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Interpreting Norms and Stigma: The India-US Nuclear Relationship from 1974 to 2008

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Interpreting Norms and Stigma: The India-US Nuclear Relationship from 1974 to 2008

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Abbreviations

ASEAN – Association of Southeast Asian Nations

CBMs – Confidence-building measures

CDA – Critical Discourse Analysis

COVID – Coronavirus (COVID-19)

CTBT – Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

IAEA – International Atomic Energy Agency

IPS – International Political Sociology

IR – International Relations

JCPOA – Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

NAI – National Archives of India

NMML – Nehru Memorial Museum and Library

NNWSs – Nonnuclear Weapon States

NPT – Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

NSG – Nuclear Suppliers Group

NWSs – Nuclear Weapon States

PIB -Press Information Bureau

PNE – Peaceful Nuclear Explosion

PTBT - Partial Test Ban Treaty

UN – United Nations

UNSC – United Nations Security Council

US – United States

WHO – World Health Organisation (WHO)

WMDs – Weapons of Mass Destruction

Abstract

Scholars in International Relations (IR) have been turning to a critical constructivist agenda in norms research in recent times. However, in doing so, there has been an underutilisation in applying this area of research for understanding the nuclear behaviour and identity formations of states described as *deviant* in nuclear governance. This thesis therefore asks: *How do stigmatised states justify and normalise nuclear non-compliance with hegemonic powers in nuclear politics?* To answer this question, the thesis develops two main arguments. The first argues that stigmatised states engage in social interactions with a hegemonic state in justifying partial adherence to norms of nuclear deterrence, non-proliferation, and non-use. Drawing on the India-United States case study from 1974 to 2008, this thesis demonstrates as well as empirically argues that India's transformational nuclear relationship with the United States points to the discursive power of social interactions in nuclear governance. In examining how stigmatised identities manage their stigma in international politics, this thesis suggests i) *stigma redaction* as a form of identity management whereby stigmatised states engage in semi-corrective behaviour to prevent their identity from being cemented as 'deviant' by the hegemon, and ii) stigma redaction being employed through the political discourse of *reasoning of instance* whereby deviance is connected to a previous act of compliance to make incongruent behaviour more socially presentable. In order to develop these arguments, the project draws from nuclear politics, International Political Sociology, and existing work on India's foreign and nuclear policy. Applying an interpretive methodology, the thesis relies on an interactionist approach to further the understanding of deviance in international politics. For its empirical analysis of data, this thesis employs Critical Discourse Analysis on archival sources. It aims to contribute to International Security Studies, the increasing scholarship on global IR, and the empirical research on India's nuclear identity.

Keywords: India, Norms, Nuclear, Stigma, US

Introduction

"As long as the world is constituted as it is, every country will have to devise and use scientific devices for its protection. I have no doubt India will develop her scientific researches and I hope Indian scientists will use the atomic force for constructive purposes. But if India is threatened she will inevitably try to defend herself by all means at her disposal. I hope India in common with other countries will prevent the use of atomic bombs" (Nehru, 1946 as cited in Perkovich, 1999: 14).

This speech by Nehru, India's first Prime Minster, characterised the nature of India's nuclear policy for decades to come. While Nehru stressed the peaceful purposes of harnessing nuclear energy for scientific progress, he also kept the option open for the weaponisation of India's nuclear facilities.[1] Apart from the semantics of his speech, one also needs to look further into its connotative aspects. As implied by the speech with the phrases "atomic force for constructive purposes" and "defend herself by all means", Nehru had clearly understood the normative aspects of a nuclear weapon programme – power, prestige, and global status.

Hence, this thesis is an exercise in historically examining the ways in which India constructed its global identity by influencing norms of nuclear deterrence, non-proliferation, and non-use. In doing so, this doctoral project studies India's social interactions with the United States as being a part of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.[2] Along with the material and social status of the United States (US), the hegemonic role of the US in envisaging a non-proliferation regime is recognised from two major historical events. Firstly, the speech by then US president Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1953, titled the "Atoms for Peace" (IAEA, 1953), served as an essential backdrop of the creation of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and subsequently the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Secondly, in efforts to lead to an indefinite extension of the NPT, then US President Bill Clinton, in 1995, remarked that "[t]he United States considers the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons without conditions as a matter of the highest national priority and will continue to pursue all appropriate efforts to achieve that outcome" (Federation of American Scientists, n.d.).

In examining India's interactions with the US, this work engages with the constructivist research on norms in International Relations (IR), International Political Sociology, the dynamics of

[1] However, it was not until the 1998 nuclear tests that India declared itself as a nuclear state (Ray, 2018). In 1999, a draft report from the National Security Advisory Board on Indian Nuclear Doctrine further expanded on Nehru's speech that stated "But if India is threatened she will inevitably try to defend herself by all means at her disposal" (Indian Ministry of External Affairs, 1999). Clause 2.3 and 2.4 of the same document state that the purpose of India's nuclear weapons programme was based on minimum deterrence and no-first use policy.
[2] I further discuss the role of the United States in the second section of the Introduction.

stigmatisation in global governance, and Indian foreign policy to shed light on how the India is a socially complex identity in nuclear politics. Going back to the aforementioned speech of Nehru, what remains interesting to note are the words "[a]s long as the world is constituted as it is..." Therefore, I would ask: what is the world? And what does it constitute of? I conceptualise the world as a shared social reality where states "give meaning to this reality through the social constitution of their relationships, belief systems, interpretations, evaluations and (re) actions" (Taylor, 1971: 27). Following the lead of Wiener and Puetter (2009), I use anthropomorphism in perceiving states as agents in this international space embodying distinctive histories, cultures, learnings and expectations in interpreting this social complex of relationships.[3]

As a social agent in international politics, India has often used its colonial experiences and learnings in shaping its foreign policy discourses on the global stage.[4] Muppidi (1999: 131) has comprehensively pointed this out by stating:

"[A]lthough the achievement of independence pushed the colonizer from within India, the social practices and relations associated with colonialism — domination, subjection to the dictates of powerful others, inequality, racial discrimination, passivity, lack of freedom, economic exploitation, and the like — remained in the international system and needed to be resisted."

With India's history steeped in a colonial past, Indian policy makers would be sceptical in using the words 'a third world order' to capture India's view of an alternate (also moral) reality, as opposed to the then dominant bi-polarity of the US and the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, it perfectly points to how India has been in an insecurity complex of trying to overcome its colonial identity on the international stage. New Delhi has tried to *constructively* share its ideas and beliefs of this alternate world view with other states – particularly by co-founding the Non-Alignment Movement in 1961 (Indian Ministry of External Affairs, 2012).

By carrying this non-racial and anti-colonial world view, India has also extended the same explanation in challenging the strict hierarchical arrangement of states within the global nuclear order (Indian Ministry of External Affairs, 2004a). This thesis further examines these challenges in terms of India manging international responses to its employed contestations and the kind of language and rhetoric it also pursued in the process.

---

[3] Unlike the English School, most notably in the work of Bull (1977), I do not distinguish between the definitional constructs of system of states, society of states, and world society. I follow the example of Buzan (1993: 334) who noted that these terms can be used interchangeably and argued that "whether or not units share a common culture, at some point the regularity and intensity of their interactions will virtually force the development of a degree of recognition and accommodation among them."
[4] Pant and Joshi (2018) have argued that India's reluctance of becoming a nuclear state until 1998 can be traced back to the non-violent struggle of its independence from British colonial rule.

1. The Research Puzzle and Question(s)

The bi-lateral signing of the "US-India Civil Nuclear Cooperation" (also known as the "The 123 Agreement") in 2008 (US Department of State Archives, 2008) has allowed the implicit[5] recognition of India's de facto nuclear status by the US.[6] However, India's relationship with the US, as part of the non-proliferation regime, has often been conflicting, especially after India's nuclear tests in 1974 (Pokhran-I) and 1998 (Pokhran-II). For example, after the 1974 nuclear test, the Nixon government reaffirmed[7] its strong position on nuclear proliferation by stating how the test had an adverse impact on world stability (Joshi, 2018; Kamath, 1999; Kux, 1992). Similarly, after conducting five nuclear tests under the Pokhran-II operation, India was subjected to sanctions[8] by the Clinton Administration (Perkovich, 1999; Talbott, 2004; Venkataraman, 1998).

This thesis theoretically seeks to understand how states from the Global South that are stigmatised through condemnations and sanctions by virtue of their deviance, interact with hegemonic powers from the Global North. Empirically, it analyses the ambivalence in India's nuclear relationship with the US as India continued to develop its nuclear weapons programme, albeit not being part of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Under this ambivalence, it specifically examines how a stigmatised New Delhi managed its imposed stigma by gradually extracting a de-facto recognition of its deviant nuclear programme from Washington. As India is the only non-NPT signatory that the US has signed a 123 Agreement with, this case remains particularly useful and of theoretical interest for three reasons.

Firstly, it helps critically examine the transformation of India's nuclear identity. This includes observing i) what counts as corrective behaviour (conforming to nuclear norms) and as well as non-corrective nuclear behaviour (non-compliance) undertaken by New Delhi to bring about a change of perception of its nuclear identity from Washington, and ii) how New Delhi undertook negotiating its deviant identity with Washington through displaying compliant and non-compliant forms of behaviour.

[5] "As part of the overall initiative India will expand international safeguards, adhere to international nuclear and missile export guidelines, continue its voluntary moratorium on nuclear testing, and ensure that all civil nuclear trade will be used only for peaceful purposes" (US Department of State Archives, 2001-2009).

[6] India remains a non-signatory to the NPT since 1968 (United Nations Archives, 1968; United Nations: Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: Status of the Treaty, n.d.). Furthermore, India was not included in the list of states (United States, United Kingdom, France, China, Russia (formerly Soviet Union)) that were allowed to possess nuclear weapons as per the NPT. Since 1996, India also remains a non-signatory to the CTBT (United Nations Archives, 1996; United Nations: Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty: CTBT, 2014).

[7] See also: National Archives of India (1974a); The Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (1974a).

[8] These sanctions included denial of humanitarian and technological assistance, termination of foreign and military funding and prohibition of sales relating to defence articles and services (The Library of Congress, 2001-2003). For a detailed discussion of the sanctions imposed on India after the nuclear tests, refer to The Library of Congress (1998) and The Library of Congress (2001).

Secondly, it also allows a broad drawing of the rich inter-disciplinary literature on social theory including that of norm dynamics, approaches to stigmatisation, and negotiation logics in international politics in studying India's identity transformation. Hence, this work arguably provides greater epistemological insight as to why India as a nuclear state has been treated differently from other deviant states. In the same context, this work challenges contemporary explanations that argue India to be an exceptionalist nuclear power (Chacko and Davis, 2018; Joshi, 2022) or commonly understood as the duality of India's commitment to a nuclear free world while being a non-signatory to the CTBT and the NPT. Wojczewski (2019: 181) rightly points out that exceptionalist discourses of identity often blur visions of scientific scholarship and end up "re-producing nationalistic, ethnocentric accounts of world politics." Furthermore, as Chapter 6 discusses how states like Iran and North Korea are increasingly moving towards justifying their nuclear deviance with similar arguments to that of India, it has become increasingly important to contest existing explanations of India's exceptionalist nuclear discourse.

Thirdly, the study of India's nuclear identity has wider implications for developing a critical scholarly agenda in studying cases of other NPT and CTBT non-signatory members like Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea, in relation to the arguments that this thesis develops.

This doctoral project is fundamentally driven by the research question: ***How do stigmatised states justify and normalise nuclear non-compliance with hegemonic powers in nuclear politics?*** Goffman (1963: 12) states that "[s]tigma can be used to refer to any attribute that is deeply discrediting and incongruous with our stereotype of what a given type of individual should be." Therefore, a state becomes stigmatised when such an attribute has been identified with the same state by other actors and this stigmatisation is further expressed through condemnations and/or sanctions.[9] The process of *justification* in the research question is embedded in social interactions in the nuclear context that require stigmatised states to engage in several ways to apologise, clarify, defend, and rectify their behaviour after engaging in deviant acts — that seemed *reasonable* rather than the *right* thing to indulge in, as opposed to a socially and collectively accepted way of normative conduct.

The main research question can be broken down into further sub-questions: What are the conditions that are to be met for a state to become stigmatised by a nuclear hegemon? How can the position of a stigmatised state be understood in international politics? How do stigmatised states tend to overcome stigma in spite of following non-compliant patterns of behaviour? The empirical case-study of India's nuclear relationship with the US from 1974 to 2008 can be further subdivided into the following: How has India resisted the deviant label in international politics without dissolving its nuclear programme? How can one understand the kind of justifications ad discourse India has used to eventually extract a

[9] The use of anthropomorphism to connect individual identity and behaviour in everyday society to states in international politics has already been highlighted earlier.

de-facto recognition of its nuclear programme from the United States?

My research question will not only allow me to investigate a socio-political phenomenon in the politics of nuclearisation, but also enable me to look at a huge body of literature that widely encompasses the purported codes of nuclear governance, perspectives on International Political Sociology (IPS) in IR, constructivist and critical constructivist rationales in global politics, and the existing literature on India's foreign policy and nuclear identity.[10] However, each of these strands of research directly engages with the important themes that my thesis is underpinned by. These include highlighting the shift to interpretive and normative explanations in IR, challenging positivist explanations of international politics, and closely examining the socialisation processes and power relations embedded within hierarchical international structures.

In answering the theoretical aspect of my research question, scholars have pre-dominantly turned to explaining how norms evolve and change over time (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998; Acharya, 2004; Lantis, 2016) and have linked the interpretation of norms to the unique inter-subjective experiences of the state in question (Acharya, 2005; Bleiker and Hutchison, 2008; Epstein, 2012; Hopf, 2013; Wiener, 2007, 2009). Researchers have also critically analysed the theoretical dynamics of norm contestation, norm diffusion, and norm robustness (Acharya, 2017; Caprioli and Trumbore, 2003; Deitelhoff and Zimmermann 2019; Lantis, 2018; Niemann and Schillinger, 2017; Zürn 2019).

Another body of research emanating from the nuclear arena have stressed on the symbolic as well as the psychological aspects of states deciding to proliferate against the nuclear non-proliferation regime (Hymans, 2006; Jervis, 1989; Müller and Wunderlich, 2013; Sagan, 1996/1997; Wunderlich, 2014). With the recent increase of works on stigma theory in international politics, there have been various inter-disciplinary interventions that examine how individuals and states − through employment of anthropomorphic approaches − manage their stigmatised identities. Following the seminal research on stigma theory by Goffman (1963), these works can be broadly understood as stigma management being undertaken by the deviant through unsettling the international order, refusing to accept as being stigmatised, distancing themselves from the stigmatisers, criticising the stigmatisers, and comparing the various degrees of imposed stigma on an actor (Kurowska and Reshetnikov, 2021; Meisenbach, 2010; Rogstad, 2022).

[10] Hopf (1998) provides an insightful difference between critical and conventional variants of constructivism. He argues that critical constructivism questions conventional understandings of identity, allows room for a reflection of the epistemic assumptions of the researcher within the field of study, recognises the dynamics of power (often unequal) in every social exchange, and enables movements of emancipation. However, conventional constructivism notes that identity drives the cause of action in specific contexts, maintains a clear distinction between the researcher and the object of study, and may not necessarily interrogate underlying power relations (Hopf, 1998). For more debates on conventional versus critical constructivism, see for example, Adler (1997); Checkel (1998); Katzenstein et al. (1998).

Finally, works on argumentation and rhetoric in international politics also discusses relevant themes that highlight how deviant acts are justified as exceptionalist undertakings, usage of arguments to make deviant acts seem more socially congruent, and states refusing to participate in discussions that underline their deviant behaviour (Goddard, 2015; O'Mahoney, 2017; Sauer and Reveraert, 2018; Shannon, 2000).

In studying India's nuclear relationship with the US between 1974 to 2008, scholars have demonstrated an NPT non-signatory India still conforming to the newly emerging non-proliferation consensus (Joshi, 2018; Sarkar, 2015; Pant and Joshi, 2018), stressed India's unique identity in international politics (Malik, 2010; Mohan, 2007; Muppidi, 1999; Chacko and Davis, 2018), and highlighted India's racialised treatment in the international system (Chacko, 2011, 2012; Biswas, 2014; Das, 2012, 2014). Smetana (2019) has proposed understanding the Indian nuclear identity through inter-linked concepts of stigma imposition, management of the imposed stigma, and reversal of the imposed stigma. Yet, Smetana's work (2019) does not satisfactorily i) understand why India's nuclear identity remains far from being normalised, ii) develop a focussed stigma theory in accounting for India's erratic display of compliant and non-compliant forms of nuclear behaviour, and iii) examine the key justificatory logics used by India to escape its identity from being cemented as deviant in nuclear governance.

More broadly, there are two largely unexplored ways in answering my research question and its accompanying empirical case study. Apart from the recent work of Smetana (2019) and its consequent shortcomings, attention has rarely been given to the ways in which the dynamics of interactionism, socialisation, and stigmatisation help constitute India's nuclear identity. Secondly, the study of constructivist norms has remained relatively underdeveloped within the field of nuclear politics to shed light on states from the Global South contesting dominant and existing nuclear norms. Answering the thesis question in these ways offers several theoretical implications. These include i) questioning the international hierarchies in nuclear governance as not given but rather as socially constructed, and hence being susceptible to challenges by states that are prevented from acquiring nuclear weapons by the NPT, ii) re-thinking the ways in which scholars have constructed the international system through a dominant understanding of positivist traditions, and iii) challenging Eurocentric knowledge production processes. Chakrabarty (2000: 29) argues that "[t]he everyday paradox of third-world social science is that we find these theories, in spite of their inherent ignorance of 'us,' eminently useful in understanding our societies." In the specific context to the development of norms in IR theory, Finnemore and Sikkink (1998: 893-895) have highlighted how their influential work on the process of norm life-cycles borrows from US legal scholarship. However, Zarakol (2014) has explained why this process remains inadequate in explaining the norm internationalisation patterns of states in the Global South.

This thesis follows *critical* scholarship accounts in IR. Therefore, it aims to problematise the existing international and hierarchical political structure and seeks to make common understandings of international norms and stigma uncommon. In constructing the US as a nuclear hegemon by virtue of the NPT and the first state that tested its nuclear weapons through technological and political superiority, my thesis draws inspiration from Said (1978). Said (1978: 40) famously remarked that the Western Self has been historically constructed as "rational, virtuous, mature [and] normal." On the contrary, the Oriental is constructed as the West's Other who is too "irrational, depraved (fallen) [and] childlike" (40). Hence, in terms of nuclear governance, the Oriental cannot be trusted with military grade nuclear capabilities.

As I elucidate with numerous examples in Chapter 1, this thesis comes at a time when scholars who study Indian foreign policy have been increasingly resorting to a more critical constructivist stance in explaining several facets of India's identity in global politics.[11] In the rapidly evolving scholarship on India's foreign policy, these works seem to be commonly characterised by the lack of a fundamental and deep engagement with norms research and the application of sociological theories in IR. Furthermore, these studies ignore explanations of the larger narrative on the relationship between norm contestation, approaches to stigmatisation, and political discourse.

