 1952).

NEFA authorities' prime worry was not the PLA's military capacity. In the early 1950s, Chinese troops such as they were focused on infrastructure and food self-sufficiency. They were isolated, poorly supplied, and subjected to the Himalayan winter. Far more concerning were PRC officials' efforts to forge relations with borderlanders. Within a few months of arriving in Dzayül, PLA troops built a school and publicly contributed to Tibetan New Year celebrations (External Affairs, 1952).

These initiatives were not different from Indian ones—they were *all too* similar. Since the mid-1940s, Indian frontier officials had increasingly replaced military promenades with schools, dispensaries or relief schemes. Development and welfare were cheaper and more effective modes of state-making than coercion and violence—especially as much of the law and order force was diverted to fight the emerging Naga independence movement. Given the Himalayan terrain and climate and financial, material and manpower shortages, state expansion was difficult without the inhabitants' cooperation and quiescence. Acknowledging state authorities' vulnerability fostered more constructive encounters with Himalayan people. The problem was that, to Indian authorities' mind, their attempts to convince them of the benefits of Indian expansion might be lessened by China's parallel efforts.

Soon enough, Indian authorities feared that cross-border dynamics went against them. Indian development initiatives in the Lohit Valley apparently paled in comparison to the PRC's schemes in nearby Dzayül: “compared to what the Chinese seem to have already achieved, our progress so far has been small”, concluded an intelligence report in 1952. It is extremely important that [...] NEFA be endowed with adequate resources to launch similar large-scale development schemes on our side so that the border tribals may not look towards the Chinese for their salvation” (External Affairs, 1952, *ibid*). If India did not provide the people of NEFA with the facilities or goods they increasingly demanded, it risked losing them to China.

STRUCTURING (1950-59)

Sino-Indian state-shadowing hence began to coalesce in a context where 1) terrain and climate presented important constraints to the projection and maintenance of state power; 2) the local population, whose cooperation and acquiescence would help the latter objective, was distinct, varied, and highly mobile; and 3) where India and China had only belatedly, *and in parallel*, begun to extend their control. We now turn to how this shadow-state relationship solidified.

From 1950 onwards, figuring out PRC policies towards borderlanders became a constant preoccupation for Indian frontier officials, finding its way into countless reports, government diaries and correspondence between frontier posts and headquarters. As NEFA stood under External Affairs' direct control (and thus Nehru's,

who doubled as Foreign Minister), these fears reverberated to the top of the Indian state.

Confidential reports from mid-1957 thus said that PRC authorities were attracting Mishmis (whom they called Deng) to their schools, where they learnt Tibetan and Mandarin and received free food, clothing, and accommodation. They especially targeted NEFA's weakly administered Dibang Valley, where they appointed government interpreter from among local Mishmis. He convinced some of them to go on a tour of China, including Beijing. Further west, Bokars in NEFA were being courted by China through school creation or monthly salaries for elders (NEFA Secretariat, 1957). Indian officials became pervaded by the feeling that their initiatives towards Himalayan populations should compete with—and indeed surpass—those of the PRC.

Often derived from local travelers' accounts, the reports of Tibetan Agents on Chinese initiatives became crucial to adjust the standards of India's own activities. News that the PLA helped people cultivate the land prompted NEFA authorities to involve their policing force in development activities (NEFA Secretariat, 1962a, Kaul to Mehta, 8 February 1955). These adjustments were to protect the relationship between the administration and Himalayan people and ensure their cooperation, quiescence, and allegiance. China's shadow affected Indian cultural and development schemes in myriad ways. Officials worried about China's projection of a benevolent attitude towards cultural and religious symbols. PRC-printed photos of Buddhist leaders and monasteries landed in NEFA's villages, while maps in possession of Tibetan travelers showed most of it as part of China. Indian officials worried these "extremely well-done" and culturally sensitive small acts "would certainly make a considerable impression" if they spread further (Elwin Papers, 1961a, 7 August 1956).

Concerns about the circulation of people and artefacts, Indian authorities sought to undermine cross-border interaction. Lhasa administrators had been forced out of Monyül, but Tibetan lamas retained huge influence. Banning them was neither possible—the boundary was too porous—nor expedient—the risk of antagonizing local Monpas was too great. Instead, frontier officials tried to monitor comings and goings by instituting a permit system for travelers from Tibet and monitoring them. They simultaneously intensified their efforts to stamp out secular Tibetan taxation. Monastic tribute was allowed to continue for the sake of state-society relations, but outposts were established near key mountain passes to stop Lhasa government officials from entering (External Affairs, 1952; NEFA Secretariat, 1951b).

While PRC authorities tried to replace Tibetan currency in Tibet (Shakya, 1999, p.95), Indian officials did the same in NEFA. In Monyül, the Monpas' preference for Tibetan currency and indifference towards the rupee undercut India's sovereignty and threatened its representatives' very survival: Indian authorities searched every for enough Tibetan coins for food and accommodation (External Affairs, 1951). Nor could they count on time to displace Monyül's customary currency. The Monpas' main trade fair at Tsona was now in PRC territory, and the climate quickly wore out Indian rupee notes. Moreover, banning Tibetan coins under threat of punishment would likely have negative effects on the Monpas attitude. Indian authorities settled on a more indirect policy to increase the rupee's popularity and undermine trade with Tibet. Their new trade depot began to accept purchases in rupees only and to sell articles traditionally bought from Tsona. A fair was organised in NEFA to rival Tsona's, and the local official sought an Indian market for Monyül's cottage industries (External Affairs, 1954).

Another policy concerned salt, whose provenance played a significant part in regulating networks of influence and authority. “There is no No-Man’s-Land on the McMahon Line, and salt from India or from China tastes the same”, declared a frontier official: people would recognize the authority of whichever country fulfilled their salt requirements (Letters to the Editor, 1953). Indian authorities accordingly tried to displace Tibet as a source of salt, distributing the precious condiment and attempting to generalize its Assamese variety across NEFA (Elwin Papers, 1954, 1952 report, p.14 and 1953 report, pp.23-24).

Cross-border interaction nevertheless continued throughout the 1950s. The Monpas’ trade, pilgrimage, and monastic ties with Tibet endured. Tibetan traders flocked to Monyül in summer and the salt trade remained brisk, the Indian administration proving unable to fulfil the population’s requirements (NEFA Secretariat, 1957). Buddhist devotees still undertook pilgrimages between Tibet, Monyül and Bhutan. Many Monpa children were educated at the Tsona Monastery, for which their elders gifted loads of grain to the abbot. Indian authorities had officially banned the export of grain to Tibet but did not apply it: they could not harm their standing among the Monpas for a few loads of grain (NEFA Secretariat, 1955b, March).

India’s state-making efforts had an unforeseen consequence: they fueled a similar sense of vulnerability among their Chinese counterparts. The PRC’s presence in Tibet was far from consolidated. Moreover, non-state actors exacerbated its vulnerabilities, whether traders, nomads, dissidents, village-dwellers, or spies; the actions and attitudes of Tibet’s borderlanders were of particular concern to Chinese authorities (Khan, 2015). There, hearts-and-minds policies were even more necessary. For, in the vicinity of borders like the McMahon Line, people still had a time-tried option: crossing over.

In the early 1950s, the inhabitants of several parts of southeastern Tibet had indeed made insistent overtures towards India. When rumors of Tibet’s annexation by China reached the region of Pemakö, locals came to the Indian official for the neighboring Siang Division to declare that they thought Delhi’s authority extended to their village and were willing to accept it. Hundreds of miles to the west, the villagers of Leh, north of the McMahon Line, visited an Assam Rifles outpost with a similar request: could India extend its administration to them? Others simply tried to move south of the boundary. To avoid a diplomatic crisis, NEFA officials told them to “gracefully submit to the new [Chinese] regime” and tried to prevent immigration (External Affairs, 1952, Weekly review for 26/1/, reviews for late December 1951 and early January 1952).