2. Theoretical Assumptions, Key Concepts, and Arguments

The main arguments of this thesis follow from two key assumptions. Firstly, the thesis is anthropomorphically underpinned by the central idea that states interpret reality as socially constructed through their own inter-subjectivities, "which are constitutive of the social matrix in which individuals [states] find themselves and act" (Taylor, 1971: 27). By virtue of interpreting reality through social interactions, states not only acquire and undergo change in identity (Wendt, 1992) but also give rise to norms, defined as "a collective expectation for the proper behaviour of actors with a given identity" (Katzenstein, 1996: 5). In outlining its role and importance, Jepperson et al. (1996) and Katzenstein (1996) have stated that norms not only prescribe regulatory behaviour but also help constitute state identities.

Secondly, this project assumes to maintain the international normative standards of behaviour, there exists a hegemon or a set of central actors that "have the power to shape the norms and discourse by virtue of their centrality and importance" (Onderco, 2015: 5). Reus-Smit (1997: 578) further explains that prevalent ideas of the international system are hegemonic "not because they are the only conceptions […] but because, in a narrow sense, they are embraced by the dominant coalition of states." Following Reus-Smit (1997), this thesis also treats the idea of a hegemon as not given. Rather,

[11] See, for example, Bloomfield (2016); Chacko (2016); Chatterjee (2005); Ganguly (2016); Møller (2017); Stevenson (2011); Wetering (2018).

it perceives the identity of a hegemon as a process — that has been socially constructed and embedded in the international system by virtue and maintenance of dominant material, economic, historical, racial, and imperialist discourses. In Chapter 1, I empirically address these aspects.

While norms have created standardised levels of meaning in the international system by allowing the creation of labels such as being "normal" and "natural", it has also given rise to the other as being deviant from the "normal" and "natural" (Zarakol, 2014: 313-314). To reinforce meanings that constitute the normal, the hegemon at the centre resorts to the process of stigmatising deviant behaviour. Link and Phelan (2001: 363) have demonstrated stigmatisation to be the co-occurrence of the following components: labelling, stereotyping, separation, and status loss and discrimination. More recently, Adler-Nissen (2014: 152) has not only advanced the argument that stigmatisation helps re-instate normal state behaviour but has also termed the "group of states that attempts to impose stigma" as the "audience of normals." She goes on to develop (143) three distinct typologies in explaining how deviant states manage their stigmatised identities in global politics — "stigma recognition" (states resorting to corrective behaviour), "stigma rejection" (states refusing to accept being stigmatised), and "counter-stigmatisation" (states converting the imposed stigma as an emblem of pride and honour).

I have already mentioned how the United States is constructed as a hegemon in terms of its important role in envisaging the non-proliferation regime, being the first state to develop nuclear weapons, and enthusiastically supporting the indefinite extension of the NPT. In providing an extensive account of how the United States sits within a core group of actors within the nuclear non-proliferation regime, Onderco (2022: 39) writes that Washington exercises "the capacity to choose and activate different connections, the possibility to mobilize larger groups, and the potential to leverage one's own connections" to heavily influence policy outcomes. Furthermore, in occupying a key position within the nuclear power hierarchy and as well as extending the NPT, the "internationally accepted legal norm against nuclear proliferation helped the US to justify, in the eyes of the international community, any coercive strategies against the violators of nuclear norms" (Onderco, 2022: 31). In doing so and as this thesis understands, the United States also assumes the role of being a normal, possesses nuclear weapons in adherence to the NPT, and exercises power to impose stigma and punish nuclear norm violators.[12]

In empirically characterising deviant behaviour and the conditions on which labelling should be imposed as part of the stigmatisation process, the US Department of State (2002) identified certain states as "rogues." These states have been defined as "rely[ing] on acts of terror and, potentially, the use of weapons of mass destruction — weapons that can be easily concealed, delivered covertly, and

[12] It is also to acknowledge that the identity of the United States as being a normal is highly contested. See, for example, Blau et al. (2008); Blum (2001); Walker (2007).

used without warning" (US Department of State Archives, 2002). Following India's nuclear test in 1974 and in 1998, India was not only sanctioned but was also called a "rogue democracy in perpetuity" (Los Angeles Times, 1998) that had "cheated" in gradually acquiring military grade nuclear weapons technology (Gilinky and Leventhal, 1998).

In more academic terms, Onderco (2015: 1) identifies that labelling a state as rogue does not mean the state in question has simply violated or is in opposition to "neo-liberalism, human rights universalism, or Western capitalist intervention." Rather, the label is likely to apply if a state specifically remains in violation of nuclear compliance and as a result engaging in a much more extreme form of deviant behaviour. Onderco (2015) also argues that for the rogue label to stick, it requires a strong normative (rather than legal) resonance among the audience of normals. Hence, the notion of being a deviant and as a result inviting stigmatisation within an international system of states, may not always carry associations of permanency with it.[13] Building on how states negotiate their deviance within the international system to erode the linkage between their identity and deviant labelling, Shannon (2000: 300) argues that actors must be able to "sell [their] violation" for being granted an exception and that "[t]he ability to deny, justify, or excuse untoward behavior to oneself and others depends on two things: the norm itself and the situation at hand." Nuclear norms particularly have a universalistic characteristic whereby the NPT has "provide[d] grammar for international political discourses" as it is "deeply internalized by actors as to become commonsense" (Budjeryn, 2015: 207). Therefore, the international community remains extremely vigilant in identifying norm breaking behaviour in the nuclear domain. Using the foundational discussions on constructivist norms and stigma from Chapter 1 as a springboard, I will develop a novel conceptualisation of stigma management in Chapter 2. In Chapter 3, I will theorise how deviant states manipulate their identities through discourses under this conceptualisation.

Following from my assumptions and the discussed inter-linkages of concepts that drive my project forward, this thesis makes an overarching case in calling for a more fluid and reflexive understanding of deviant identities in global politics. More specifically, it comes up with two main arguments.

By treating the field of nuclear politics as socially constructed, the first argument that my project makes is that stigmatised states engage in social interactions with the hegemon, through which the former justifies partially following norms of nuclear deterrence, non-proliferation, and non-use with the hegemon. These interactions are by no means given as stigmatised states justifying nuclear non-compliance do so through their own inter-subjective experiences and interpretations of nuclear norms. This remains dissonant to the dominant nuclear discourses that the hegemon has given rise to through the NPT and the construction of an audience of normals with shared ideas of what is meant by nuclear compliance. Unlike in the occurrence of securitisation theory (Buzan et al., 1998), where a hegemon

[13] Refer to footnote 3 on how this thesis views the international system of states.

tries to convince an audience (of normals) of securitising an issue that demands action, I treat the hegemon as part of the audience of normals (albeit with differential power status). The hegemon along with the audience of normals come to share a common experience and expectation of reality overtime by virtue of social, political, cultural, historical and economic learnings, and cognitive interactions. Furthermore, complete normalisation of stigmatised nuclear identities does not occur because the issues of dissonance/deviance between the hegemon (along with the audience of normals) and the stigmatised state remain unresolved. Rather, *change* occurs as the ambivalence and the anxiety in the relationship are only forgotten momentarily. The uneasiness does not completely disappear and risks the probable chance of reappearing again in the future.

My second argument is more empirical in nature and directly pertains to the case-study of this project. I argue that India's transformational nuclear relationship with the US points to the discursive power of social interactions in nuclear governance. This explains the socially constructed aspects of deviance and approaches to stigmatisation that until now have remained under-theorised in nuclear governance. Using the case of India and borrowing from Spivak's (2005) concept of subalternism, I theorise India's stigmatised identity (rather than an attribute or a process) to be a social *position* that India occupied, post its 1974 nuclear test. The position of stigmatisation is characterised as a space wherein India was alienated and sanctioned by the hegemonic US within the non-proliferation regime. India's nuclear behaviour was understood as rogue or an extreme form of deviance, and India's justifications for 1974 and the subsequent 1998 nuclear tests fell on deaf ears. I base the understanding of achieving the stigma position in Chapter 2 as requiring i) an act (India's nuclear tests in 1974 and 1998 by being a non-signatory to the NPT), ii) condemnation (a normatively shared wide-spread outcry that involved the US as a hegemonic power to lead the charge of verbally shaming and sanctioning India), and iii) emergence of the other identity (India suddenly ceased to become a responsible nuclear power and its system of normative values and world view was perceived as *radically* different from other states).

Alongside the three earlier typologies suggested by Adler-Nissen (2011) of managing stigmatised identities, I add a fourth typology. By using the case of a stigmatised India (post the 1974 nuclear test) resorting to a process of identity change, I term this identity management technique as *stigma redaction*. Stigma redaction only allows a state to partially come out of its stigma position. Unlike stigma reversal, stigma redaction does not refer to stigma recognition where states completely resort to changing its behaviour to make it corrective or compliant. Rather, it refers to a semi-correction of stigma and partial efforts of a stigmatised state to resort to corrective behaviour. While India still refuses to sign the NPT and simultaneously give up its nuclear weapons, it has been semi-accommodated into the global nuclear order, has no imposed sanctions based on its nuclear non-compliance, and has been given a de-facto nuclear status by the US — all following the operationalisation of the 123 Agreement in 2008 (US Department of State Archives, 2008). However, while India refuses to give up the nuclear option and sign the NPT, it nonetheless correctively resorted

to separating its civil and military nuclear facilities and putting 14 civilian (out of its total 22 nuclear facilities) under IAEA safeguards (The Library of Congress, 2006).

To further understand how stigma redaction is employed by deviant states as a fourth typology of stigma management, I use the literature on justification and rhetoric in international politics to propose *reasoning of instance* as a novel and dynamic course of communication and justification of deviant behaviour (Goddard, 2015; Krebs and Jackson, 2007; Goddard, 2015; O'Mahoney, 2017). In doing so, I theorise that when deviant states showcase partial compliance through stigma redaction, they amplify its impact by continuously stressing on the undertaken behaviour of compliance in various summits, press meetings, governmental documents, etc. Contrarily, in case of making incongruent behaviour more socially presentable, the undertaken social non-compliance is often connected to a previous act of compliance, for making other powers pro-actively respond to the norms being contested. Not only do these approaches to discourse allow stigma redaction to be undertaken successfully by the deviant actors, but also provide them opportunities to enter normative discussions with the audience of normals. It can hence be argued that stigma redaction and reasoning of instance − forming smaller abstractions of international behaviour and discourse − provide a novel understanding of how India undertook reconstructing its nuclear identity, albeit remaining a non-signatory to the NPT and the CTBT.[14]

Using archival research in Chapters 5 and 6, I empirically revisit how India's ambivalent relationship with the US from the period of 1974 to 2008 revolved around an almost cyclical and routinised pattern. Within this period India tested its nuclear capabilities, faced verbal shaming and sanctions, resorted to corrective behaviour, and again went back to nuclear testing. Tellis (2015: 488) terms the India-US nuclear relationship as a "low-level equilibrium trap" in stating that "the trajectory of … the relationship [between New Delhi and Washington] has [either] been upward or downward, [but] … has not proceeded to its maxima in either direction."

3. Contributions

This project contributes to four areas of study in international politics: i) the study of norms and stigma in International Security Studies, ii) interpretive methodologies of studying deviant states through discourse and interactionism, iii) the burgeoning works on global IR, and iv) the empirical research on India's nuclear identity and its interactions with the United States.

Constructivist works in IR theory have increasingly moved to the concept of norms to understand the dynamics of identity and behaviour in international politics (Epstein, 2012; Lightfoot 2006: Souter,

[14] I highlight the empirical instances of India being termed as a rogue state for rather a short period of time in Chapter 1. Following Onderco (2015), it is indeed empirically observable that the rogue label was only applied to India by the US after the former's nuclear weaponisation, following the 1998 nuclear tests. See footnote 68 in Chapter 1.

2016). Using the seminal work of Tannenwald (1999) and constructivist norms research more generally, there has been a surge since the last decade in understanding the relationship of states within the NPT. These understandings are gradually moving away from cause-and-effect analyses operating within the hierarchy of states in the NPT, to how the sociology of this hierarchy is sustained (Lantis, 2018; Muller, 2014; Rublee and Cohen, 2018). Explanations have often been attributed to a range of factors including identity management, interactions, behaviour, discourse, and the dynamics of norms that have held the structure of the NPT together since 1970. In contributing to this set of sociological explanations, this dissertation combines the scholarship on IPS, nuclear politics, and critical constructivist research in shedding new light on the identity management of states that refuse to follow the norms of the NPT. With the conceptualisations of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance in International Security Studies, this thesis introduces a theoretically novel and enriched approach to further research on the negotiation of deviant identities and the challenges they pose to existing norms in the international system.

The second contribution is methodological in nature. It advances Smetana's (2019) work in examining deviant identity constructions and links Goffman's (1963) stigma approach with the literature on interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Hall, 1972; Mead, 1934). To do so, this thesis evidences the relevant discourse and behaviour that enabled India to undergo a change in its nuclear identity through a range of sources. By taking a very novel approach, Chapters 5 and 6 employ chronological and historical instances that incorporates analyses of discourse at various levels as well as focusses on how social interactionism within these discourses lead to deviant identity constructions in international politics. Rather than employing Smetana's (2019) method of using primary and secondary sources of analysis in inadequately evidencing how India undertook stigma management, the methodological logic of looking at key instances within a historical timeline that simultaneously incorporates analyses of discourse as well as social interactionism is therefore unique. Hence, this work i) disrupts traditional notions of methodological inconsistencies, ii) argues that the differences in the employed approaches can harmoniously co-exist, and iii) demonstrates their importance in informing our understanding of the social dimensions of international state behaviour. A lot of analyses on discourse (Janks, 1997; Mirhosseini, 2017; Strange, 2022) use limited sources of evidence to focus on the various meanings of interactions and its effect on actor identities at the micro, meso, and macro level. As the timeline of this thesis is purposely kept broad in constructing the change of India's nuclear identity through stigma redaction and reasoning of instance, employing parsimonious sources of analysis runs the risk of derailing the credibility of this thesis.

By explaining the transformation of India-US nuclear relations through the usage of an inter-disciplinary approach in norms and nuclear research, the thesis also contributes to the developing debates of a global IR research agenda (Acharya, 2014; Tickner, 2003; Tickner, 2016). This is done in two ways. Firstly, my research speaks to the emerging scholarship on having global conversations in

IR which is founded on an idea of "synergiz[ing] disciplinary IR (with its theoretical interests and innovations but perceived lack of empirical richness) and the area studies tradition (with its strong emphasis on field research but which is seen by its critics as atheoretical)" (Acharya, 2014: 650). In this process, it integrates analyses of problematic power relations between states from the Global South with the Global North into the discipline. Secondly, in doing so it widens the scope of global IR conversations in making the scope of international studies more organically inclusive to capture "the relational, unfixed and open-ended aspects of a process of constitution that is global" (Fierke and Jabri, 2019: 509).[15]

The final contribution is empirical in nature and pertains to India's nuclear identity and its interactions with the United States. In examining how India managed to bring about a de-facto recognition of its nuclear programme from the United States, the concepts of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance enable developing a more nuanced understanding of the India-US nuclear relationship. Instead of just stopping short of understanding New Delhi's nuclear relationship with Washington as being shrouded in "suspicion and distrust" (Kapur and Ganguly, 2007: 642), stigma redaction and reasoning of instance adds new light to this uneasy relationship. Also, rather than developing a sociological understanding of India's commitment to nuclear norms of the NPT as well as remaining in violation of these norms through its nuclear weapons programme, scholars have often characterised India's nuclear behaviour as exceptionalist or ambivalent (Abraham, 1998; Chacko and Davis, 2018; Joshi, 2022; Malik, 2010). As demonstrated in the forthcoming chapters, employing stigma redaction and reasoning of instance contributes to developing more specific understandings on the stigmatisation dynamics that constitute India's persistent ambivalent interactions with the United States.

4. Research Approach and Methodology

Gerring (1999: 359) states that "concept formation lies at the heart of all social science endeavour. It is impossible to conduct work without using concepts." Therefore, as already discussed, this project develops the concepts of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance in treating them as key for advancing this study. Also, more broadly, the theoretical framework of this research engages in a theory building and concept formation exercise by combining perspectives from IR theory, IPS, and international nuclear governance. To do so, the thesis broadly uses an *interpretive* methodology. Adcock (2006: 60-61) identifies three fundamental components of an interpretive methodology: "grasp[ing] meaning and action together as parts of a complex, situated whole", "inquir[ing] into the making, remaking, and implications of meanings" and the process of "attending, on the one hand, to

[15] Fierke and Jabri (2019) note that conversations are always ongoing which "neither require consensus, nor does it dispense with opposing points of view" (519). In terms of the globalness of conversations, they also suggest that the "[t]he intention is neither to eliminate difference, as difference is necessary for an interesting conversation; nor is it to achieve unity" (519). While the aim is to contribute to these conversations, my work also sheds light on the prevailing unequal and hierarchical power structures in the international system.

the material, social, and cultural setting(s) of those whose meanings they are; and, on the other hand, to the actions through which these settings are made, remade, and sometimes transformed."

By borrowing from a variety of methods that an interpretive methodology offers, this thesis employs an interactionist approach in explaining the India-US nuclear relationship within the chosen timeframe. Interactionism in social science stems from a more micro-level sociological approach known as symbolic interactionism.[16] Blumer (1969: 65-66) defines symbolic interactionism as "an activity in which human beings interpret each other's gestures and act on the basis of the meaning yielded by that interpretation." Furthermore, these interpretations through which individuals create meanings are not fixed but are being continuously constructed in society through language, symbols, and interactions (Hall, 1972). More recently, Hall (2003: 38) has argued that interactionism as a broader concept (than symbolic interactionism) has helped offer macro-level perspectives on how the "processes of power, politics, collective identity information, media agency, interest groups, and the public agenda became central concepts for understanding the ebb and flow of social problems."

The works of Goffman (1963) and Becker (1963) have remained seminal in offering several theoretical perspectives on using (symbolic) interactionism to study deviant and stigmatised identities in societies. By using anthropomorphism to characterise the social behaviour of states in international politics, Smetana (2019: 8) has highlighted that "[i]nteractionists strictly depart from the absolutist conception of norms and deviance and point to the (inter)subjective, socially constructed nature of both." Therefore, using interactionism to study sociological deviance remains consistent with the already discussed socially constructed theoretical aspects of this project.

The thesis perceives states to be social agents in the international system that are engaged in interpreting, re-interpreting, and enacting norm meanings based on individual experience and expectation (Wiener and Puetter, 2009). Employing anthropomorphism in conceptualising this agent-based analysis for states remains particularly useful. It not only helps empirically observe how the stigma label on India (post its 1974 nuclear test) played out in discourse and policy practises vis-à-vis India's social interactions with the US, but also the ways in which India managed this stigmatised identity.

Furthermore, an agent-based analysis of states speaks to the inconspicuousness of norm breaking and norm abiding behaviour. By conceptualizing states as agents, an agent-based analysis sheds light on several discursive (including hierarchical, lingual, racial, cultural, and historical) factors that shape state interactions on the global stage. As a caveat, this thesis understands Indian political elites as being key in representing India's agentic concerns and taking charge of India's stigma management

[16] The foundation and development of symbolic interactionism as a sociological analytical tool is generally credited to the writings of Mead (1934) and Blumer (1969).

with the US on the global stage. The list of elites includes former Presidents and Prime Ministers of India, Indian Ambassadors to the US, Foreign Secretaries of India, and central and state cabinet ministers of India. This list is of course by no means exhaustive in fully capturing the agency of the diverse and vast Indian domestic populous. Nevertheless, it is an important starting point to examine as to how much elite actors in Indian foreign policy have been able to translate the concerns and opinions of the domestic populous into diplomatic forms of action. In the specific context to nuclear weapons and Indian foreign policy, Abraham (2009) argues that these issues play little or no significance when it comes to the Indian electoral process of choosing Indian elites in key government positions. Therefore, debates of nuclear policy are "an elite affair, concentrated around New Delhi; election required appealing to the interests of India's far-flung, regionally oriented mass who cared about other things" (Perkovich, 1999: 132). Nonetheless, the invisibility of the local population in India's foreign policy negotiations may also invite anthropological, political, cultural, and social studies to more thoroughly examine the problems associated with gatekeeping in a highly heterogeneous Indian society.

In the context of elites, Nehru's support along with scientific expertise from Homi J. Bhabha – the first chairman of the Indian Atomic Energy Commission – led to the establishment of India's indigenous nuclear programme. Similarly, the pathway to the 1974 nuclear test was led by several political elites under the leadership of then India's Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi. Gandhi's decisions of Indian foreign policy put a "greater emphasis on the need for force, yet also maintained an overwhelming focus on autonomy and self-reliance" (Narang and Staniland, 2012: 84). In the words of Cohen (2001: 41), this worldview of the Gandhi administration as "[t]he dominant perspective for the next twenty-five years could be characterized as 'militant Nehruvian.'" While Vikram Sarabhai, the successor of Bhabha, continued expanding India's nuclear programme by spelling out a future space development programme (Sarabhai, 1970), New Delhi's ultimate undertaking of the 1974 nuclear test occurred under the new scientific leadership of Homi Sethna (Pant and Joshi, 2018). Post the nuclear test, several Indian elites − which include then India's Defence Minister, Jagjivan Ram, and two key scientists, R. Chidambaram and R. Ramanna − maintained in public how "the test had few or no military implications and was simply part of India's ongoing attempts to harness the peaceful uses of nuclear energy" (Ganguly, 1999: 160).

When India declared the weaponization of its nuclear programme in 1998, it saw a new Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Vajpayee, a candidate from the Bharatiya Janata party as opposed to Gandhi from the Indian National Congress, was led by different ideological leanings. In terms of differences between both parties, Narang (2009: 143) argues that the Congress bases itself on "demonstrating Indian self-sufficiency and technological prowess as a vehicle to be being considered a legitimate global power" whereas the Bharatiya Janata Party is driven by defiance against an

"aggressive Pakistan and a hypocritical club of global powers seeking to exclude India from great-powerdom." When Vajpayee came into power in the 1998 elections, he argued that "there is no compromise on national security; all options including the nuclear options will be exercised to protect security and sovereignty" (Nuclear Weapon Archive, 1998a). Furthermore, he was also guided by an elite contingent of scientists who ensured that Vajpayee fulfilled his electoral promise. Some of the key names in the scientific advisory team included Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, R Chidambaram; Director of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Anil Kakodkar; Scientific Adviser to the Defence Minister and Chief of the Defence Research and Development Organisation, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam (Subramanian, 1998).

Having briefly discussed US reactions to the 1998 nuclear tests in the first section of the Introduction, one sees a very different electoral climate in India with the 123 Agreement being negotiated with Washington. When Manmohan Singh, the Prime Ministerial electoral candidate from the Indian National Congress, won the general elections in 2004, it is not surprising that along the ideological lines of his party, New Delhi sought to have a deeper integration into the world economy. However, in dealing with domestic pressure in parliamentary debates, Singh made it amply clear that with the 123 Agreement "[w]e will not accept interference by other countries vis-à-vis the development of our strategic programme" (Embassy of India in Washington D.C., 2006). Consequently, the success of the 123 Agreement whereby India maintained its strategic autonomy of not putting its military nuclear facilities under international safeguards, can indeed be attribute to what Narang and Staniland (2012: 79) calls India's elite "strategic core". In the case of India, along with External Affairs Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, key figures that led the successful diplomatic negotiation of the India-US nuclear deal included the experienced team of "Shivshankar Menon, Shyam Saran, M. K. Narayanan, Anil Kakodkar, Ravi Grover, and DB Venkatesh Varma" (Paddock, 2009: 10).

In studying the key instances of India's agency being played out in its interactions with the US vis à vis Indian elites, this thesis observes the racialisation of India's nuclear identity through sanctioning and verbal shaming, India's comprehensive plan to the world community in calling for complete disarmament (Sundaram, 2018), and India's hesitance in weaponising its nuclear programme; the two latter factors can be attributed to India's history of non-violent colonial struggle (Pant and Joshi, 2018). In further studying how India's interactions with the US empirically generate language, meaning, and identity, this project engages in archival research.

George and Bennett (2005: 84) note that archival sources are "a type of purposeful communication" in "interpreting the meaning and significance of what is said, […] who is speaking to whom, for what purpose, and, under what circumstances." As the project looks at the research question from the perspective of the *stigmatised state* (India, in this case), archival sources in New Delhi originally

included the Press Information Bureau (PIB), National Archives of India (NAI), and The Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML). However, due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the project had to shift to a remote form of data collection. The websites of Abhilekh Patal (an initiative of making holdings online by NAI), PIB, and the Indian Ministry of External Affairs were used to remotely access documents of interest. For conducting remote archival study at NMML, relevant catalogues were browsed online, requests of archival interest were placed to the stationed archivists, and scanned copies of the relevant documents were received via email.

After using these remote modes of data collection, primary sources of empirical analyses pertain to announcements from Indian and US decision makers, press releases from the Indian Government, diplomatic exchanges between Indian and US political elites, and general addresses from key governmental representatives from India and the US on several international and local institutions which include the IAEA, United Nations (UN) General Assembly, UN Security Council (UNSC), gatherings between Non-Aligned countries, parliamentary proceedings, and speeches of political elites in various educational institutes. Documents were also browsed online from the Library of Congress, The White House Archives, US Department of State, and the US Presidential Archives in incorporating official US perspectives into this project. Studying language in all these forms of communication is a more direct method in observing the meanings embedded in social interactions between both sides. Secondary sources are intended to fill the research gaps that arise in the process. These include more indirect forms of communication such as media reports from CNN, The Economic Times, The New York Times and The Times of India, policy papers from The Stockholm Peace Research Institute and the Federation of American Scientists, and academic works in terms of monographs, journals and edited books. In Chapter 4, I show the breakup of sources in greater detail and the frequency of sources, in relation to the overall citations in this thesis.

For studying the interactional elements of discourse embedded in the identified archival documents, this thesis also turns to the work of Adler-Nissen (2014) who has brought to light how states challenge the moral discourse of a norm, become stigmatised in this social process, and the ways in which states then resort to managing its newly acquired socially stigmatised identity. This discourse is perceived by this thesis as being embedded in the exchange of ideas, shared belief systems, and identity constructions which are constituted through interactions with others. Under an interpretive research methodology, this thesis uses a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) method developed by Fairclough (2013) to interpret data from the identified archival sources.[17]

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[17] Jorgensen and Phillips (2002: 5) define discourse as "a form of social action that plays a part in producing the social world – including knowledge, identities and social relations – and thereby in maintaining specific social patterns." Scholars over the years have developed several discourse analytical methods. For example, Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) discourse theory argued that all social phenomena can be understood as discourses and these discourses are constantly changing and evolving overtime. Foucault's (1970) discourse analysis focusses

Fairclough's CDA model is based on three steps: "description (text analysis); interpretation (processing analysis) and explanation (social analysis)" (2013: 133). Using Fairclough's (2013) approach is suited for the thesis as it helps explore several contributing themes of this thesis through the usage of an archival study method. Apart from looking into the several layers of meaning in the archival documents, it also includes investigating the following set of questions for the thesis: How did India construct its justifications for the 1974 nuclear test? How did India modify its response when it ultimately decided to weaponise its nuclear programme? How did India attempt to reconstruct its social perception as a responsible nuclear power after conducting its second nuclear test in 1998 and therefore violating NPT norms? Why did Washington's removal of all nuclear related sanctions on India in 2001 not automatically translate into India becoming a part of the normals?

Because of the studied instances within the wide timeline of this thesis and following the argument of Schegloff (1997) about the vast analytical field of CDA, all primary and secondary sources of analyses were coded in the NVivo data management software. This enabled narrowing the analytical framework in interpreting the relevant interactional elements between India and the US as well as creating main nodes and constituent themes/sub-nodes; both emerging from the project's main research question and theoretical framework. The main nodes underline key concepts that make up the stigma management behaviour of states undertaking stigma redaction and reasoning of instance. The sub-nodes within the main nodes enabled observing more specific aspects under these broader theoretical conceptualisations that are affected when deviant states undertake stigma redaction with the normals.

Doing so, and as I highlight in Chapter 4, uses an abductive form of reasoning, i.e. using the theorisation of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance in creating these nodes for conducting preliminary analysis. Patterns of similarities as well as anomalies were then observed within these nodes and themes along with subjecting them to further refinement to develop coherent categories of analyses. The developed final set of codes in NVivo were used to identify interactional dynamics of stigma behaviour and management between India and the US.

Furthermore, CDA was undertaken on the specific areas of primary and secondary sources that were flagged by NVivo after using the final set of coding categories, as listed in Chapter 4. Subsequently, the emerging results from CDA were interpreted and then represented through a historical and chronological narrative. Employing such a narrative also serves as an ordering mechanism for representing historically and empirically important events that emerge from the developed theoretical

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on linkages between language and the distribution of societal power relations. He argued that the ways through which power and language shape society are both, conscious and unconscious.

framework of this project. Doing so, is underpinned by the methodological arguments of disrupting traditional and more familiar usages of CDA as well as making historical events that shape structural discourses in global politics more accessible to the reader.

Following from the undertaken interpretivist approach of this thesis, Bevir and Rhodes (2015) argue that behaviour and belief systems cannot be reduced to intervening variables to establish causal claims and can only be studied through the interpretations of empirical evidence as behavioural indicators of specific instances. Hence, in terms of structure, this thesis divides its historical timeframe as observing instances of India-US interactions into two comparable and inter-relatable components. The first timeframe (in Chapter 5) that comprises the period of 1974 to 1998 helps observe two perspectives of India's nuclear identity. This includes its treatment by the US in 1974 when India justified its nuclear test as peaceful, and that of 1998 when India declared itself as having nuclear weapons capability. Instances under the second timeframe (in Chapter 6) of 1999 to 2008 enables observing the change of India's nuclear perception (as a nuclear weapons state and still being outside the widely shared norms of the NPT) in eventually receiving a de-facto nuclear recognition from the US.

5. Limitations and Personal Considerations

Like all projects, my PhD thesis does encounter certain limitations. Some of these limitations have been self-imposed while others stem directly or indirectly from the epistemological, ontological, and methodological ways through which I have approached my project. However, I have tried to meticulously consider each one of these and weigh in the alternatives through which these research gaps can be filled.

Studied instances within the timeframe of the project span over thirty years of the India-US bi-lateral relationship. Because of this historical timeline, my project may face criticism that suggest that it lacks depth which could have been attained by looking at a shorter timeframe. While this criticism is not entirely without merit, it overlooks an important factor that guides my project – a critical approach to constructivism. One of the key reasons why constructivism gained popularity after the Cold War was to explain change in international politics that realism and liberalism failed to account for. Therefore, if the project was to choose a shorter timeframe, the entire premise of its undertaking would fall through.

The thesis has also incurred several limitations while undertaking archival field work. I had initially planned to undertake fieldwork in India and the US, but I have ultimately limited it to the former. To support this cause, it can be argued that my project focusses on the *stigmatised state* rather than the

stigmatising state, and therefore is more interested in looking at the comparatively less explored archives in New Delhi. The United States follows a Presidential Library system which stores all the archival documents based on the administrative timeline of each US President. Due to this organisational structure, I would have to undertake research visits to seven different Presidential Libraries (from the period of Nixon to Bush). In relation to the overall period of my PhD project, this turned out to be unfeasible. Additionally, sorting through documents from seven different libraries and finding the relevant ones for my thesis remained impractical. Other hindrances would have included funding these research trips and the increasing problem of de-classification of government documents for purposes of national security as I was gradually approaching the end of my research timeline. Nonetheless, I was able to incorporate (albeit very limited) official US political views into my PhD project by browsing documents online from the Library of Congress, The White House Archives, US Department of State, and the US Presidential Archives.

Furthermore, after the Omicron wave of the COVID-19 pandemic cut into my planned time-period (February 2022 to May 2022) of conducting archival research in New Delhi, all my archival research had to be done online.[18] To do so, the website of Abhilekh Patal, an initiative of the National Archives of India, was used to remotely access the relevant documents (Abhilekh Patal, n.d.). In the case of conducting remote archival study at The Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, the catalogue for the list of holdings in its repository was browsed online (NMML, n.d.(b)). Following this, email requisitions for scanning the relevant documents were sent to Ms. Jyoti Luthra, Research Associate in the Reading Room (Manuscripts Section). For collecting data online from the Press Information Bureau website (PIB, n.d.), records under the Department of External Affairs were browsed year wise and the relevant documents were securely stored for further analyses. Additionally, on the website of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (Ministry of External Affairs: Government of India, n.d.), under the category of Media Center, the sub-categories of Bilateral/Multilateral Documents, Press Releases, and Speeches and Statements were browsed within the timeline of the thesis to collect additional analytical evidence.

Being stationed away from the intended sources of archival study came with its own set of limitations in the context of employing an interpretive research methodology. These limitations included being unable to become an immersive epistemic participant inside the archives, missing out on the chances of stumbling upon refreshing and revelatory sources of empirical archival evidence that could have further informed the empirical chapters of this doctoral project, and lacking conversations with fellow researchers who would have provided important feedback on this work as well as enabled working

[18] I have already outlined the methodology and methods used to interpret online archival sources in the previous section on ‘Research Approach and Methodology.’ For a more detailed overview, refer to Chapter 4 of this thesis.

together on future collaborative projects. These limitations were compounded with government documents being difficult to obtain due to their secretive nature, relevant archival sources being inaccessible online, placing multiple requests with stationed archivists to send across scanned copies of the intended empirical material(s) of study, and amending ethical considerations and travel plans due to COVID-19.

After being able to access archival documents online, hindrances have pertained to judging the level of influence of documents written by lower-level officials, incomplete paper trail in reaching towards a specific outcome, and misinterpretation of archival sources due to the negligence of its specific context. I have aimed to fill these research gaps as well as corroborate my findings with careful examination of press reports of the intended source and employing various archival sources from a range of official websites under the Government of India.

In terms of my bibliography, while I have aimed to employ a broad range of scholarly voices to de-monopolise the process of gate-keeping in knowledge production process in IR, the major presence of Western scholars is indeed a matter of concern. As this highlights the demerits and limitations of the discipline, it is nevertheless an area that requires urgent attention.

Finally, this project has allowed me to engage in the exercise of reflexivity — an important aspect of interpretive research. Yanow (2006a: 73) states that "[t]he presence of reflexivity in interpretive methods focuses on the central fact of the researcher herself living "in a distant land" and the ways in which that lived experience shapes her interpretation of others' interpretations of their own metaphorically distant lands." While I identify as an Indian, my core scholarly engagement with IR as a disciple started from my post-graduation years in the West. Therefore, as a researcher, I have constantly asked myself several moral questions throughout my project as it studies a state from the Global South. These included: How do I prevent myself from falling prone to a scholarly agenda that perpetuates a Western world view? Are there any existing and problematic assumptions in the way I seek, analyse and produce knowledge? Who am I and from where do I derive the power to make claims in the process of knowledge building? While I have been constantly engaging with and exploring these questions for the duration of my doctoral study (and also beyond my PhD years), I am yet to find satisfactory answers. However, in the process of writing my doctoral thesis and overcoming its challenges, I was indeed provided with an opportunity to critically engage with my own agency and constantly develop as a researcher.

6. Structure and Chapter Outline

The thesis can be broadly divided into five parts. The first part comprising of Chapter 1 forms the

literature review of this project. It critically identifies the gaps in IPS approaches in the study of nuclear politics, positions the Indian nuclear case within these sociological debates in IR, and engages with the existing scholarship on India's nuclear (and as well as global) identity in international politics.

The second part comprising of Chapters 2 and 3 develops the novel theoretical framework of this thesis. This is done by constructing conceptualisations of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance and building onto existing understandings of stigma management and political rhetoric.

The third part comprising of Chapter 4 spells out the methodological choices that this thesis employs for its empirical study.

The fourth part of the thesis that includes Chapters 5 and 6 comprises its empirical sections. These chapters contain direct observations and its interpretations from my online archival work. By re-visiting and analysing documents at the US-India inter-governmental level, it looks at how interactions between these states constantly changed and evolved over time that led to a radical transformation of India's nuclear identity. Focus on these documents remain in identifying instances of political arguments and stigma management that led to a transformation in the nuclear relationship between India and the US.

The fifth part of the thesis comprises the conclusion chapter. This chapter sums up the findings of the entire project and identifies avenues for further research that could build on this research.

Chapter 1 is a theoretical exercise in examining the existing literature on constructivist and nuclear norms in IR, and simultaneously understanding the representation of India's identity in global politics. More specifically, this chapter highlights the areas where there remains a possibility of combining (critical) constructivist approaches in norms research and nuclear politics. In doing so, Chapter 1 problematises the existing epistemic understandings that has emanated from of past studies of deviant nuclear states. These research gaps are further contextualised by relating the Indian nuclear identity to the existing literature on norms and stigma. Furthermore, this chapter sheds light on the IR scholarship on political argumentation and rhetoric. In doing so, it underpins discussions in the relevant literature as to how India justified and reacted after being stigmatised by the United States for being deviant of NPT norms. This chapter also situates the binary understanding of states imposing stigma versus stigmatised states to a problematic conceptualisation of the international structure being hierarchical and unequal in nature. Chapter 1 then goes on to underline the added value of positioning the Indian nuclear case (albeit a deviant nuclear state) in the study of norm contestation through stigma management, political justifications, and identity change.

Drawing from sociology and employing an anthropomorphic approach, Chapter 2 dramaturgically

identifies stigmatised states as *performers of the deviant* and proposes stigma redaction as a new typology of stigma management. In furthering the research on sociological deviance, this typology is characterised by a stigmatised state undertaking irregular patterns of semi-corrective behaviour to partially overcome its stigma position and escape the label of being a permanent deviant in international politics. Chapter 2 also underlines states that contest hegemonic norms as stigmatised social agents. Furthermore, it departs from the existing understanding of stigma as a position or an attribute, by arguing that states that are stigmatised occupy a subaltern stigma position from where its contestation of nuclear norms are rendered illegitimate, its justification towards norm-breaking is deemed voiceless, and its agentic and background learnings are made invisible. In the final section of this chapter, it also explicitly spells out the scope and conditions of stigma redaction. These include democratic forms of governance fast-tracking the deviant's process of seeking legitimacy from the normals and deviants using stigma redaction in gauging social acceptability from the normal in a variety of cases in world politics.