Despite these Indian policies, PRC border officials had strong reasons to worry about developments in NEFA. Fertile and wooded, Tibet’s southeast provided the Tibetan plateau with crucial wood and agricultural resources. The forests north of NEFA, almost the only ones on the plateau, furnished the wood for Lhasa’s buildings. Dzayül was Tibet’s rice-bowl, and its low altitude even made it suitable for tea. They also hosted some of the most venerated sites of Tibetan Buddhism and a major route between Lhasa and China (Dewatshang, 1997, p.46; Huber, 1999, chs. 9-10). Thus, just as Indian officials warily glanced over the border, their Chinese counterparts observed them. Indian frontier officials felt their watchfulness daily. Villagers bumped into PLA patrols at night. Border officials disappeared, reportedly kidnapped by PRC authorities. Chinese pictures of the Dalai Lama circulated. Travelers reported being extensively quizzed about India’s expansion plans (External Affairs, 1952, 16 February; External Affairs, 1955, November report).

State-shadowing, as it took shape between China and India in the 1950s, stemmed from an intense fear of being compared by the eastern Himalayas' inhabitants and their corresponding efforts to withstand the comparison. Whether or not local people did in fact assess the situation in terms of a China vs. India binary is less important than the fact that ground-level state actors did think this was the case, and in attempting to remedy the issue gave the competition a *sui generis* quality. On the diplomatic front, China and India declared their "peaceful coexistence" to the world; on the ground, the very fact of that coexistence made peace impossible.²

ESCALATION (1959-62)

We now turn to how this structural friction intensified, and how the collision between this bottom-up dynamic and high-level tensions led Sino-Indian relations to crumble. For much of the 1950s, China and India's hearts-and-minds competition had been relatively stable. Securing border areas competed with consolidating Indian presence in NEFA's most populated areas. Chinese authorities, similarly constrained, had not yet expanded all along the border (NEFA Secretariat, 1955c, pp.11-12). From 1959 onwards, however, state-shadowing accelerated due to a concatenation of external *and* local crises, culminating in the deterioration of diplomatic relations between China and India and the two countries' decision to push up to the border—militarily, but also developmentally and administratively. The structural dimension in China and India's shadow-state relationship ensured its continued escalation.

After 1959, mass uprising in Tibet and the deterioration of Sino-Indian relations saw India and China push their troops up to the McMahon Line. For the PRC this "forward policy" was as much a domestic as an international emergency: the regions north of NEFA were a stronghold of Tibetan fighters and Beijing considered it essential to drive them out (PLA General Staff, 1959). Chinese militarization spurred Indian authorities to do what they had rejected in 1950: sending the army into NEFA. The degeneration of Sino-Indian relations did not therefore arise just out of failed diplomatic encounters, but also out of ground-level developments.

As both countries pushed closer to the border in an effort to close it, the socio-economic networks, cultural traits, and "Mongoloid" features of NEFA's inhabitants became an unacceptable liability for Delhi. The PRC now explicitly rejected the McMahon Line. For Indian authorities, it was crucial to show that the boundary coincided with India's geographical and civilizational limits. Cross-border ties put this neat story into question (Correspondent, 1959a). The old fear that NEFA's inhabitants would choose to settle across the border or invite China in percolated to India's public opinion. Politicians accused the PRC's of seducing borderlanders with "ethnic affinity and irredentism, economic allurements and hatred of the West besides, of course, ideological claptrap". "[T]he tribesmen keep [...] returning from [Tibet] with armfuls of Chinese magazines which show in pictures the progress Tibet is making", warned the *Times of India* (Kamath, 1959; Correspondent, 1959b). NEFA officials quietly decided to boost development and educational efforts in border areas (NEFA Secretariat, 1962b).