Chapter 3 builds on Chapter 2 in conceptualising a salient way of how performers of the deviant employ stigma redaction with the audience of normals and the effect it has on the latter. To do so, it proposes reasoning of instance as a dynamic course of communication and justification. Chapter 3 also theorises that reasoning of instance allows performers of the deviant to identify common normative baggage with the normals in ultimately enabling the former to emerge as a successful norm innovator. Also, this chapter argues that by using reasoning of instance, performers of the deviant showcase partial compliance through stigma redaction and then amplify its impact by continuously stressing on the undertaken compliant behaviour in various summits, press meetings, governmental documents, etc. Contrarily, in case of making incongruent behaviour more socially presentable, the undertaken social non-compliance is often connected to a previous act of compliance, for making other powers pro-actively respond to the norms being contested. Doing so, often provides the performers of the deviant a reference point to enter normative discussions with the audience of normals.

Chapter 4 of this PhD project justifies the usage of an interpretive methodology to study the empirical case of India's social interactions with the United States in the nuclear domain. Under the broader ambit of an interpretive methodology, this project uses archival sources to reconstruct how India partially escaped its subaltern stigma position. Archival sources are employed to examine how New Delhi's nuclear deviant identity underwent social change in gradually gaining a de-facto recognition of its nuclear programme from Washington. For the interpretation of archival sources, this chapter synthesises social interactionism along with borrowing from an approach to Critical Discourse Analysis. As CDA can underline a plethora of contexts, its synthesis with social interactionism remains helpful in specifically observing how interactions produce as well as re-instate the identity dynamics of normal and deviant in international politics. Furthermore, all primary and secondary

sources of analyses were coded into NVivo through the identification of nodes and sub-nodes. The emerging empirical results from the analysis in NVivo were interpreted through the lens of the adapted methodology and were then presented using a linear historical narrative in the subsequent chapters.

As the timeline investigated in this thesis purposely remains broad to gradually observe India's semi-accommodation in the global nuclear order vis-à-vis its social dynamics of interactions with the United States, the empirical chapters are divided into two sub timeframes. The first covers instances within the period from 1974 (India's first nuclear test) to the year 1998 (India's second nuclear test) and forms Chapter 5 of this thesis. This empirical chapter highlights the reactions of Washington to the 1974 nuclear test that risked New Delhi's position being permanently cemented as a stigmatised subaltern identity in the nuclear hierarchy. Chapter 5 also shows how India employed stigma redaction and reasoning of instance to manage its stigmatised identity but was unable to completely reduce its social distinctiveness from the United States. Washington introduced a further round of sanctions to curtail New Delhi's newly developing missile development programme in the 1990s along with tightening the noose on the latter's nuclear programme after the 1998 nuclear test. Although India displayed semi-compliance in various instances through the usage of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance, this chapter points to the hinderances that prevented India from being understood as a conforming nuclear identity by the United States.

Instances within the second timeframe from 1999 to 2008 that forms Chapter 6, covers the period of renewed bi-lateral engagement where there was a simultaneous semi-accommodation of India's nuclear identity along with changes in the strategic interests of the US. Chapter 6 links the discussions from the previous chapter in demonstrating India's cautionary justification of nuclear norms through stigma redaction and reasoning of instance, post its 1998 nuclear tests. It highlights New Delhi's cognisance of its lost social status after conducting the 1998 nuclear tests and the steps it took to add more transparency to its foreign policy. Nonetheless, this chapter argues that the removal of sanctions on New Delhi by Washington did not automatically translate into New Delhi becoming part of the audience of normals in nuclear governance. Chapter 6 demonstrates that while India's emergence of a successful norm innovator was an example of normative change, Washington's implicit acceptance of India's nuclear programme can only be characterised as a norm of semi-acceptance that was reversible and conditional. Finally, it examines as to whether India's usage of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance in bringing about an implicit acceptance of its nuclear programme by the United States can be understood as a change in India's subaltern nuclear identity.

The concluding chapter of this doctoral work considers the wider epistemological, ontological, and methodological implications of this project. In doing so, it sums up the contributions from the theoretical, methodological, and empirical sections of this thesis in further advancing emerging

research on the sociology of deviant states in International Security Studies. More specifically, this chapter revisits the key question of this thesis and underlines the process of how the overall arguments made in the previous chapters answers the main research question. It highlights why the methodological choices made in the thesis contributed to a more holistic investigation of the chosen empirical sources, along with recognising the limitations associated with doing interpretive research in the times of COVID-19. This chapter further engages with broader questions on international order that emerges from the India-US nuclear case study. It stresses the effect that stigma redaction and reasoning of instance have on state revisionism, dynamics of cooperation and conflict, and policy choices of carrots and sticks in punishing social deviance. Furthermore, this chapter discusses how this work can fit in emerging scholarship on works on norm fetishisation, norm contestation, status, and approaches to stigmatisation in international politics. Finally, the chapter stresses on the importance of socialisation in the current decadent state of arms control and points to various avenues of research that could emerge from the undertaking of this doctoral project. This includes examining the nuclear non-compliant behaviour of states like Iraq, Libya, and South Sudan.

Chapter 1| Reading Norm Contestation Dynamics and India's Nuclear Identity[19]

1.1. Introduction

"It would be as ridiculous to construct a theory of international politics based on Malaysia and Costa Rica as it would be to construct an economic theory of oligopolistic competition based on the minor firms in a sector of an economy" (Waltz, 1979: 72).

This quote by Waltz thematically runs in contradiction to exactly what this chapter epistemologically intends to achieve: i) identify the convergences of the existing literature on nuclear policy and the research on constructivist norms, ii) position a non-preponderant Indian nuclear identity to the scholarship on norms and stigma, iii) problematise the international normative structure in terms of existing power hierarchies, iv) highlight how India contested its imposed stigma within this hierarchy by posing challenges to NPT norms through political rhetoric and justification, v) recognise further research avenues by analysing India's nuclear relationship with the US, with a specific focus to norm contestation and identity change.

While Waltz's argument would invoke severe backlash from post-structuralist scholars today, the field of IR was increasingly characterised by such Western dominated epistemological assumptions, until the late 1990s. However, several areas of IR have undergone transformations in the 21st century, with scholars undertaking the role of proverbial messiahs. Some of these transformations have called for decolonising a Western-centric approach to what we perceive as knowledge in IR, recognised how politics is understood only through the lens of preponderant powers in the international arena, and called to attention the need to develop inter-disciplinary as well as cross-disciplinary approaches to study international politics.[20] The field of constructivist norms research in IR has particularly benefited from these reformations as scholars have combined norms to study a variety of disciplines and policy areas that range from human rights to environmental politics (Epstein, 2008; Greenhill, 2010; Sikkink, 2011; Skjærseth et al., 2006). While there have been considerable recent scholarly interventions in drawing on the study of norms from constructivist research to investigate the nuclear behaviour of deviant states, there is still a lack of fundamental focus in studying the relationship between stigma, norm contestation, and political argumentation — especially by using case studies.

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[19] This chapter was converted into a journal manuscript and now appears as a publication in *India Review*. The publication can be accessed here: Saha, A. 2022a. "Addressing the Norms Gap in International Security Through the India-US Nuclear Relationship", *India Review*, 21(2): 216-248. doi:10.1080/14736489.2022.2080488. However, further edits were made later and these may overlap with the publication of the next chapter in *International Studies Quarterly*.

[20] Barkawi and Laffey (2006: 330) have stated that "taken-for-granted historical geographies that underpin security studies systematically understate and misrepresent the role of what we now call the global South in security relations."

Surprisingly, the gradual evolution of norms research in constructivist scholarship as a distinctive field in the 1990s (Adler, 1997; Johnston, 1995; Katzenstein, 1996; Wendt, 1992) roughly ran parallel to the timeline of the research frenzy on nuclear politics, mainly emanating from the United States (Cohn, 1987; Nye Jr., 1986; Jervis, 1989; Pilat, 1990). The latter works can be commonly characterised as developing ethical and strategic perspectives of how the new nuclear world should function as the Soviet Union was increasingly reaching its demise during the Cold War. Even though there have been attempts from the late 1990s to bring both these strands together (Arnett, 1998; Krause and Latham, 1998; Tannenwald, 1999), Rublee and Cohen (2018) have nevertheless acknowledged that "[t]he actual literature on norms in nuclear politics is rather small, but it illustrates the potential for this powerful framework in grappling with a range of nuclear-related issues and problems" (319). Secondly, it was in 1999 that Muppidi's work had demonstrated the need to analyse India's foreign policy using constructivism, as opposed to structural theories like realism and liberalism. Even though scholars have taken off from Muppidi's lead (as I have highlighted later in this chapter), Chacko — as recently as 2019 — has claimed that using "constructivist frameworks has been less common in studies of Indian foreign policy. This perhaps reflects the central focus of this literature on Eurocentric accounts of global norms and socialization" (2019: 52).

By analysing the landscape of the work on India's foreign and nuclear policy since Muppidi (1999) and the development of constructivist and nuclear scholarship since the late 1980s, there are several questions that this chapter intends to answer: At what possible points has the literature on nuclear politics and norms in constructivist research shown intersections? How does one position the Indian nuclear case study in context to the growing constructivist scholarship on norms and stigma? How does a deviant India contest its imposed stigma through argumentation logics within an unequal international hierarchy? How does the existing literature understand deviant identities, like India, when they decide to contest dominant nuclear norms?

To answer these questions, this chapter has been divided into five sections.

The first section identifies how the reactions of a norm-taker in nuclear politics can often be dynamic in nature with the evolving research on the fluidity of norms and identity in constructivist scholarship. Furthermore, it highlights the problematic use of language still prevalent in the areas of academia and policy discourse that seem to prevent norm-takers from engaging in any complaint form of behaviour. This further delegitimatizes a norm-taker in engaging in any justification for its (deviant) nuclear programme, discredits identity transformations in international politics, and prevents deeper examination of the norm-taker's undertaken non-compliance at the structural and as well as the agentic level. The second section presents some of the dominant themes in the literature on the sociological approaches to deviance and the stigmatisation. By using this strand of scholarship, the second section also contextualises the notion of stigma embedded in India's nuclear identity after it

undertook the 1974 nuclear test and how scholars till date have rarely studied the stigmatised Indian nuclear case.

The third section brings to light the broader picture of the notions of stigma and norms operating within a hierarchical power structure, with a specific focus on India. Using key literature, it analyses how India's aspirations of becoming a 'great power' (through acquiring of nuclear capabilities) in the international normative power structure has been treated with high scepticism. It also highlights how the problematic international structure has downplayed India's role of being an active participant in the nuclear debate. The fourth section partakes in the role of understanding norms as being susceptible to contestation by actors that undertake diverse justifications of non-compliant behaviour. Using the case of India, it also argues that norm-breaking behaviour may call to attention the security needs of an actor being ignored in international politics, along with the international community devaluing compliant forms of behaviour that the actor is/has undertaken. The last section highlights viewing socialisation as a one-way process being increasingly problematic and a distinct categorisation of states (such as good versus bad) may result in failed instances of closely examining identity transformation processes in international politics.

1.2. Norms in Nuclear Politics and India's Nuclear Identity

In understanding norms as a concept, one comes across a variety of definitions. Katzenstein (1996: 5) has stated that a norm "is a collective expectation for the proper behaviour of actors with a given identity." Finnemore and Sikkink (1998: 891) in their influential work have defined norms or what is considered as normal as "a standard of appropriate behaviour for actors with a given identity." McDonald (2008: 63) has identified that "norms may be defined as shared expectations about appropriate or legitimate behaviour by actors with a particular identity." While definitions differ, there seems to be some consensus on the notion that norms are social, shared, and are linked to the identity or identities of the actor(s).[21] Several attempts have also been made to group this area of research as the *first*[22] wave and the *second*[23] wave (Acharya, 2004; Bloomfield and Scott, 2017; Lantis, 2016). However, the literature has largely remained divergent in identifying a specific typology of a *third* wave based on the research on norms in constructivism. Scholarly propositions for a third wave include: explaining the effectiveness of norms (Deitelhoff, 2009, Deitelhoff and Zimmerman, 2017;

[21] There has indeed been an acknowledgement in IR scholarship for the need of a more 'critical' constructivist agenda in norms research that shifts the attention from the maker and imposer of a norm to the norm-taker. For a discussion that separates constructivism from critical constructivism, refer to: Chacko (2019); Hopf (1998); Wiener and Puetter (2009). Also, see footnote 10 in Introduction.
[22] The first wave of norms research treats norms as a static concept and tries to explain the structural responses of states reacting to these norms. Acceptance of the first wave of norms is deemed as universal and any resistance to these norms is treated as illegitimate. For a more specific discussion on the first wave, see: Finnemore and Sikkink (1998); Keck and Sikkink (1998); Peterson (1992); Sikkink (1993); Wiener (2009: 179).
[23] The second wave of norms research focusses on the creation of meaning through social interactions between structure and agency. See also: Farrell (2001); Gurowitz (1999); Sending (2002); Widmaier and Park (2012).

Heller, et al., 2012) to understanding mechanisms of norm internationalisation (Acharya, 2004; Freedman, 2013; Wiener and Puetter, 2009).[24] Attention has rarely been given to understanding how the reaction and treatment of a norm-taker[25] have differed – according to each wave of norms research being applied on the former – especially in the nuclear context.

In the nuclear context, works by Sagan (1996/1997), Hymans (2006), and O'Reilly (2014) have underpinned the normative and psychological aspects of acquiring nuclear weapons and hence the application of nuclear norms. However, it is yet to be highlighted as to how this application is interpreted in relation to the inter-subjective circumstances of the norm-taker. These inter-subjective meanings emerge out of the cultural, political, social, and economic insecurities of the norm-taker. Also, these aspects of an inter-subjective understanding form an integral aspect of the research on norms as demonstrated by the works of Bleiker and Hutchison (2008), Hopf (2013), and Krebs and Jackson (2007). More recently, Rublee and Cohen (2018) have argued that the scholarship on constructivist norms shows much promise in explaining nuclear politics in terms of nuclear possession, non-use, and the non-proliferation regime.

In furthering the contention that the norm-taker remains disadvantaged in IR scholarship, there needs to be an urgent attention given to linguistic representation of norm-takers in academia and policy discourse (as language has been a central tenant in constructivist norms research[26]). Nuclear norms have been dominantly seen as a method to prevent the norm-taker from acquiring nuclear weapons (Craig and Ruzicka, 2013; Gusterson, 1999; Krause and Latham, 1998). However, the creation of a hierarchy of the nuclear-haves versus the nuclear have-nots (also as a result of the dominating *lingual* discourse) needs further elucidation. There remains an operational normality[27] in policy discourse and academia with the usage of language for the norm-taker(s) as "dissenters", "pariahs", and "rogues" (Krause and Latham, 1998: 40; Sagan, 1996/1997: 82; Puri, 2017: 309). Even though Nye Jr. (1986: 85) has underlined moral conditions under which the acquisition of nuclear weapons is justifiable, he has further gone on to stress that the inequality in the possession of nuclear weapons lends stability to the international system. The problem with such language and perpetuating an unequal international system is two-fold. Normatively, not only does it empower the norm-maker as hierarchically superior in nuclear policy making but also robs the norm-taker from any credible justification of maintaining a nuclear programme (even before such a justification is made), through the process of forceful

[24] The key concepts of stigma management and reasoning of instance that this thesis discusses falls in the third wave of norms research or overarchingly addressed as a critical variant of constructivism.

[25] Refer to: Checkel (1999) in the context of *norm-taker* versus *norm-maker*. Norm-taker is defined as the state(s) on which the norm is being applied/imposed while a norm-maker is defined as the state(s) which make(s) the norm and applies/imposes it on the norm-taker(s).

[26] In the context of how language forms an essential aspect of constructivism, see: Epstein (2013: 502); Kratochwil (1989); Onuf (1989); Searle (1995: 59–60).

[27] Exceptions are mostly in the post-colonial analysis of power relations between states. For examples, refer to the works of Biswas (2001, 2014, 2018) and Das (2017).

labelling. Furthermore, labelling encourages the identity of a norm-taker (as a sovereign state which is capable of its own decision making) to be subjected to a normatively rigorous and authoritative scrutiny by the norm-maker.

Another gap in the literature is often overlooking the notion that reshaping/alteration of identity through norm-breaking behaviour improves the perception of a state within the community of norm-takers who collectively remain opposed to the same norm. While Puri (2017: 309) has highlighted the embracing of norm-breaking behaviour by "pariahs", the literature has largely overlooked the epistemological and ontological explanations through a case study in understanding how a state manages its norm-breaking behaviour in the nuclear context. The notion of labelling follows after a norm has been broken or when a state threatens to break a norm. In the same context, the constructivist works of Acharya (2004: 243) and Finnemore and Sikkink (1998: 897) mention the existence of "grafting"[28] and "framing"[29] processes in the international system. Rarely has labelling been viewed as *framing* in the context of nuclear proliferation wherein dominant states use this process to demonstrate how dangerous *labelled* norm-takers are to the existing world order. Threat manufacturing has also existed in the international system through "grafting" wherein treaties such as the CTBT and the NPT can be traced back to the normative underpinnings of the Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT), signed in 1963 (United Nations: Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water, 1963).

Apart from language and identity, social constructivist scholars have argued that norms are what actors interpret them to be through the process of social interaction.[30] Wiener and Puetter (2009: 4) have further added to this, stating that norms are "as 'good' as what actors make them out to be." This "good", also understood as "just, fair and legitimate" by Wiener and Puetter (2009: 4), is in itself a result of social interactions at the structural level. However, norms of deterrence, non-proliferation, and non-use that operate in the nuclear arena are not limited to interactions at the structural level.[31] For example, the justifications that India uses to be in acquisition of nuclear capabilities and yet stay committed to a nuclear free world are also shaped by domestic and ideological underpinnings of non-violence, which evolved during its struggle for independence (Ahmed, 2017; Pant and Joshi, 2018; Malik, 2010).[32] Therefore the justification of non-compliance through nuclear norms in the case of India operates in conjunction to both: interpretation through social interactions at the structural level

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[28] Grafting has been defined as a tactic through which norm-makers give rise to a new norm by connecting with an already existing norm in the same area.
[29] Framing has been described as a process through which norm-takers give rise to an issue "by using language that names, interprets, and dramatizes them" (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998: 897).
[30] Wendt (1992: 391); Onuf (1989)
[31] Freedman (2013) has identified these three norms being central in preventing a nuclear war.
[32] India remains a non-signatory of the NPT since 1968 (United Nations Archives, 1968; United Nations: Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons: Status of the Treaty, n.d.). It is also a non-signatory to the CTBT since 1996 (United Nations Archives, 1996; United Nations: CTBT, 2014).

and as well as social, cultural[33] and ideological learning at the level of agency.

Since Muppidi's (1999: 119-146) ground breaking book chapter that stressed the need to develop a constructivist as well as a post-colonial agenda to study India's foreign policy, there has been an immense scholarly attention towards this intervention. Nizamani (2001: 12) has stated "political discourse on nuclear weapons of India and Pakistan" should be "meaningfully considered as political practices central to the constitution, production, and maintenance of their national identities." Widmaier (2005) has challenged the democratic peace theory by re-constructing the notion of democracy and using the near-war scenario of India and the US (being two democratic states) in 1971. He concludes with the idea that the innate virtue of democracy is not always sacrosanct in giving rise to cooperation but rather is modelled on how states perceive it. Drawing from Sagan (1996/1997), Frey (2006) has equated the normative implications of India's nuclear programme to the re-conceptualisation of India's power and prestige in the international system. Sasikumar (2017) and Selden and Strome (2017) have stated that post 9/11, India has resorted to *(re)managing* its state identity in international politics to increase its compatibility with the US and the global nuclear order.

The case of India's post-colonial nuclear identity has also received huge traction among academics such as Biswas (2001, 2014), Chacko (2011, 2012), Chacko and Davis (2018) and Das (2012, 2017). For example, Chacko and Davis (2018: 353) have recently argued that India derives its status as a responsible nuclear power from its "civilizational exceptionalism" or its supposed historical "innate inclination toward moral behaviour." Their argument marks a significant departure from the implications that flow from accusations by the Indian government of the international system being hierarchical and racial in nature (as demonstrated by Biswas, 2001) to focussing on unique Indian civilisational characteristics.

There also remains an *extensive* or a horizontal variety of constructivist works on India's foreign policy. Drawing from Wendt, Chatterjee (2005) has equated ethnic conflicts in South Asia to conflicts of identity and has highlighted how the concepts of friend and foe build on the notions of interaction and threat perception. In the context of climate change, Stevenson (2011) has highlighted India's key role in diffusing these norms and has argued that for the process of successful norm diffusion, congruence[34] of norms should be understood as fluid and a continuous construction in the international system. In his book, Michael (2013) has traced historical and colonial perspectives that have contributed to the construction of India's foreign policy. Singh (2014) has argued that India's deepening engagement with the Asia-Pacific region is demonstrative of India's desire to craft a new

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[33] Recent work on the interpretation of norms based on cultural and historical understandings has been done by Wiener (2007, 2009) and Wiener and Puetter (2009). Highlight has also been given to how such understandings are integral to the interactions between structure and agency. These works have been highly theoretical in nature and there has been an absence in empirically explaining how states often use these understandings to justify its deviant behaviour in international politics.

[34] Refers to the co-relation of an international norm with the domestic conditions of a state.

identity for itself in the region. Ogden (2014) has identified multiple (also competing) normative factors that have dynamically shaped India's security policy in specific relation to India's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government.

However, scholars have particularly remained reluctant in subjecting India's nuclear behaviour to an *intensive* (or a vertically in-depth) engagement with the theoretical dynamics of normative approaches in nuclear and constructivist research. Carranza (2007) has pertinently identified that building on key areas of social constructivism can be extremely helpful in understanding the shift of India's nuclear identity. This remains particularly true in the areas of norm contestation through stigma management and political rhetoric that I discuss later in this chapter. Rarely have scholars in the broad realm of Indian foreign policy carried off from Carranza's (2007) lead in combining norms research, routinisations of identity, stigmatisation, and approaches to managing stigma in explaining India's sociologically deviant behaviour in nuclear politics. Rather than speaking to these identified areas of the constructivist debate in international politics to formulate effective explanations, scholars have generally conformed to the usage of a more historical and a strategic narrative in understanding India's nuclear behaviour.[35]

Bhatia (2013) has argued that the transformation of India's relationship can be credited to the Clinton Administration where the latter decided to move away from an agenda of eliminating Indian nuclear capabilities towards accepting India's policy of nuclear restraint.[36] Pant and Biswas (2018: 2245) have stated that "accommodating India in the global nuclear order was therefore a part of US strategy to maintain its hegemony in Asia while simultaneously balancing China." In the economic arena, Perkovich (2005) has solely betted the success of the 123 Agreement on the ability of the US to foster long-term cooperation with India, based on meeting the latter's demand of nuclear fuel and energy needs. Ganguly and Mistry (2006) also take a like-minded approach while making the case for the 123 Agreement. They remain optimistic in arguing that the Agreement can open up "energy benefits for India, commercial opportunities for U.S. firms, and gains for global environmental objectives" (17).

It cannot be contradicted that these historical and strategic analyses of India's security policies in relation to the non-proliferation regime and in particular to the US, remains imperative in drawing inferences about the purported codes of global nuclear governance. The problem arises when the growing literature on India's nuclear policy has unknowingly treated these pathways as a dominant way of doing so (Basrur, 2001, 2010, 2011; Basrur and Sullivan de Estrada, 2017; Chakma, 2005; Chaudhuri, 2014; Kumar, 2014; Paul and Shankar, 2007). Such an understanding of India's

[35] This remains especially true when studies have tried to encompass a broad timeline in tracing India's nuclear identity. Some of these works include Ganguly (1999); Joshi (2018); Kamath (1999); Sarkar (2013, 2015); Pant and Joshi (2018). However, there are considerable exceptions as highlighted later.
[36] Clause 2.3 and 2.4, from a draft report from the National Security Advisory Board on Indian Nuclear Doctrine in 1999 states that the purpose of India's nuclear weapons programme was based on minimum deterrence and no-first use policy (Indian Ministry of External Affairs, 1999).

association with the nuclear non-proliferation regime lacks normative rigour as it contributes to a generalised trajectorial overview of how the latter eventually emerged as a US recognised nuclear power in South Asia.

Traditional theories in IR would attribute this success of the 123 Agreement to various factors. Realists would speak about the international system being anarchic whereby states "seek to ensure their survival" (Waltz, 1979: 91). To realists, balance of power remains key in reducing conflicts and can often be maintained through seeking alliances and distribution of material capabilities (Morgenthau, 1948). Hence, Tellis (2007) and Pant (2009: 275) argue that the US has not only engaged China but has also reached out to powers within the Chinese periphery in "reinvigorating its existing alliance with Japan … [as well as] new partners such as India." In the case of liberal institutionalists, globalisation has become key in exploring emerging markets towards profit maximization exercises and maintaining hegemony. In the same context, former US ambassador to India, Robert Blackwill states that "US exports to India grew by 25 percent in 2004" and "prospects for the rapid expansion of U.S.-Indian trade are bright" (The National Interest, 2005). He also opines countries like India "have emerged in recent years as major factors in the international economy, in international politics … [therefore] … international institutions are going to have to start to accommodate them in some way" (The National Interest, 2005).

Yet, these explanations are not entirely convincing in contest to the success of the 123 Agreement. If states are indeed concerned about power maximization and removing rival competition, why did the US not impose further sanctions on India as the latter only put its civilian nuclear facilities under international safeguards? Also, with India having already acquired nuclear weapons capability in 1998, New Delhi could potentially start stockpiling nuclear weapons, further evade nuclear verifications, and become more threating to Washington's hegemony in contemporary world order. With arguments on liberal institutionalism and world economy, we do not see India's full accommodation into the global nuclear order. If India's new nuclear identity was indeed unconditionally accepted (rather than being rendered an implicit recognition) by the US, both parties would have gained further from 123 Agreement. This would have seen an increased expansion in trade, identification of more avenues for miliary and civilian cooperation, and an overall enhanced mechanism of trust embeddedness in the bi-lateral relationship.

As I refer to existing theories of stigma as well as develop a new category of stigma management in Chapters 2 and 3, I aim to theoretically unpack the underlying ambivalence of the India-US nuclear relationship. In the specific context to this bi-lateral relationship, stigma theory enables us to gauge deeper into the history of sanctions imposed by Washington on New Delhi on several occasions. In the realist sense, it would have better suited Washington to maintain these sanctions to sever New Delhi's economy and further weaken international competition. Yet, one is confronted with the notion

of examining how India managed to escape stigmatisation despite remaining a non-signatory to the fundamental nuclear norms of the NPT and the CTBT. Furthermore, with India's continued non-compliance, even putting its civilian nuclear facilities under international safeguards, marks a remarkable change from the kind of nuclear deviance India exhibited throughout the latter half of the 1900s. Also, Washington implicitly accepting India's nuclear identity showcases not just the tale of a poorly explained case of liberal institutionalism, but rather a successful narrative of how India managed its stigmatised identity in navigating its social relationship with the global nuclear non-proliferation regime.

1.3. Research Gaps on Deviance and Stigma

Having highlighted the role of norms being regulatory (of how actors should behave), constitutive (of an actor's own identity construction and perception based on its behaviour) and value based (inter-subjective experiences, background knowledge, and learning), it also remains important to ask a counter question: What happens when an actor does not follow norms that have come to be commonly and widely shared by other actors in the international system?[37] Much of the work in international politics about an actor being *deviant* of the norm(s) generated and imposed by other actors or which Adler-Nissen (2014: 152) calls the "audience of normals" borrows from sociological research in the 1960s. Becker's (1963) work offers several views of what *deviance* can mean in different fields, before he formulates his own definition. For example, Becker (1963: 4) speaks about deviance in a statistician's point of view, i.e., deviant being "anything that varies too widely from the average." Becker (1963) then moves on to equating deviance with a pathological disease to finally arguing that deviance is a consequence that occurs when the audience of normals/in-group commonly understand what constitutes as deviant behaviour and also successfully applies this label on the deviant/member(s) of the out-group.

The theorisations of the processes in dealing with deviants in social settings have brought out the concept of stigma.[38] The idea of stigma again takes us back to the sociologists of the 1960s, most notably to the famous work of Goffman (1963). Since the turn of the 21st century, international politics more broadly conceived, have simultaneously developed and as well as incorporated the sociological idea of stigma as a tool to understand deviant occurrences in international politics. This has ranged from nuclear governance, international law, environmental politics, to international monetary policy (Armantier and Holt, 2020; Broto et al., 2010; Sauer and Reveraert, 2018; Shamai, 2015; Solanke, 2017). However, the notion of stigma has a much older origin in Greek civilisation.

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[37] On the theoretical assumption of what is meant by an international system, refer to the section titled, 'Theoretical Assumptions, Key Concepts, and Arguments' in the Introduction.

[38] On strategies and mechanisms of dealing with deviant states in policy and discourse, see for example, Brookes (2005); Henriksen (2001); Schwartz (2007). This thesis is more interested in looking at how the stigmatised approach the stigmatiser in justifying nuclear non-compliance.

Stigmata was used to refer to a dot, mark, or a tattoo made by hot iron to brand "cattle, …. [the] slaves in the Orient, …. fugitive slaves in Greece and Rome [and] [s]oldiers…of some Eastern countries" (Jones, 1987: 140). Osborne (1974: 72) notes that stigma gradually found its way into the Christian religious culture whereby its usage for "religious and punishment purposes began to merge…and…referred to the appearance on the body of wounds corresponding to those of the crucified Christ." Page (1984: 2) has identified that today stigma has almost moved from the idea of any visible bodily mark to an attribute which has come to be "associated almost exclusively with inferior forms of physical appearance, conduct or ethnicity." In very similar terms, Goffman (1963: 3) understands stigma to be "an attribute that is deeply discrediting." Also, Goffman (1963: 4) goes on to identify three types of stigma, one of which he attributes to "abominations of the body" or physical deformities. The other two types relate to "blemishes in character" and "tribal stigma of race, nation, and religion" (3).

In studying how stigmatised identities manage the imposed stigma from the normals, the usage of stigma management theories is often prevalent in social psychology, health sciences, and behavioural studies. For example, Kanuha (1999: 28) concluded in the 1990s that some lesbians and gay men manage "stigma associated with homosexuality by passing as heterosexual in social interactions …. [through] …. a conscious strategy of resistance to societal oppression." Kanuha (1999: 34-37) underlined three particular ways of managing this stigma which include "dissociation" (by behaving as not part of the stigmatised group), "omission" (prevents giving out details in conversations that would invite stigma), and "mutual pretense" (interactors and stigmatised individuals engage with each other and wilfully ignore the stigmatising attribute). More recently, Noltensmeyer and Meisenbach (2016: 1385) have shown that a particular category of burn survivors may often deal with bodily scars and emotional trauma by i) "accepting" the stigma (often using humour as a resort), ii) "avoiding" stigma (using clothes to hide scars and escaping social interaction), and iii) "reducing offensiveness" attached to the stigma by coming to terms with it or looking at it from a different perspective.

In a more related context to international politics, a deviant state that remains stigmatised invariably evokes the scholarship of status in global governance. Basrur and Sullivan de Estrada (2017: 2) define status "as the condition of filling a place in the social hierarchy." Employing stigma through sanctions or condemnations on a deviant state automatically lowers the social perception of the state in question in the existing normative space. Hence, the deviant state comes to occupy a *low* status in world politics (Sullivan de Estrada, 2020). However, the association of low status may not have a degree of permanence to it. Deviant states may be able to manage the imposed stigma by resorting to more socially compliant acts and thus, leading to "improving its standing … [in order] … to pass into a higher-status group" (Larson and Shevchenko, 2010: 70). Resorting to corrective acts as means of stigma management also contests existing social perceptions in the international system whereby the normals may be forced to lend implicit forms of recognition to the deviant identity. Therefore, what

the strategy of stigma management offers is not just highlighting the socialisation challenges that deviant states face in moving from low to high status. Stigma management also underlines the deviant's interactional exchanges with the normals in terms of norms, legitimacy, power, behaviour, and identity. In the same context and while proposing strategies of states managing status, Lebow (2008) argues that states can improve their status through *emulation* (following existing norms and reproducing a similar identity to that of the great powers), *deviance* (violating existing norms), and *challenge* (changing existing norms and proposing alternative value systems and hierarchies).

To move from one status type to the other, status-seeking ability is understood by Murray (2019: 46) as the pursuit of "the accurate perception of a valued attribute, which becomes a defining feature of its [a state's] social status." However, the possibility remains that the notion of stigma can be very sticky and difficult to overcome as "past crimes are not forgotten" (Onderco, 2014: 180). Stigma associated alongside a state's identity and operating in the background may do very little in improving its international status. Other states could quickly dismiss any stigma management strategy of the deviant as being a threat to the international system and in turn hinder and/or make the deviant's higher status-seeking abilities seem more gradual. Contrary to Lebow's (2008) status seeking strategies, a stigmatised state attempting emulation may make other powers suspicious, whereas deviance and challenge can inevitably invite or tighten existing stigmatisation on a deviant state.

Discussions of low status and stigma also makes one take note of the work on shame and misrecognition in international politics. Using sanctions and condemnations on a deviant state as means of stigmatisation invokes feelings of being *shamed* and *hurt* in context to its social, economic, and political means of survival. Not only "shame bites at the roots of self-esteem" (Giddens, 1984: 55), but also "produces a deeper feeling of insecurity because it means that someone behaved in a way he or she felt was incongruent with their sense of self-identity" (Steele, 2008: 53). Consequently, while "shame plays a vital role in the development of conscience" (Kaufman, 1996: 5), it can also trigger agents to "resort to violence when they feel that they can wipe out shame only by shaming those who they feel shamed them" (Gilligan, 2003: 1163; Bassan-Nygate and Heimann, 2022; Snyder, 2020). Furthermore, feelings of shame, low status, and reduced self-esteem gives rise to international misrecognition or "a gap between the dominant narrative of a national Self and the way in which this national Self is reflected in the 'mirror' of the international Other" (Adler-Nissen and Tsinovoi, 2019: 3). Misrecognition can prolong the feeling of hurt and shame, (re-) produce social hierarchies, register loss of identity and separation from an intersubjective community, and instil a sense of being a victim of normative injustice (Thompson and Yar, 2011; Zarakol, 2018). In these cases, notions of victimisation could potentially become a valuable source of being studied as a stigma management strategy that result from the deviant being stigmatised, criticised, shamed, and misrecognised by the normals. In most cases, the deviant may have more restricted access to material and ideational resources in the international system as compared to the hegemonic normals. Therefore, using

victimisation as a strategic discourse would potentially enable deviants to find a sympathetic and intersubjective group of actors whereby these actors may harbour similar concerns of the global order being unfair and unjust as the deviant state in question.

It is indeed important to note that stigma is likely to be *reactively* generated i.e., a reaction to non-compliance or any incongruent forms of social behaviour from the normals. In the same context, Onderco (2015: 1) writes that stigma is much likely to be imposed as a reactionary outcome if a state remains deviant/in violation of nuclear norms rather than oppose other norms such as “neo-liberalism, human rights universalism, or Western capitalist intervention.” As I have already highlighted before, deviance in the nuclear arena have generated several labels for states which refuse to follow the norms of Nuclear Weapon States (NWSs) and Nonnuclear Weapon States (NNWSs), as laid down by the NPT coming to force in 1970. Returning to Becker’s (1963) example of pathology would mean that states possessing nuclear weapons and in violation of the NPT are treated as a disease to the system, which needs to be attended to, cured, and if required, surgically removed. Nonetheless, Sauer and Reveraert (2018: 440-442) have correctly identified that the nuclear literature has remained divided in understanding as to whether i) stigmatisation occurs in response to a state violating the norms of the NPT (Craig and Ruzicka, 2013; Harrington de Santana, 2009; Ritchie and Pelopidas, 2016), or ii) the very attribute of enormous destruction capabilities of nuclear weapons invokes stigma upon the latter (Raymond, 1997; Shamai, 2015; Tannenwald, 2005). They also state that NWSs prefer sticking to nuclear weapons as “international normative symbols of modernity and identity” (Sagan 1996/1997: 55) by using several strategies[39] of stigma management, in response to the gaining humanitarian ground of stigmatising the destructive power of nuclear weapons.

Shamai (2015) has identified that an essential way of addressing the threat and proliferation of WMDs is by stigmatising these weapons through local, national, international support. Hamidi (2020) has argued that NNWSs (often those occupying the subaltern stigma position) use a discourse of inequality, racism, and nuclear apartheid against the NWSs to strategically manage their sense of collective identity and gain technological benefits of clean energy. Also, there seem to be certain recurring themes in nuclear politics scholarship on the implicit notion of stigma and its management. These include abandoning WMDs completely, re-visiting its remarkable threats on human security by re-sensitising language discourses in policy practice, and advocating humanitarian initiatives in arms control to manage the stigma surrounding WMDs (Borrie, 2014; Carpenter, 2011; Cooper, 2011;

[39] Sauer and Reveraert (2018) mention these strategies in the context of how NWSs contest/react/manage stigma after the stigma is imposed on the former by the humanitarian initiative on complete abolishment of nuclear weapons through the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (United Nations: Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, 2017). By borrowing from their work and using it in this context, avoidance can be used to refer to NWSs refusing to participate in discussions through which deviant states may decide to contest a norm; rejection can be understood as NWSs refusing to accept that the issue of contestation has been raised; and evasion can be a strategy of blaming a third-party or a situation when the matter of norm contestation has been raised.

Enemark, 2011). All these works that indirectly speak about stigma management can be commonly characterised by a lack of a critical approach of explicitly theorising strategies that help explain local, state, and international behaviour in nuclear politics. Understanding the reactionary behaviour to social norms has particular significance as it not only helps observe identity changes over a long period of time, but also makes us examine as to how non-compliant states work towards being normal and getting eventually accepted (or semi-accepted) by the audience of normals.

Also, remaining hopeful of using stigma and the growing movement on humanitarian initiatives to pressure NWSs to disarm is fraught with problems. It has been more than 50 years since the NPT's norms of nuclear deterrence, non-proliferation, and non-use have sustained — in spite of creating racial hierarchies and power disparities, its inability to prevent proliferation in the case of India, Israel, and Pakistan, and facing continuous challenges from more contemporary deviant states like Iran and North Korea. (Abe, 2020). An atomic and scattered approach to collate stigma attributes from various resistance movements across the world to challenge the NWSs misses the point on the underlying characteristic of a norm of any kind. Such an approach to stigma remains inadequate in actually saying anything concrete rather than aspirational — of challenging the institutionalised, normatively shared, gradually consolidated, and the continuous social enactment and re-enactment of NPT nuclear norms vis-à-vis state interactions. Freedman (2013: 104) highlights this social and realistic dilemma succinctly in arguing that hoping for NWSs to completely disarm "depends on reciprocity, with nuclear nations abandoning their nuclear weapons together in a remarkable feat of choreography."