² The expression comes from the so-called Panchsheel Agreement on "Trade and Intercourse between Tibet Region of China and India", signed in 1954 when both countries needed good relations at the diplomatic level.

PRC border officials were equally preoccupied. They too wanted people to declare their loyalty (Khan, 2015). Many northern Pemakö inhabitants had again asked to settle in NEFA. When Indian officials rejected their request, they took the matter in their own hands: they moved of their own accord. By the time PLA troops occupied Pemakö in 1961, the area had lost much of its population (NEFA Secretariat, 1957; NEFA Secretariat, 1960, May report; External Affairs, 1961b, Intelligence summary, September). For borderlanders to stop seeing India as a place of escape, PRC authorities had to render their neighbor less attractive, including to the visitors who spread information about NEFA.

Between 1960 and 1962, China and India's shadowing competition escalated dramatically. Trade depots, schools, hospitals, craft centers popped up from Monyül to Dzayül (NEFA Secretariat, 1959, pp.31-2; NEFA Secretariat, 1962c, List of issues; Elwin Papers, 1961b, pp.149-50; NEFA Secretariat, 1962d, p.34). Ambitious village electrification, agricultural and husbandry schemes or government-built monasteries were earmarked for border areas. Following an old British Indian call to dispense "liberal funds [...for] beneficent activities" to displace another state's influence, these schemes aimed to thwart China's territorial claims and neutralize its power of attraction (External Affairs, 1943).

As long as NEFA's inhabitants visited Tibet, "infiltration" would threaten India's territorial integrity. Concretizing the boundary hinged on reconfiguring NEFA's human geography, dissociating it from Tibet to redirect trade and social flows towards India. The China-India divide was to become reality through its embodiment in the bodies, the actions, and ultimately the minds, of local inhabitants. Yet people could not by force be prevented from crossing the McMahon Line. Although Indian check-posts had multiplied since 1959, they were undermanned and stranded in difficult terrain. Worse, coercion would damage India's standing among border people and work to the other side's benefit. The only hope was to give people incentives not to cross the border—by providing everything they might need or want (NEFA Secretariat, 1962e, p.53).

Indian authorities henceforth decided to "maintain regular supply of [...] goods [normally acquired in Tibet] to the tribal people as and when required by them" (NEFA Secretariat, 1962d, pp.11-12). Frontier officials began selling goods at a loss to overcome the greater attractiveness of Tibetan woolen clothes, brass utensils, agricultural implements, and ornaments, asking for people's advice on what they wanted and pricing schemes. They began buying local goods traditionally meant for trans-McMahon Line areas and developed local craft and production centers, hoping to create border communities that could survive without their Tibetan hinterland. Officials had an advantage in trying to replicate Tibetan crafts: thousands of Tibetans had fled to NEFA since 1959. Partly to fulfil the refugees' own needs, partly to answer those of border communities, they launched craft centers among them. They thus hoped to recreate the socio-economic networks that had tied many NEFA people to the Tibetan plateau *within an Indian geographic space*, insulated from Tibet itself (ibid; NEFA Secretariat, 1962i; NEFA Secretariat, 1960).

A nation-building strategy was simultaneously devised for border areas. Indian authority had hitherto given little thought to it, seeing national awareness as a natural yet subordinate corollary of state expansion and economic development. In fact, their policies had isolated NEFA not just from Tibet, but from its Indian hinterland (Guyot-Réchar, 2013). With PRC authorities reportedly spreading word that NEFA's people

were akin to Hans, who would shortly come to free them from India (Sinha and Athale, 1992, p.60), they now sought to rectify the situation. Given “international developments across the border”, they decided to provide borderlanders “added opportunities [...] for social intercourse with a view to integration with the rest of [India]” (NEFA Secretariat, 1962b, Note on the development of border areas).