Therefore, rather than advancing such aspirational and utopian explanations, what is required is using stigma to address the ways in which states rendered deviant or non-nuclear by virtue of the NPT apologised, clarified, defended and/or rectified their behaviour after engaging in acts of nuclear non-compliance — that seemed *reasonable* rather than the *right* thing to indulge in, as opposed to a socially and collectively accepted way of normative conduct.[40] This remains particularly important in understanding how deviant NNWSs as social agents embodying distinctive political, cultural, historical and economic learnings have tried to *deal* with hegemonic notions of stigma that flow from the audience of normals. The meaning of the NPT has gradually come to be institutionalised and has fixated over five decades as to which states can and cannot have nuclear weapons (Article IX of the NPT (United Nations Archives, 1968)). However, the complexities of inter-subjectivity which require NNWSs to go nuclear (in spite of knowing the possibility of being stigmatised) highlight how deviant states as social agents, undergo an intense challenge of socialisation to finally develop a strategy of

[40] I purposefully use this distinction of right versus reasonable. A right thing to do would invoke ethical discussions and normative IR theory. Both these discussions remain outside the ambit of this thesis. On ethics and normative IR theory, see for example, Brown (1992); Cochran (1999); Frost (1996); Price (2008). However, a reasonable act need not be necessarily right and is highly dependent on the evaluation and interpretation of the social context in which actors find themselves in.

managing their stigmatised identities.

As India is the only non-NPT signatory that the US has signed a 123 Agreement with, India's case therefore remains on point — as being a non-signatory to the NPT, being stigmatised post the 1974 nuclear tests, the ways in which it dealt with this stigmatised identity, and finally moved towards normative acceptability through stigma management. Problematically, and as highlighted in the previous section, the existing literature on the transformation of India's nuclear identity vis-à-vis the US post 9/11, has in fact offered very little in examining this transformation though a lens of stigma and deviance in international politics.

Arguably, Smetana (2019: 16-17) conducted a very recent and comprehensive work on how India managed its stigmatised identity after its nuclear tests in 1998. In doing so, he argues that the process of stigma follows "stigma imposition", "stigma management", and "stigma reversal." In the specific case of India, Smetana (2019) points to India undertaking stigma management through eventual i) "neutralization" of guilt by still remaining committed to global disarmament and blaming its tense security environment (192), ii) "normalising" its nuclear identity by observing a self-imposed moratorium on testing (200), and iii) projecting itself as a responsible nuclear power in contrast to that of Pakistan. Interestingly, in reference to India's notion of stigma reversal, Smetana (2019: 204) seems to make a passing mention to how "[s]tigma reversal involves the attempts of other actors to (partially) destigmatize and reintegrate India to the 'normal international society.'" Therefore, the unanswered questions that arise and which this thesis aims to tackle in the forthcoming chapters are as follows: If stigma reversal was indeed successful along with a normalisation of India's identity, why has India been partially accepted into the audience of normals? How does the dynamics of partial acceptance connect to the larger conceptualisation of stigma and stigma management in international politics? If India followed neutralisation, normalisation, and constructing itself as a responsible nuclear power, how does one explain India's non-compliant forms of behaviour and thereby its challenge to NPT norms? If India displayed non-compliance through its 1998 nuclear tests, how has it tried to overcome stigmatisation by the US without dissolving its nuclear weapons programme?

As the literature has inadequately looked at these questions, it has unconsciously contributed in perpetuating and downplaying the heuristics and inter-subjectivities of India's pursuit of developing a nuclear identity. Also, an in-depth engagement with the research on IPS approaches holds much promise in tracing out a critical direction of thinking about key factors that guide India's nuclear behaviour in international politics. As a result, it remains clearly evident that existing works on norms, deviance, and stigma management, have missed out on developing a more holistic understanding of how India's nuclear identity underwent a robust social transformation in nuclear governance.

The seminal work of Tannenwald (1999: 434) argue that since the bombing of Hiroshima and

Nagasaki, the norm of nuclear use in nuclear governance has been transformed into a stigma or an existing "taboo" that is still observed during times of war.[41] Paul (2009) has argued that the "taboo" of not using nuclear weapons has now turned more into a "tradition" that all states maintain. Nonetheless, it cannot be ignored that nuclear weapons – albeit their unimaginable potential for destruction and the observance of the nuclear taboo – still exist in the arsenals of deviants as well as NWSs. Notions of technological prowess and status symbols attached to nuclear weapons also provide reasons and argumentation logic for deviants as well as NWSs to cling onto these Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs). However, as the next section highlights, a wider scholarly focus in particularly studying dominant nuclear identities contributes to a hierarchical and problematic international structure in international politics.

1.4. The Problematic Normative Power Structure for States Going Nuclear

Since the late 1980s, there has been a huge scholarly intervention (mainly from the US) in understanding how international norms shape decisions of states to develop or refrain from starting an indigenous nuclear programme (Jervis, 1989; Nye Jr., 1986; Rostow, 1995). Sagan's influential work published in *International Security* in 1996/1997, proposed three alternative frameworks to this cause in understanding why states pursue the nuclear path — to protect themselves from foreign threats, to serve bureaucratic and domestic interests, and to reflect its power, prestige and identity in global politics. In this piece, Sagan's (1996/1997: 55) overall argument is reflective of the second proposed framework which stresses on nuclear weapons being a form of "international normative symbols of modernity and identity."

In more recent times, Ikenberry (2011) has stated that the functional aspect of norms in IR enable the distinction and hierarchical arrangement of the differential power capacity among states. He further argues that the power transition from the North to the South is representative of the capacity of revisionist states like Brazil, China, and India to prosper and ascend within the already established normative power structure.[42] Acharya (2005) takes a more sociological stance of the application of norms and identity in analysing the role of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) in

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[41] The bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are the only two existing instances of nuclear attacks on a state (Japan) by another state (US) to date. In more general terms, Goldschmidt (1980: 73), who served as the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the IAEA, writes that the less developed nations gave up nuclear ambitions in the hope that "nuclear powers would adopt specific measures for nuclear disarmament, would never threaten to use, or use, nuclear devices against them, and would provide them with genuine assistance for advancement in the domain of the peaceful applications of nuclear energy." In case of the more industrialised nations, the social expectations were rather different from the treaty. These industrialised states not only wanted to gain from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, but also were afraid to lose out in the world nuclear competition against NWSs and hence insisted on the universal inspection of civilian nuclear facilities by the IAEA (Goldschmidt, 1980).

[42] The aspect of power transition is underlined by Acharya's (2001) argument when he demonstrates that the functional and moral aspect(s) of norms change overtime. Ikenberry (2011: 56) speculates that this change could give rise to norm multilateralism — "a more contested and fragmented system of blocs, spheres of influence, mercantile networks, and regional rivalries."

maintaining regional order. He points out that it remains imperative for regional powers to engage in defending normative inter-subjectivities, increasing socialisation, and pursuing a regional identity in a world of increasing non-credible security guarantees. Clark (2014) has pondered in understanding the relationship between power and norms in shaping international order while strictly advocating and designing a framework[43] in international security to study China's global status. The works of Sullivan de Estrada (2015) and Ollapally (2011) have been underpinned by the mechanisms through which India's identity has been constructed as a rising global power in the post-Cold War era. The works of Ganguly (2016) and Møller (2017) have brought out India's ambivalence with the Right to Protect norm as being a tool of abuse and manipulation in the hands of the West. More recently, Wetering (2018) has argued that trust in the international system is constructed by practices, identities, and emotions. In the same book chapter, she has also reasoned that it was the lack of focus on re-building this trust that had contributed to a discursive relationship of animosity between India and the US during the Cold War. More recently, Leveringhaus and Sullivan de Estrada (2018: 482) have argued that conferring the status of a responsible nuclear state "is a politicised process shaped by the interests, values, and perceptions of powerful stakeholder states in the global nuclear order." They have also highlighted that the recognition of India's responsible nuclear status from all the members of the nuclear non-proliferation regime "poses a strategic, political, and social challenge to these states" (482).

This common strand of literature on international and regional power structures is underlined by the notion that any standardised form of behaviour or seeking recognition of being a rising power is often based on the idea of consent. Consent requires the norm-taker to re-evaluate its own position based on either the aggressive or passive convincing power of the norm-maker. This further opens up room to conceptualise that the ideas of norms, stigma, and power (within and beyond the nuclear field) are both practically and discursively inter-linked, hierarchically co-constituted, and therefore inseparable from each other.[44]

The important work of Mattern and Zarakol (2016: 623) focusses on three "logics" of hierarchies as i) a relationship of "exchanges in which actors trade degrees of freedom for a desired social or political arrangement" (634), ii) an arrangement "where an actors' identity, role, interests and/or expectations are constituted by, or an effect of, their position in the system" (639), and iii) structures of productivity that "simultaneously produce distinctive political spaces and the varied actors and actions that populate and enact them" (634).[45] In carrying off from Mattern and Zarakol's (2016) lead on the second logic of hierarchies, this thesis will build on the notion of positionality. This is because the

[43] Throughout the article, the purpose of this framework has been to study the conceptualisation of China's power, legitimacy and its responsibilities as a rising state in the international system.
[44] This work will develop this relationship further in the following chapters.
[45] For other works on hierarchy, see for example, Cooley (2003); Lanoszka (2013); MacDonald and Lake (2008).

understanding of the *norm-taker* and *norm-maker* are not only based on conceptions of identity but also that of positionality. In examining how positions within a hierarchy affect perceptions of identity and norm contestation discourse of stigmatised states, I borrow from Spivak's (2005: 476) conceptualisation of the "subaltern." This exercise of developing the notion of positionality is further engaged in detail as part of the thesis' theoretical framework in Chapter 2. Nonetheless, it remains important to explicitly point out that while hierarchy can refer to an entire system of arrangement among states (based on material as well as non-material factors), positionality is an ontological deductive of the concept of hierarchy. Hence, the idea of positionality very specifically focusses on the relationship between two or more states within a hierarchy.

When a dominant nuclear state, such as the US, imposed sanctions[46] on India as the latter conducted its second nuclear test in 1998 under the Pokhran II operation (Morrow and Carriere, 1999; Perkovich, 1999), it goes on to demonstrate several aspects of the purported codes of global governance. Not only does it highlight how preponderant powers enforce norms of international stability on other states, but also gives rise to the aforementioned notion of global positionality i.e., *who* controls/has the *right* to exercise the power of judgements[47] over *whom*.[48] Furthermore, it illustrates how preponderant powers remain apathetic to challenges to their own nuclear status in trying to curb the nuclear programme of other states.

India's decision to pursue a nuclear programme and its relationship with the US within the nuclear non-proliferation regime remains a case of high suitability to the discussed literature on power, norms, and hierarchies. It is particularly so as there is a dominant geo-strategic argument in the scholarship on India's foreign policy that India went nuclear because of the shared India-Sino adversarial relationship and the capability of a hostile Pakistan to become a nuclear state in the near future.[49] However, Malik (1998: 201) has noted that the decision of India to pursue an indigenous nuclear programme was to challenge the technological superiority of "white nations" and also dismantle the belief system that the world order is designed by "the post-World War II, U.S. led, European-

[46] Refer to footnote 8 in Introduction.

[47] Generally, the nature and exercise of these judgements is severely restrictive (lacking Southern inter-subjective understandings towards the cause of its interpretation). For example, after the US imposed sanctions on India after a normative judgement that the 1998 Indian nuclear tests were a grave threat to word stability, the Indian Foreign Ministry termed the US sanctions as "coercive and unhelpful" and "a grotesque way of addressing the world's largest democracy" (BBC, 1998).

[48] All the five states belonging to the nuclear non-proliferation regime had issued a statement of strong condemnation against the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan in 1998 (United Nations: Security Council Condemns Nuclear Tests by India and Pakistan, 1998a).

[49] However, several other arguments have also been offered. These include: "the failure by states possessing nuclear weapons to accept a time-bound framework for nuclear disarmament along with the CTBT" (Krepon, 2008), the decision of India going nuclear reflects the militarist and aggressive Hindu ideology of the then India's ruling party – Bharatiya Janata Party (Bidwai and Vanaik, 1999) and Huntington's analysis that after the breakup of the Soviet Union (India's strongest ally) in 1991, India's was left as a vulnerable and a lonely state (as cited in Malik, 1998: 193). For a more detailed focus on India's decision to go nuclear, see Malik (1998: 192-201) and Ganguly (1999).

dominated power structure." Malik's argument can even be presented in relation to the one offered by Sagan (1996/1997). India's challenge to the "white" non-proliferation regime with its own nuclear programme is representative of the breakdown of a Western exercised monopoly on "international normative symbols of modernity and identity" (Sagan 1996/1997: 55). This is further indicative of the notion of how constructed symbols[50] of power moved from the Global North to the Global South and contributed to India's rising global status.

In context to the changing power structure of the international system, a further point of criticism is about the still remaining sceptical representation of Southern states' global aspirations. The case of India is a classic example of this. Scholars (Jabeen, 2010; Kavalski 2007; Smith 2012; Sullivan de Estrada, 2015) have pointed out that India has often projected its identity in terms of aspiring to be a global power.[51] Smith (2012: 385) has strongly concluded that India is "predominantly concerned about its own position in the global order, and less so about the plight of the developing world." In a recent book chapter, Sullivan de Estrada (2015: 15) has stated that there remains "a central ambivalence within India's attempts to position itself as a prominent global actor." She equates this ambivalence to India's challenge "to reconcile a quest for recognition from established major powers with a desire to maintain relations of solidarity with developing country allies of the Cold War era" (15). This ambivalence and status seeking from great powers is also implicitly underlined by the notion that India's identity in global governance is subject to tacit approval from preponderant powers in international politics. Furthermore, while Ikenberry (2011) has identified the shift of power centres from states categorised as Global North to the Global South, there seems to be little trust in academia and policy discourse that India would be able to successfully replace/reproduce the historically high normative standards set by great powers located in the Global West (the US, in particular).

The field of nuclear politics has also not necessarily been left out from these problematic normative assumptions. Pilat (1990: 152) has defined "nuclear democracy" as "the reduction or removal of differences between nuclear-weapon states (NWSs) and nonnuclear-weapon states (NNWSs)." However, he remains careful in stating that the way in which the treaty (United Nations Archives, 1968) brings about this nuclear democracy is through the "[t]he universal and inalienable rights embodied in Article IV of the NPT" without which the "reception of nuclear assistance or exports would depend on the greed, good will, or grand strategy of the (nuclear) suppliers" (152). This argument seems a carefully constructed narrative that successfully plays into the historical origins of the (London) Nuclear Suppliers Group, requesting membership from the third world countries. Rather than having intentions of greater inclusivity, the (London) Nuclear Suppliers Group simply wanted to

[50] Aspects of both: material as well as non-material factors.

[51] The identified pathways through which India aspires to position itself as a global power include: seeking a permanent seat in the UNSC, eroding Western influence in South Asia through strategies of regional hegemonic dominance, demonstrating multiple (yet clashing) identities and the projection of distinctness through foreign policy making.

reach out to India and the other third-world countries to break its own image of being a nuclear club that solely consists of the rich and powerful and also mainstream the nuclear behaviour of recalcitrant states like India (Joshi, 2018).

Craig and Ruzicka (2013: 336) argue that the current nuclear order "privileges a stable international order dominated by status-quo large nuclear powers, and that has forsaken its original blueprint for a nuclear-free world." Harrington de Santana (2009: 341) expresses the choice of always keeping the nuclear option open as *nuclear fetishism* and "states that are the most dissatisfied with their position in the international hierarchy … have the most incentive to proliferate." In moving beyond this nuclear fetishism to gradual nuclear disarmament, Ritchie (2013: 147) states "that nuclear disarmament will necessarily entail a process of devaluing, or un-valuing, nuclear weapons since states are unlikely to voluntarily surrender highly prized national assets. Nuclear disarmament will therefore require nuclear armed states to think differently about the values currently assigned to their nuclear weapons." As already evident, the literature in the nuclear arena is fraught with arguments over the construction of nuclear strategic value, the structural logics of why states decide to glue onto the nuclear option, and ways through which states could be driven to reluctantly disarm. Yet, there is little focus on the kind of normative arguments NNWSs use to stick to the nuclear option, in spite knowing the social consequences attached to such decision making and a disadvantaged social position they would eventually come to occupy in the international hierarchy.

While it is true that the reason why India has argued that the NPT creates a global hierarchy and largely differentiates between NWSs and NNWSs is to legitimise its own nuclear programme, there is a flip side to this argument. Chacko and Davis (2018: 352) have pointed out that "India has sought to resignify the Western discourse of nuclear responsibility such that it is linked to nuclear disarmament and equality rather than nuclear non-proliferation and hierarchy." By advancing this literature, it would also be possible to say that while nuclear democracy is essentially an ideal/aspirational concept, India remains an active agent in furthering this utopian cause of nuclear democracy. It has therefore historically drawn to attention, addressed, and underlined how the nuclear non-proliferation regime advances its own realist agendas by creating NNWSs. Secondly, through posing challenges to the existent non-proliferation regime, India has not only added a new dimension to the nuclear debate but also acted as an agent of conveying to the existent global order that the NPT which fosters discrimination, will not be accepted without opposition.

1.5. Norm Contestation Through Political Justification and Argumentation

Interestingly though, the third[52] wave of constructivist norms research turns the negatively perceived conceptualisation of stigma upside down. We see the focus shifting away from states playing the role

[52] I have briefly discussed in Section 1.2. about what each wave of constructivist norms research roughly entail.

of socializers/norm-makers/the audience of normals to that of the socializees/norm-takers, and what that I call *performers of the deviant.*[53] Florini (1996: 382) states that contestation is essentially a structural problem rather than a domestic one. She further states when norms "call for specific behaviors, the competition is relatively direct. An actor cannot follow two opposed norms at once. However, when norm variation is present…an individual actor [may] pursue a mixed strategy, following one norm on some occasions and its competitor on others" (373). Furthermore, the notion of contestation[54] of a norm posed by deviant identities has also undergone a change of perception in the literature.

Constructivists have argued[55] that if norms are a way of understanding the common belief systems and ideas of actors collectively, the very nature of norms being contested contradicts this definition. A number of scholars have further challenged the notion that norms are fixed structures of standardised behaviour with definitive boundaries that are taught over time (Florini, 1996; Finnemore, 1996; Keck and Sikkink, 1998). However, only recently has there been an acknowledgement that norms are more complex and dynamic in nature (Kersbergen and Verbeek, 2007; Krook and True, 2012; Sandholtz, 2008; Wiener, 2004).[56] Furthermore, norm challenge can not only be dynamic in nature but also simultaneous in terms of domestic as well as international contestation. Evidence of this is in a raging debate among Indian policy makers (since Indian independence in 1947) as to whether India should embrace a nuclear future after the Sino-India war in 1962.[57] As a result, the NPT was also simultaneously challenged at the international level by the Indian leadership. An example of this is when Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and her advisors refused to sign the NPT on behalf of India, arguing that the treaty creates and operationalises a system of "nuclear haves" and "nuclear have-nots" in the international arena (Sarkar and Ganguly, 2018).