Hindi replaced Assamese in schools (Miri, 1958) while annual trips took NEFA students on whirlwind tours of India to show them that they belonged to “the great Indian nation and should take pride in its rich heritage, civilization and culture”. Border schools were renovated and increased in numbers. The best students were sent to public schools elsewhere in India to train them for technical and administrative jobs. Where education had hitherto encouraged pride for local cultures, it now also aimed to stress the advantages of belonging to India against China. A Youth Training Institute would display “all the characteristics of an enlightened free socialistic democracy”, conversely stressing “the characteristics and setbacks of totalitarian society, such as [the] use of force, [and the] absence of the fundamental freedoms and human rights”. Which side of the McMahon Line was suffering was meant to be obvious (NEFA Secretariat, 1962b, Note on the development of border areas).

The trouble was that this shadows game went both ways. China too was accelerating its efforts to win over borderlanders, in Tibet *and* in NEFA. Development facilities, trade outlets, and cultural initiatives were flourishing across the McMahon Line as well. For each fair-trade shop, Tibetan-language school or entertainment facility on the Indian side, a corresponding facility seemed to be freshly built on the Chinese one. So much so that the PRC village of Tramo in Pemakö was soon equipped with telephone and wireless transmissions, had three hospitals, and graciously hosted cinema shows and cultural performances for the benefit of villagers and travelers (Luthra, 1963, pp.3-5).

Even more unnerving for Indian frontier officials, Chinese initiatives seemed underpinned by an evaluation of their own schemes. Echoing the way Sawthang La had questioned Kamasha, the Dzayüli carpenter, PRC authorities questioned travelers about NEFA border shops—what goods they sold, at what price, what locals wanted that India failed to provide (NEFA Secretariat, 1962f, Appendix, 18 November 1962). Far from being stopped at the border, NEFA-side borderlanders were treated to “lavish entertainment, free board and lodging, expensive presents and very liberal barter terms” on the Chinese side, even as Chinese officials tried to stop Tibet-side residents from entering India (NEFA Secretariat, 1962e). Indian authorities were certain of it: all along the McMahon Line, their PRC counterparts were systematically trying to “win over NEFA people with entertainment, baits, and courtesy” (Luthra, 1963).

Indeed, they encouraged NEFA inhabitants to ignore the border. In May 1962, two Bangrus (**Map 3**) crossed the McMahon Line into Chayül (**Map 1**) to hunt wild sheep and musk-deer. A Chinese government interpreter convinced them to visit the local official, upon which they would receive tea and food. Persuaded, the two hunters were greeted by the official and his wife, who duly offered them flour, cooked rice, vegetables, and even pork. They later sold them profitably deeper in Chinese-held territory (NEFA Secretariat, 1962g, p.3). By displaying a seemingly effortless generosity and granting free and safe passage just as Indian authorities sought to restrict interaction with Tibet, the Chinese official showed that his government could provide more, better, and quicker, and all that without hindering the movement of the NEFA population, for trade or

otherwise.

Some of these enticements had an immediate intent: obtaining information or hiring people to spy across the border. Travelers were questioned on their *bona fide* and on what they knew of developments on the other side of the McMahon Line; Tibetan refugees settled in NEFA were suspected of unknowingly harboring Communist informants (Newman, 2007). And yet, problematically, Indian authorities needed such movement to maintain their intelligence networks in Tibet, let alone to conduct propaganda there.

In this context, India's attempts to materialize the McMahon Line floundered. In late 1959, the only government school in the northern Tagin regions (**Map 3**) closed down after locals, observing Chinese educational facilities across the border, decided to send their children there. NEFA authorities responded by intensifying development efforts in the area (Correspondent, 1959b). "The only way to solve the problem [of people crossing over for trade was] more attractive economic incentives than what the Chinese [were] providing" (NEFA Secretariat, 1962e, p.53). State-shadowing was now rapidly escalating.