By borrowing from Havercroft (2017), Rublee and Cohen (2018: 326) specifically argue that contestation "should be looked at as the legitimate exercise of an actor's rights to interrogate the norms by which they are judged." However, the field of nuclear governance has often remained devoid of such meanings of contestation. Freedman (2013: 97) writes that breaking social taboos "affect defined social groupings and may therefore be ignored by those in different societies with their own distinctive value systems." He also distinguishes disobedience of a social taboo from breaking

[53] I conceptualise this in the next chapter.
[54] Wiener (2014) distinguishes between proactive (deliberate participation and critique to improve the quality of a norm) and reactive (actors reacting negatively and in opposition to a norm) contestation.
[55] Niemann and Schillinger (2017) have conceptually highlighted how contestation is deeply embedded in what we understand as norms.
[56] Building on this complexity which often makes norms ambiguous, Engelkamp and Glaab (2015: 201) have called "for a culture of tolerance and an ethics of ''hospitality'' that celebrate normative ambiguity as a source for dialogue."
[57] India suffered a humiliating defeat in this war. Dutta (2017) recalls the incident in an issue of the *Times of India* where he writes that around 3,250 Indian soldiers were killed along with India losing 43,000 square kilometres of land (roughly the size of Switzerland) to China. Also, refer to Mishra (2016) for an overview of the various positions taken in these debates by Indian policy makers.

the nuclear use taboo, stating that the latter event "would be a transformational event representing a turning point in international history" (Freedman, 2013: 97). Rarely has it been demonstrated in the literature that breaking norms as prescribed by the NPT[58] and contesting the non-use of nuclear weapons through *justifications*[59] (that a state provides) is distinct from the actual usage of nuclear weapons. For example: After contesting the NPT and being a non-signatory to it, India has also contested the complete non-use policy of nuclear weapons. However, India maintains a policy of "no first use of nuclear capability"[60] as "[i]ts diplomats have often advanced the country's commitment not to use nuclear weapons first as proof of the country being a "responsible" state and thereby a way to resist any pressures to sign any treaties that would affect its nuclear arsenal" (Sundaram and Ramana, 2018: 152).

In the same context, there have also been works that speak about (deviant) actors using justifications in international politics to explain norm challenges through behavioural logics, mainly understood as existing in terms of an actor-audience relationship. Perelman (1979: 33) therefore argues:

"[J]ustification ordinarily arises only in a situation that has given rise to criticism: no one is called upon to justify behavior that is beyond reproach. Such criticism, however, would be meaningless unless some accepted norm, end, or value had been infringed upon or violated. A decision or an action is criticized on the ground that it is immoral, illegal, unreasonable, or inefficient – that is, it fails to respect certain accepted rules or values. It always occurs within a social context; it is always 'situated.'"

A parallel body of scholarship stress on how actors in world politics often assess situations based on argumentation and then decide the appropriateness of a norm to follow, when faced with several competing norms at once (Leiteritz 2005; Mitzen 2005; Müller 2004). Risse (2000) notes that through the strategy of argumentation, actors do away with the fixation of interests by wanting to reach a socially acceptable consensus. In very similar terms, Deitelhoff (2009: 61) argues that the notion of persuasion and rational discourse may "change the range of legitimate arguments within debates and thus the range of possible outcomes as well." While these works successfully capture the changing nature of identities and interests, Pouliot (2008) and Hopf (2018) worry that logics of argumentation allow too much room for agents to rationally reason and flex social structures to their own strategic convenience.

Also, as the existing literature treats norms to be inherently contested (Acharya, 2017; Niemann and Schillinger, 2017; Nye Jr., 2017; Wiener, 2014), there has been a disagreement as to whether norms

[58] Refer to: United Nations Archives (1968).
[59] The terms "contestation" and "justification" have been used interchangeably as this research treats justification as norm contesting method.
[60] Subrahmanyam (1995) as cited in Sundaram and Ramana (2018).

are weakened (Heller, Kahl, and Pisoiu 2012; McKeown 2009; Panke and Petersohn 2012) or strengthened (Rublee and Cohen, 2018; Smetana and O'Mahoney, 2022; Wiener, 2008) through the process of contestation.[61] Hence, there still remains an inadequate focus on how actors justify their non-compliant behaviour. Chayes and Chayes (1993: 179) note that "states carry out treaty commitments only when it is in their interest to do so" and that "states cannot be legally bound except with their own consent. So, in the first instance, the state need not enter into a treaty that does not conform to its interests." Building on Perelman (1979), Korsgaard (1997) states that have the means towards achieving a strategic end through normative justifications[62] are often shaped by interpretations of how these ends are constructed. Brandom (1998) equates this reasoning of behaviour as linked to the belief system of the actor in question. More recently, the literature on international politics has moved on to understanding the strategies through which justificatory language can be used to manipulate and influence outcomes. Krebs and Jackson (2007: 42) speak of rhetorical manoeuvring through which actors can deny the *other* the "rhetorical materials out of which to craft a socially sustainable rebuttal."[63]

Using the case of Nazi Germany and the Munich Crisis, Goddard (2015: 97) notes that revisionist states "justify their actions as legitimate" by aligning their actions "with prevailing norms and rules in the international system, appeasement is the probable response" while "illegitimate claims are likely to provoke confrontation." Similarly, in looking at how justifications shape political outcomes, O'Mahoney (2017) argues that actors often construct a strategic rhetoric and then perform acts to make the rhetoric seem more believable, noting this process as *rhetorical adduction.* Nonetheless, because the existing literature has often treated justifications operating in crisis to legitimise deviance, the notion of political outcomes is understood to be static and non-evolving as well as employing a relatively restricted understanding of behavioural logics (Hurd, 2005; Krebs and Lobasz, 2007; Schimmelfennig, 2001). Therefore, we need to turn our focus to how identities of recalcitrant states in international politics reason or justify deviance and non-compliance in an almost repeated fashion, in spite of having previously engaged in similar kinds of deviance acts.

Even by using such justifications, deviant states still seem to leave some room for the wider international community to believe that they have been or would be engaging in corrective acts in the

[61] The general consensus being: Scholars who agree that norms are weakened through contestation argue that contestation chips away and erodes norms. Scholars who agree that norms are strengthened through norm contestation argue that contestation increases the legitimacy of the norm and a norm-taker has every right to question the norms that it is being expected to follow.
[62] Albeit these justifications are practical and rationalistic. Also, this thesis already mentioned in Chapter 1 that the circumstances of the norm-taker that give rise to the need of a justification are often socially determined based on the norm-taker's belief system and the treatment meted out to it by other actors in the international system.
[63] The usage of the term rhetoric is characterised by the following factors as listed by Herrick (2000: 7-8); these include rhetoric being "(1) planned, (2) adapted to an audience, (3) shaped by human motives, (4) responsive to a situation, and (5) persuasion-seeking."

future. Hence, O'Mahoney's (2017) theorisation of rhetorical adduction of how actors construct a strategic rhetoric and then perform acts to make the rhetoric seem more believable is an important starting point. More recently, Kurowska and Reshetnikov (2021: 232) have argued that stigmatisation may give rise to a "trickster" actor who "is both conformist and deviant, hero and anti-hero – a 'plural figure' both reflecting the rich cultural texture of international society and contesting its hierarchies." Yet, they speak very little on the kind of discourse and justification used by the trickster to challenge as well as simultaneously conform to the norms of international order.

Actors employing justifications often do so to for influencing wider legitimacy perceptions of their undertaken behaviour in an existing normative context. In terms of defining *legitimacy* of a norm, Hurd (2007: 30) defines legitimacy as "the belief by an actor that a rule or institution ought to be obeyed. Such a belief is necessarily normative and subjective, and not necessarily shared with any other actor." The literature till date has often viewed the legitimacy of norms in terms of authority, principles, and a system of governance (Hurd, 2019; Wiener, 2014; Zürn 2019). Rarely have norms been seen as an epistemological and ontological basis of generating inter-subjective understandings which are unique to each actor in international politics. Therefore, rather than contestation increasing or decreasing the legitimacy of a norm, it amplifies the present need of the norm-taker and calls for the attention of the international community to pay heed to this need.

Instances of this include India contesting the non-possession and non-use nuclear norm with its first nuclear test in 1974 (Indian Ministry of External Affairs, 2016). India justified its undertaken contestation through political arguments of New Delhi's failed attempts of securing nuclear guarantees from the great powers (Noorani, 1967), the increasing threat from China after the latter had successfully acquired nuclear capabilities by 1964 (United Nations: International Day Against Nuclear Tests, 29 August, n.d.), and India already having fought two wars with neighbouring Pakistan over Kashmir (United Nations: India-Pakistan Background, n.d.). It also remains important to note that India had in fact helped in drafting[64] the NPT to demonstrate its commitment to a nuclear-free world. However, the international community failed[65] to take note as to why India was contesting the NPT (in spite of contributing to it) amidst its growing security concerns in the region, which ultimately drove India to its first nuclear test and fuelled the emergence of India as a nuclear power.

The next point about norm contestation through political argumentation is about identity. Scholars (Caprioli and Trumbore, 2003; O'Brien and Bond, 2004; Segell, 2004) have often carried a static

[64] Ganguly (1999: 155) mentions the contributions of India to the draft treaty were on three fronts: "a balance of mutual responsibilities and obligations on the part of the nuclear and nonnuclear powers", "attempts to promote non-proliferation would merely be a first step toward the ultimate goal of universal nuclear disarmament", and "nonnuclear states should be able to carry out peaceful nuclear explosions."

[65] On this point, refer to Mirchandani (1968: 139).

view[66] of the identity of a norm-taker when the latter challenges a norm through inter-subjective justifications. Saha (2022a: 225) writes that "[t]his static view of a norm-taker is highly problematic in nature as not only does it go against the basic tenants of social constructivism but it also refuses to acknowledge that the norm-taker's behaviour can be guided by its own heuristic security concerns." Secondly, it takes away the chance from the norm-taker to engage in *corrective behaviour*[67] to improve/change its perception in the international community and reduce the level of challenge that it poses to a norm. More importantly, even if there is an effort to engage in corrective behaviour, it would tend to be ignored in the international community and hence the change in robustness of a norm would go unnoticed.

This unchanging view therefore dissuades the norm-taker from improving/changing its perception in terms of behaviour and identity in the eyes of the norm-maker(s). In spite of these identified hindrances, the case of India seems to be interesting in nature. The work of Das (2017) successfully captures how India's image from a "rogue democracy in perpetuity"[68] (which refused to sign the NPT, CTBT and conducted nuclear tests in 1974 and 1998) transformed into a nation which (according to an official US view) has been built "on the solid foundation of shared values, shared interests and our increasingly shared view of how best to promote stability, security and peace worldwide in the 21st century."[69]

While scholars (Ganguly et al., 2006; Kronstadt, 2007 and Tellis, 2007 as cited in Das, 2017: 749) have recognised this discursive shift in India-US relations, they have viewed this independently through the lens of international security. It is to suggest that the role of norm contestation through political rhetoric in IR theory vis-à-vis international security is crucial in understanding this transformation of the India-US relationship. Examining political rhetoric more carefully can enable one to closely observe the empirics involved as to why India was no longer fully[70] required to engage in corrective behaviour, albeit possessing nuclear weapons and being an NPT non-signatory. Furthermore, India still uses justifications to challenge the status of the norm-proliferation regime, contrarily plays the role of a responsible nuclear power under de-facto recognised nuclear status, and also demonstrates adherence to the norms of the 123 Agreement.

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[66] As stated previously, this static view is also demonstrated through the normalisation of labelling the norm-taker(s) as *dissenters*, *pariahs*, and *rogue states*.

[67] Zarakol (2011) argues that some states may try to correct its behaviour while other states may embrace this identity and use it to a strategic advantage.

[68] These words have been used by Robert Manning (a former US policy advisor in the State Department) to describe India's foreign policy (Los Angeles Times, 1998). Post the 1998 nuclear tests, *The Washington Post* carried a column titled, "India Cheated" (Gilinky and Leventhal, 1998). For a more detailed discussion on the verbal shaming and sanctions imposed on India by the international community by virtue of the former being a nuclear rogue, refer to Smetana (2019: 191-216).

[69] This an excerpt from the speech of US Under Secretary Burns (2008), as cited in Das (2017: 749).

[70] There is recognition of the fact that India is still under nuclear restrictions. To have a further view of these restrictions, refer to: US Department of State: U.S and India Release Text of 123 Agreement (2007).

Also, specific to the Indian nuclear case, Smetana (2019) argues that India's change of identity can be attributed to the reversal of two stigma images: i) the first stigma image undergoing reversal through India's pursuit of neutralisation and normalisation, and ii) the US aiding India to reverse the latter's international perception as being a deviant state. As a result, unanswered questions that arise from Smetana's (2019) work include: If India did pursue a strategy of normalisation and neutralisation, what are the specific discourse mechanisms at work that links these strategies to India's compliant as well as non-compliant forms of nuclear behaviour? How did India use justificatory logics to move from a nuclear deviant to a responsible nuclear state? How does one identify this discourse? How does the aspects of normalisation and neutralisation fit into the larger literature on social interactionism and political rhetoric?

1.6. Normative Change and Responsible 'Rogue' Entrepreneurship

In simultaneously studying the Indian nuclear case as well as building into works in IR discourse, the present literature on normative justifications through language and rhetoric also do not seem able to aptly capture how deviants engage in norm entrepreneurship. Recalcitrant states seem to be capable of justifying non-compliance while simultaneously leaving some room open for compliant acts in the near future. In undertaking this notion of semi-compliance and using justifications to socialise with other actors in the international system, deviant states may also emerge as successful norm entrepreneurs in the process.

Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) state that "[n]orm entrepreneurs attempt to convince a critical mass of states to embrace new norms" (895) and "[n]orm entrepreneurs are critical for norm emergence because they call attention to issues or even "create" issues by using language that names, interprets, and dramatizes them" (897). In the nuclear context, Rublee and Cohen (2018: 329-330) define norm entrepreneurs as "actors who seek to "sell" their normative judgements so that they are incorporated into policy." Also, the area of nuclear politics has been distinctly categorised into states playing the role of norm entrepreneurs in global nuclear governance (Müller and Wunderlich, 2013; Fey et al., 2013; Lantis, 2018), norm contestation (Müller and Wunderlich, 2013; Fey et al., 2013; Wunderlich et al., 2013), and the promotion of nuclear disarmament (Becker-Jakob et al., 2013; Hanson, 2010).

Finnemore and Sikkink (1998: 898) conceptualise the flow of norms or norm diffusion as a norm life cycle process that operates in three stages: "norm emergence", "norm cascade", and "norm internalisation." This model has indeed expanded constructivist understandings of norm entrepreneurship in international politics. It has also allowed scholars to look at the process of norm entrepreneurship at the structural and agentic level, and to specifically study its role in a variety of policy fields, ranging from human rights to environmental politics. Building on Epstein (2012), Adler-Nissen (2014: 150) has pointed out that the fundamental way in which socialisation has been

perceived as a norm diffusion process remains problematic as the "constructivist literature on norms tended to examine socialization as a one-sided process" i.e., a linear flow of norms from the norm-maker to the norm-taker. While Adler-Nissen (2014: 151) suggests that such a conceptualisation of norm diffusion downplays the existence of *normal* being constituted through the "constitutive outside", this has also left a deep impact in the nuclear arena. Rarely has the role of changing norms been attributed to a rogue identity[71] in nuclear politics.[72] The absence of such scholarship is further indicative that states which are termed as *rogues*, have been perceived as being impulsive, irresponsible and irrational, and are therefore incapable of undertaking norm change in the international context.

After being stigmatised for detonating its first nuclear device in 1974 under the Pokhran I operation (Joshi, 2018; Kamath, 1999; Kux, 1992), India undertook several forms of compliant behaviour in gradually inviting a de-facto nuclear label upon itself as well as engaging in responsible (rogue) innovation in the process.[73] For example, in order to conform to export controls and the non-proliferation regime, India did not renew the Peaceful Nuclear Cooperation Agreement with Brazil which was due to expire in March 1975 (NAI, 1975a as cited in Joshi, 2018: 1081). Another example is when India refused to renew a peaceful cooperation agreement with Argentina for the second time after a first bilateral signing in May 1974 (NAI, 1975b as cited in Joshi, 2018: 1081-1082). The third instance is when India stalled a Peruvian requested for a General Cooperation Agreement on Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy in 1976 stating that "the complexity of nuclear cooperation required some deliberation" under the Indian Ministry of External Affairs and the Indian Atomic Energy Commission (NAI, 1976a as cited in Joshi, 2018: 1082).

This gradual transformational role of recalcitrant India since its 1974 nuclear test leads one to further question as to whether a rogue state that decides to engage in normative change by conforming or re-aligning its (nuclear) behaviour to international expectations could be understood as indulging in corrective behaviour. As social constructivists would argue, India's attitude towards non-proliferation (even after being a non-signatory to the CTBT and NPT) was in fact shaped by social interactions with the international community. For example, after Canada and the US cut off all nuclear cooperation[74] with India after Pokhran I (Ganguly, 1999), India knew that in order to prevent isolation within the international community, it had to carefully balance decision making regarding nuclear policy according to the evolving consensus on export controls. Moreover, with China aiding the Pakistani nuclear programme in the 1990s, India was hopeful that the non-proliferation regime would

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[71] Manning's (1998) reference to India being a "rogue democracy" after the latter's nuclear tests in 1998.
[72] Exceptions include: Kumar (2014); Smetana (2019); Wunderlich (2014).
[73] After the 1974 nuclear test, the Nixon government reaffirmed its strong position on nuclear proliferation by stating how the test had an adverse impact on world stability. See also: NAI (1974) and NMML (1974a).
[74] For a detailed analysis of the immediate US and Canadian responses to India after Pokhran I, refer to Kamath (1999).

be able to dissuade Pakistan from developing and consequently testing a nuclear device in the near future (Ganguly, 1999).

Constructivist works (Banchoff, 1999; Katzenstein, 1996; Onuf, 1989; Wendt, 1992) have often stressed how states can create multiple identities through social construction by interacting with other states. For example, with particular reference to India's colonial identity, Hopf (1998: 195) states that "British colonial dominance was understood as masculine in relationship to Indian's feminine submission, and Indian culture was understood as infantile and archaic." Scholars (Lightfoot, 2006; Wunderlich, 2013; Souter, 2016: 797; Wheeler and Dunne, 2002) have recently borrowed from this strand of literature in understanding how social interactions can give rise to "good international citizens"[75] in international society. The problem with only identifying certain states[76] as *good* not only creates a binary of *good* versus *bad* international citizens, but also refuses to acknowledge that a rogue or deviant state — as constructed by the international order — may undergo multiple identity transformations (depending on the kind of corrective behaviour that it is undertaking). Moreover, the conceptualisation[77] of corrective behaviour in itself can be a useful tool to understand the foreign policy alternations of an outliner state in order to conform to the norms of the non-proliferation regime.