WAR (1962)

By mid-1962, attempts to dissuade Himalayan populations from choosing the other state were degenerating. China and India were locked in a struggle to outdo one another. After difficulties in securing funds and materials, NEFA authorities were accelerating border development while Chinese authorities in Tsona reportedly proclaimed they would soon eject India from Tawang, where they would work for the poor's benefit (Mullik, 1971, pp.334,339). Then, on 20 October 1962, China invaded India, defeating it in the course of a one-month long war.

It is generally agreed that the escalation coincided with a military security dilemma in the Himalayas—Indian and Chinese troops had pushed farther and farther into disputed territory, both in NEFA and the Aksai Chin. What is ignored is that the months prior to the war had also signalled the acceleration of state shadowing dynamics, which predated military "forward policies". Even before 1959, China and India's forced coexistence had fueled perceptions that the other side held irredentist views over the NEFA-Tibet borderlands--irredentism fostered by cultivating ties with border populations who could move over. Around that same time, Kazakhs were fleeing *en masse* from China's Xinjiang to the Soviet Union (Taylor Fravel, 2008, pp. 101-05).

The war was the culmination in China and India's mutual shadowing. By invading NEFA, the PRC did not just aim to force a humiliated India to recognize its possession of the Aksai Chin (Gopal, 1975-84, p.230); it also sought to make a definitive demonstration of its superiority as state to borderland populations—ending, once and for all, its Indian shadow state's attractiveness and credibility. The Indian army's debacle led to the near-collapse of civilian administration in much of NEFA. Well beyond the cease-fire, the PLA occupied parts of Indian-administered territory, during which it systematically destroyed, damaged, or removed reminders of the Indian government: farms, statues, buildings, wires, furniture, livestock, government-built monasteries (NEFA Secretariat, 1962h, December report). By contrast, Chinese troops preserved indigenous structures and monuments and behaved with great restraint towards civilians. Not only do various sources agree on this, including Indian governmental

ones, they report the PLA's kindness and generosity towards borderlanders (ibid; External Affairs, 1962, Rustomji note, 23 January 1963).

This was no coincidence. China was showcasing benevolence and greater state capacity towards the inhabitants through the PLA. By juxtaposing their solicitude for the population with the violence meted out to institutions and symbols of Indian state power, Chinese forces--trained in propaganda and political work as much as in military techniques (Blasko, 2001, pp.249-54) sought to prove that, whereas India was weak and could neither protect nor deliver to the population, the PRC could, and would, do so.

The demonstration further lay in two aspects of border development that had frustrated Indian authorities: road-building and corvee labor. Whereas India had constantly struggled to build transport infrastructure in NEFA, in a few months of occupation the PLA managed to build several roads, including a twenty-five-mile segment north of Tawang. "The Chinese must thus have impressed the tribal people of their competence in other fields than warfare", reflected NEFA's top official; people would "undoubtedly be making a comparison between the speed with which the Chinese have constructed this road and the comparatively slow progress of our own engineers." What's more, the PLA had built these roads without requisitioning the inhabitants' labor, demonstrating "their attitude and approach to the tribal people [..., stressing] that they carry their loads themselves [...and demonstrating] in other ways also that it is not their policy to lord it over the people as is sometimes the tendency amongst our officials" (External Affairs, 1962, Rustomji note, 23 January 1963).

The final element in China's demonstration of superiority lay in the PLA's parting message to the people of NEFA: if negotiations with India failed, it would return to liberate them (NEFA Secretariat, 1962h, December report). "Write and tell us if the Indians trouble you", departing troops reportedly told the Monpas after stressing Indian military reverses. They added that, "in case they accepted the Chinese Administration", their religious practices and institutions would be respected (Correspondent, 1963). PRC soldiers left after distributing weapons and equipment, salt and cloth, and pictures of Mao (Sinha and Athale, 1992, p.381; Doig, 1963).

This indicates that the 1962 war was a performance not just aimed at Indian leaders and public opinion or international and domestic audiences but at borderlanders themselves. It told the story of China's greater capacity and potential, and of India's corresponding weakness. For people on the Tibetan side of the border, China's wartime lesson was that India was not, and would never be, a viable alternative—since it could not even protect its own territory and abandoned its own people, how could India defend Tibetans? For people in NEFA, occupation underscored the deficiencies of Indian rule, spelling out what its absence—and even perhaps permanent Chinese control—could mean for them. Through their magisterial handling of the war, their benevolence, and their promises to return as liberators should the inhabitants demand it, PRC authorities aimed to usher an anti-Indian resistance movement in NEFA—as already existed in nearby Nagaland.³ India's attempts to retake possession of the region would be greatly hampered, relieving China of its uncomfortable spatial promiscuity with India.

³ In the late 1940s, autonomy demands in the Naga-inhabited parts of Assam had morphed into an independence movement. By early 1954, heavy-handed police actions radicalised the Nagas into armed militancy. As the Indian army moved in, the conflict escalated into a dirty war.

If the PLA's successful invasion ended with its unilateral withdrawal beyond the McMahon Line, treating as its Line of Control, it's because the PRC had little to gain and much to lose from staying by force. The eastern Himalayas are harder to keep than to invade from the Tibetan plateau, especially with overstretched lines (External Affairs, 1961b, July report). Had it stayed, the PLA would likely have lost its reputation for invincibility and benevolence, crucial to sway borderland populations. China also had to reckon with the Cold War. NEFA was a strategically crucial piece of territory for India. Should the PLA seek to retain it, the PRC risked an unpredictable escalation and superpower intervention (Chen, 2006, p.98).

Above all, the invasion was to provide China with a definite upper hand in Himalayan state-making. Permanent military conquest was counter-productive, whereas an explicitly temporary withdrawal would preserve the discourse of Chinese benevolence towards border communities. It also maintained the PRC's image of a restrained power, giving it leverage internationally (History and Public Policy Digital Archive, 1962). The hope was arguably that this would settle the situation in Tibet while keeping the door to a pro-Chinese (or at least anti-Indian) movement permanently open. Beijing would support precisely such resistance in north-eastern India in the 1960s and early 1970s (Bhaumik, 1997).

To Indian officials' surprise, NEFA's inhabitants welcomed them back after the war—but with a flurry of precise demands that showed their acceptance was sceptical and conditional. It “was not proper for the people in authority to leave the people in those days of crisis”, some said. They, for their part, had done much to help defend their land (APCC 1963, p.19). They now counted on the Indian state to repair relations by providing what they asked for: compensation, but also roads adapted to their needs, regular air services, better educational services or support for their cottage industries and agriculture (APSA 1963; APCC 1963, p.194; Johorey, 2014).

In this sense, the PRC's attempts to end the upper hand in the Sino-Indian shadowing contest failed. By portraying themselves as invincible—something India had never seemed capable of—Chinese authorities wrested borderlanders of their own agency, of their capacity to accept state-making on their own terms. Their relative and non-permanent “preference” went to an Indian state that was less efficient but could at least be tamed. As for the Tibetan side of the border, it would continue to experience far popular resistance to PRC rule than NEFA vis-à-vis India.

Interstate conflict, in this case, can be interpreted simultaneously as the outcome of a state-shadowing dynamic—in that it was fueled by a long-term, ever-repeated competition for people's loyalty and cooperation—and as an instrument to push the competition in a different direction and, in so doing, settle it. That China's success in 1962 might well have been a pyrrhic victory shows, however, that war is at best a very fickle instrument of state shadowing.

CONCLUSION

This article reinterprets the roots of contemporary Sino-Indian tensions. Countless works explain them as the outcome of a boundary dispute or of a series of power struggles, once fueled by the Cold War and now by great power ambitions (e.g. Lamb, 1964; Maxwell, 1970; Hoffmann, 1990; Garver, 2003). Most of these perspectives share the same implicit framework for studying international relations. Their focus is on high

politics—on the corridors of power in London, Delhi or Beijing where top-level diplomatic, political and military decisions are taken and where statesmen, diplomats or generals hold forth.

As a rule, this scholarship spares little thought for the people of the Sino-Indian borderlands—partly because, strategically, the crux of the dispute was long the uninhabited Aksai Chin (**Map 2**) (Garver, 2003, p.100). In these accounts, the Himalayas appear as a piece of unchanging physical territory and its people at best as a footnote, devoid of a role and indeed of agency. Responding to the call to study international relations “down” as well as “up” (True, 2010), this paper brings the Himalayan borderland into focus, demonstrating that local people, events and bottom-up dynamics of inter-state comparison and competition have much to tell us about the nature of China and India’s encounter.

To speak of “shadow states” is to refine our understanding of international politics’ spatial dimension, conceptualising the generative potential of borderland spaces and the people who live and move through them for interstate relations. State-shadowing stands for the geopolitical effect of this structural friction of coexistence, where separating “international” relations from the supposedly domestic realm of state- and nation-building is impossible. Anxiety-driven, mirroring and competitive, the feedback loop between shadow states—this concatenation of small things, daily experiences and encounters in international borderlands, driven by an unsettling mixture of similarity and difference—brings to the fore the importance of regional or local phenomena in shaping inter-state relations at a national level, and the many ways, often contradictory, in which bottom-up and top-down dynamics intersect. This forces us to look beyond the archives and actors of high politics and explore ground-level encounters in border spaces.

The feedback loop of state-shadowing can help us better understand the roots of interstate conflict. When neighboring polities become trapped in it, a security dilemma different from that generally envisioned in International Relations or Security Studies can arise, one centered around the identities, habits, and actions of local people. Evidence from the Himalayan borderlands themselves however shows that a form of competition, centered around hearts-and-minds, had been at play even before Delhi and Beijing decided to push their troops as far as possible after 1959. If security dilemma there was, it was more multi-faceted than generally thought.

For the growing body of scholarship concerned with borderlands and their generative potential, whether as “contact zones” or spaces to practice the precarious “art of neighbouring” (Viehbeck et al, 2017; Saxer and Zhang, 2018), the concept of state-shadowing adds precision to the idea of a dialogical relationship between states and people. Without downplaying the coercion and militarization so visible along many South Asian borders, it highlights how more ambiguous development, welfare and cultural protection initiatives can play an equally central role in state-driven border-making (see also Yeh, 2013; Murton, 2017; Rippa, 2018).

Like the cartographic anxiety it relates to, state-shadowing is particularly pregnant when neighbouring polities are in an indeterminate position between ‘in the space between the “former colony” and “not- yet-nation.”’ (Krishna, 1994, p.508) This is not to say it cannot occur in different contexts or ceases as borders harden. Though the Chinese, Indian or Nepalese states seek to divert the flow of people and goods in directions (Murton, 2017) that suit their aims, borderlanders’ own “geographic

diversions” (Harris, 2013) still have the potential of undermining them. Outwardly, much of the Himalayas appears to consist of a “closed” border. In practice, small-scale movements continue, and people and states alike to look across. In 2011, the Indian authorities reacted in an extreme fashion to a Kashmiri grandmother’s decision to move to Pakistan’s side of the Line of Control (Cons and Sanyal, 2014, p.5). In 2015, the Lisu people (**Map 3**) were reportedly given Scheduled Tribe status by India for fear they would be “co-opted” by China (Arunachal Times, 2015). So, while the perception of “the other side” as a shadow state might be evolving, it is not disappearing—but perhaps taking on new shapes.

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