The case of India offers a useful insight for the advancement of this understanding. After conducting the second nuclear test under the Pokhran II operation, the US put sanctions[78] on India by invoking the Glenn Amendment (The White House Archives, n.d.).[79] However, India's identity of being a rogue democracy underwent several transformations post 9/11 of gradually progressing towards international acceptability over the next few years. Key instances include: when "President Bush issued a final determination on September 22, 2001" to remove all the imposed sanctions on India (The Library of Congress, 2002: 1-3) and the India-US joint declaration in 2003 of "re-defin[ing] the US-India relationship in terms of "re-defin[ing] the U.S-India relationship" in terms of "democracy, common principles and shared interests" of fighting "[g]lobal terrorism, state sponsors of terrorism,

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[75] Souter (2016: 797) states that there is a consensus in academic and political discourse that "the basic content of good international citizenship involves a strong commitment to human rights, multilateralism, and international law, including the responsibility to protect. In short, good international citizens are committed to the common rules and values governing the international society of which they are members."

[76] The literature only identifies a small group of western states namely, Australia, Canada, Sweden and Germany, as good citizens. It is also to recognize that the label of a good international citizen cannot be independently viewed from cooperating and adhering to the foreign policy of the United States. I do not argue against the creation of a norm. However, labelling states which are deprived of taking into account their own inter-subjective circumstances create an irrational and unjustified burden of compliance for the state in question.

[77] This conceptualisation will be later developed in the theoretical framework of this work.

[78] See footnote 8 in Introduction.

[79] After India's 1998 detonation, the US maintained that the testing had made "the world a more dangerous place" (The New York Times, 1998a) and that the incident would drive other states towards nuclear armament. This fear came true after Pakistan conducted a nuclear test, North Korea threatened to commence its own nuclear programme and Iranian diplomats started asking for greater cooperation in nuclear policy making (Hoagland, 1998 as cited in Das, 2017: 747).

and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction" (US Department of State Archives 2003).

This entire cycle of India's identity transformation as a state that was keen in engaging in corrective behaviour also resulted in the bilateral signing of the 123 Agreement with the US in 2008 (US Department of State Archives, 2008). By virtue of the Agreement, the same nation which had a rogue identity of once developing nuclear capabilities in secret during the 1974 and the 1998 tests (Laxman, 2017) had now in fact agreed to put its civil nuclear facilities under the safeguards of the IAEA (US Department of State Archives, 2007). However, the Agreement came with three implicit underpinnings: i) there was a compromise of India's stringent position of arguing that the international system is racial and hierarchal in nature as its nuclear programme was now more congruent to US foreign policy of attaining a global non-proliferation agenda,[80] ii) this served as one of the key reasons for the US to recognise India's corrective behaviour and implicitly confer a de-facto nuclear status on the latter, and iii) India's signing and adherence to the norms of the 123 Agreement (Kimball and Reiff, 2019) also increased its international nuclear acceptability, therefore strengthening its global role in partaking in responsible norm adherence.

1.7. Conclusion

This chapter is thematically underpinned by two aspects in the growing scholarship in International Relations. Firstly, it addresses the underutilisation of a constructivist analysis to study the politics of nuclearisation. Secondly, it positions the India's nuclear identity within the more specific debates of norms that includes stigma, norm contestation, and political argumentation in international governance.

To do so, this chapter has i) identified the convergences of constructivist norms and nuclear politics, ii) examined India's nuclear identity as being deviant of NPT norms and as a result being stigmatised after its undertaken 1974 nuclear test, iii) understood the ways in which the treatment of a deviant nuclear state such as India has remained problematic in the existing literature, iv) recognised how norm contestation is undertaken through political argumentation along with contextualising the Indian nuclear case, v) examined how the research on norm contestation can be epistemologically improved upon further by moving beyond parsimonious categorisations of good versus bad states.

This chapter forms the literature review of this thesis and is organised into five sections, before Chapter 2 starts building its theoretical framework. The first section has recognised that the dynamic reactions of a norm-taker is highly dependent on the kind of norms research being applied on the latter and the still prevalent lingual denigration in academia and policy discourse for the norm-taker. In

[80] Biswas (2014) states that the treaty allowed the US to maintain a global post-colonial and hierarchical nuclear order. There was also a raging domestic debate in India as to whether the 123 agreement constricts India's foreign policy decisions as an independent sovereign nation (see Chari, 2006; Kamara and Jones, 2007).

doing so, this section recognises the innate negativity that surrounds the reshaping or alternation of identity of the latter and the importance of examining the norm-taker's undertaken non-compliance at the structural and as well as the agentic level. The second section has highlighted some of the dominated themes present in the scholarship on deviance and stigma. By using this strand of scholarship, the second section also contextualised the notion of stigma embedded in India's nuclear identity after it undertook the 1974 nuclear test and how scholars till date have rarely studied the stigmatised Indian nuclear case.

The third section has highlighted the lack of a fundamental focus on the relationship between norms and power in the problematic international normative structure, the sceptical treatment of India's aspirations of becoming a 'great power' (through the acquirement of nuclear capabilities) in international politics, and the obfuscation of how the problematic international structure has downplayed India's role in the nuclear debate of NWSs versus the NNWSs. The fourth section undertook understanding norms being susceptible to contestation by actors through argumentation logics that justifies non-compliant forms of behaviour. Using the case of India, it also argued that norm-breaking behaviour may call to attention the security needs of an actor being disregarded in the international politics along with the international community ignoring the compliant forms of behaviour that the actor is undertaking. The last section has observed i) the ways in which the conceptualisation of socialisation as a one-way process can give rise to several unassessed assumptions in the nuclear arena, and ii) a distinct categorisation of the roles that states play may result in the failure of capturing various instances of how recalcitrantly constructed states engage in identity transformation processes.

The next chapter understands states that contest hegemonic norms as stigmatised social agents. It argues that states that are stigmatised occupy a subaltern stigma position from where its contestation of nuclear norms are rendered illegitimate, its justification towards norm-breaking is deemed voiceless, and its agentic and background learnings are made invisible. The next chapter also dramaturgically identifies stigmatised states as performers of the deviant and proposes stigma redaction as a new typology of stigma management.

Chapter 2| Deviance and Stigma in Nuclear Governance[81]

2.1. Introduction

"The normal and the stigmatized are not persons but rather perspectives" (Goffman, 1963: 138).

While this quote from Canadian-American sociologist Erving Goffman's famous work titled: *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, partly succeeds in capturing the epistemological foundations of this chapter, it nonetheless provides an important starting point of the conceptualisation of stigma and deviance. Rather than only treating normal and stigmatised as socially distinct and contradictory to each other, this chapter understands the normal and the stigmatised (as a result of deviant behaviour) to be co-constituting the identity of the *other*. In doing so and advancing the thesis further, this chapter aims to: i) draw from Subaltern Studies to conceptualise stigma as a position (rather than an attribute or a process) and further characterise this position in terms of an unequal relationship that is shared between the deviant and the normal, ii) move towards a novel way in identifying how deviant states manage the stigma position by editing the stigma imposition through stigma redaction or showcasing some form of socially compliant behaviour, and iii) and discuss the scope and conditions of stigma redaction.

I have already highlighted in the previous chapter as to how the concept of stigma and deviance gradually trickled down from Greek civilisation to Christian culture in symbolising bodily wounds. Very surprisingly studies of conveying stigma to the outsider − in terms of witch-hunting and silencing intellectuals who spoke against the Church − often remained confined to help re-draw Christian values of morality (Ben-Yehuda, 1980; Brooke and Cantor, 1998). Even though in the late 1900s, there have been prominent approaches in re-addressing stigma in contemporary society (Becker, 1963; Goffman; 1963), medical sciences such as social psychology, health sciences, and behavioural studies (Hayward and Bright, 1997; Kanuha, 1999; Keusch et al., 2006; Wailoo, 2006) seemed to adapt stigma as a conceptual framework, before the theory of stigma found a strong grounding in international politics.

The notion of using stigma in the Christian context seemed to continue with the seminal work of Adler-Nissen (2011, 2014) who analysed how Christian dominated states (Austria, Cuba, Denmark, Germany, and United Kingdom) manage stigmatisation and state sovereignty in global governance. However, it remains important that the conceptualisation of stigma is further expanded in investigating the behavioural dynamics of states located away from the geographies of the Americas

[81] An earlier version of this chapter was converted into a journal manuscript and now appears as a publication in *International Studies Quarterly*. The publication can be accessed here: Saha, A. 2022b. "Nuclear Stigma and Deviance in Global Governance: A New Research Agenda", *International Studies Quarterly*, 66(3): sqac055. doi:10.1093/isq/sqac055. However, further edits were made later and these may overlap with the publication of the previous chapter in *India Review*.

and Europe. Doing so, prevents entire geographies as being rendered relatively insignificant in advancing theoretical and policy relevant approaches to stigmatisation. Furthermore, it also enables developing more focussed case studies on how and why states from the Global South are stigmatised by hegemonic powers located in the Global North and the ways in which these stigmatised states manage their socially incongruent identities in global politics. In specific context to the transformation of India's nuclear identity vis-à-vis its interactions with the US, excepting the works of Smetana (2018, 2019) and Chacko (2014), scholars have mainly shied away from directly addressing India's international identity through interventions in stigma and anxiety management theories in IR. This chapter addresses this research problem in drawing out a theoretically novel stigma perspective that underlines the empirical instances of India managing its anxious stigma position post its 1974 nuclear test.

Having analysed the importance of constructivist norms and stigma research as well as emphasised their importance in addressing India's nuclear identity, it rather remains important to ask the following set of questions: What happens when states rendered NNWSs by virtue of the NPT decide to follow behaviours of nuclear non-compliance? Why do these states find themselves in a stigma position? How is this stigma position brought about? What is this stigma position characterised by? How do non-compliant states that remain outside shared norms of interactions behave and manage the stigma position? To answer these questions, this chapter has been divided into two sections and starts to develop the theoretical framework of the thesis.

The first section characterises non-compliant states as performers of the deviant who build their social identities around — rather than against — audience of normals. In doing so, it argues that the deviant's performance is a result of its own as well as the normals' social, political, cultural, historical, economic, and cognitive learnings and interactions. Drawing on the discussions on positionality from the previous chapter, this section develops this conceptualisation further. It draws from the scholarship of Subaltern Studies to characterise stigma as a position. The first section argues that when deviants occupy this characterised stigma position, deviant performers give rise to a different expectation of reality as compared to the hegemon and the audience of normals. Furthermore, when a non-compliant state contests a nuclear norm from such a position, its challenge is susceptible to being ignored, rendered illegitimate, and the causes of contestations from the deviant can be made invisible. Hence, because of the prevalence of an unequal relationship, this section recognises that the power of legitimising any norm challenge as valid solely rests with the audience of normals. Also, for a basic understanding of any successful contestation to have taken place, it requires the performers of the deviant and the audience of normals to commonly share this social understanding. Finally, this section briefly mentions the position of stigma as created through a) an act of nuclear non-compliance, b) shared condemnation of the undertaken non-compliance, and c) the emergence of an identity whose belief systems drastically differ from the normal(s).

The second section partakes in the role of advancing the theoretical framework further. It develops the concept of stigma redaction as a way in which stigmatised identities in global politics manage their social roles in the stigma position. With the deviant occupying the subaltern stigma position, stigma redaction is undertaken by this deviant to resort to a strategic semi-correction of stigma and partial efforts to employ corrective behaviour. In other words, the second section develops the understanding of stigma redaction as referring to a combination of corrective and non-corrective behaviour. Albeit the world-view of the deviant remains radically different, deviant states undertaking stigma redaction signal and as well as demonstrate intent of foregoing some aspect of this world-view in making their international perception more socially congruent. However, the power dynamics remain unchanged and the audience of normals may only choose to pay heed to some of the socially compliant acts undertaken by the deviant. The second section also draws on the theories of anxiety management in understanding how states ontologically routinise legitimate and illegitimate forms of behaviour in order to gradually escape the subaltern stigma position. Lastly, this section understands change in the relationship between the performers of the deviant and audience of normals as occurring amidst the unforgotten history of uneasy political tensions and the anxiety in the relationship only being forgotten momentarily.

Using the discussions from the previous sections, the third section spells out the scope and conditions of stigma redaction. It identifies that democratic forms of governance can be key for deviants in seeking quicker means of legitimate identity from the normals. Nonetheless, the extent to which the deviant is willing to imbibe congruent world-views would still remain a crucial factor for (partial) normal recognition. Furthermore, stigma redaction also offers the deviant to gauge as to whether exercising congruent behaviour and normative status improving exercises for short spans of time, offers any of social acceptability from the normals. Because stigma redaction is interlaced with non-congruent forms of behaviour, unsatisfactory recognition from the normals may again push the deviant to revert to non-compliance. Finally, stigma redaction lends an important framework for classifying state behaviour. While social congruence can be deemed as legitimate, there always remains a risk that deviants would resort back to undertaking normative contestations. ssssss

2.2. Conceptualising Deviant Performances and the Subaltern Stigma Position

In social anthropology, Abu-Lughod (1991: 147) has noted that the construction of difference "tends to be a relationship of power", while Escobar (2008) has highlighted that differences are often due to historical and political processes that emerge out of a specific context of power relationships. Similarly, in the late 1990s, Campbell (1998a) and Neumann (1999) have argued that the identity of *self* is often constructed against the *other.* However, understanding stigma as a process and a result of difference follows the lead of a seminal article jointly authored by psychologist Bruce Link and sociologist Jo Phelan. Their article titled "Conceptualizing Stigma" in the *Annual Review of Sociology*

in 2001 looks at stigma as a constitution and interdependence of the following processes: labelling differences, stereotyping the other based on negative attributes, separating self from the other, loss of social status, and finally discrimination based on status loss. Zarakol (2014) has taken a different route in conceptualisation stigma as an attribute and further highlighted how the West stigmatises and shames their Eastern counterparts. This shaming leads the latter to mimic Western perspectives of modernisation by imbibing geographically distant set of ideas and distorting their own existing local practices. Adler-Nissen (2014: 149) not only sees socialisation "in the form of emulation, learning, or persuasion" as a form of social ordering but in fact includes stigma as "public sanctioning to construct and display normality." She also states that the process of stigma imposition is only successful when the other believes, internalises, and as well as acknowledges that it has been stigmatised by the self.

In furthering Adler-Nissen's (2014) argument, it is important to note more explicitly that states act as social agents. In doing so, states themselves perform the role of deviance/difference in international politics vis-à-vis the process of socialisation. I dramaturgically identify these states as *performers of the deviant.* Following Sagan (1996/1997), Debs and Monteiro (2016) provide extensive empirical evidence in making the case that states operating in the complexity of security environments decide to go nuclear by weighing in the trade-offs between risk versus benefit. However, when NNWSs decide to take the risk of nuclear proliferation (and hence, non-compliance), they do so within a continuously re-enacted normative space that is created and governed by the hegemon within the audience of normals. Furthermore, the strategic performance of deviance on the stage of nuclear governance is not for the sake of just being seen, heard, or acted upon. Rather, the performance (and later its strategic management) becomes an inextricable "sum total of the deviant's and as well as the normal's social, political, cultural, historical, economic, and cognitive learnings and interactions" (Saha, 2022b: 3).

More than understanding stigma as an attribute or a process, recalcitrant states also give rise to the *position* of stigma within the existing and the normatively shared space of actions and discourse. In theorising this stigma position, this thesis turns to the research in Subaltern Studies on identity and positionality.[82] In Chapter 1, I have already operationalised the distinction between hierarchy and positionality. In arguing that "[s]ubalternity is a position without identity [and where] where social lines of mobility, being elsewhere, do not permit the formation of a recognisable basis of action",

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[82] Green (2011) identifies that the word *subaltern* first appeared in Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*. Green (2011: 388) also notes that Gramsci developed the category of *subaltern social groups* to "identify and analyse the politics and activity of marginalized social groups in Italian history [that included] … slaves, peasants, religious groups, women, different races, the popolani (common people) and popolo (people) of the medieval communes [and], the proletariat …" While there is a huge literature on subaltern studies or subalternism, its meaning has undergone continuous contestation through countless scholarly production of agentic approaches to societies, histories, and cultures. However, Ludden (2002: 12-13) states that the underlying notion of subaltern studies asks "historians and post-colonial critics [to] stand together against colonial modernity to secure a better future for subaltern peoples, learning to hear them, allowing them to speak, talking back to powers that marginalize them, documenting their past." Also, refer to the works of Bhabha (1994); Chakrabarty (2018); Chatterjee (2004); Guha (1982).

Spivak (2005: 476) renders the subaltern position as relatively static. Spivak (2005) also imagines the subaltern as powerless by removing its sense of agency. Recently, Sarker (2016: 829) has insightfully stated that while "subalternity is not engraved in the identity of a subject; identification is, however, urgently necessary in a 'war of positions.'" If one where to read Sarker (2016) and Spivak (2005) simultaneously, it is rather the *un*recognisable basis of action, that invites the deviant identity and the position of stigma. As I discuss in the next section, it is vis-à-vis the performance of (partial) deviance within the position of stigma that a recalcitrant identity seeks agency in the international system.

Therefore, one would also ask: What happens when deviant performers occupy the subaltern stigma position in nuclear governance? Firstly, the non-compliant state gives rise to a different expectation of reality as compared to the hegemon and the audience of normals. Brigg (2008: 11) notes that "[m]uch of what is at stake in the difference challenge relates, in other words, to different versions of truth and reality." Furthermore, this expectation of differences in truth and reality is often "reified and essentialized as inescapable" (Bargués-Pedreny and Mathieu, 2018: 289). In the same context, much of the IR scholarship have spoken about the concept of a *hybrid solution*, whereby states strike "an intersubjective mediation between local and international scales and norms, institutions, law, right, needs and interests, depending on both power and legitimacy" (Richmond, 2015: 51). However, bridging the perception gap in the nuclear realm would require either or both sides to heavily disrupt their own version(s) of truth and reality through material and/or ideational compromises. Also, apart from problematically re-instating and legitimising identity binaries of *local* versus *international*, a hybridity approach reflects the deeply entrenched existing power inequalities in the international system (Bhabha, 1994).[83]

Secondly, as Spivak (1988: 28) writes in her seminal essay that "the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern….is even more deeply in shadow", a deviant performer becomes the subaltern identity when occupying the subaltern stigma position. Therefore, when a non-compliant state contests a nuclear norm from such a position, the challenge is rendered illegitimate, its justification towards norm-breaking is deemed voiceless, and its agentic and background learnings are made invisible. In this stigma position, the deviant performers tend to continuously challenge a norm to re-instate its notion of agency against the audience of normals.[84] However in doing so, non-compliant states run the risk of cementing their identity within the subaltern stigma position.

[83] Theories of hybridity in international politics have come to encompass a wide-range of contested concepts that include democracy, equality, liberal intervention, peace-building, etc. For a further discussion on different approaches to hybridity, refer to: Galtung (1996); Jarstad and Belloni (2012); Ginty (2010); Nel (2010); Sabaratnam (2011). My purpose of using the notion of hybridisation in international politics is to briefly foreground the inadequacy of mediatory theories to resolve the differences in the subaltern stigma position — that are specifically encountered in the norms of institutionalised nuclear governance through the NPT.

[84] In the Introduction of my thesis, I have already stated that I conceptualise the hegemon as a part of the audience of normals as they widely share common social, cultural, political, and economic learnings. Therefore, the term *audience of normals* is henceforth used and understood as inclusive of the hegemon.

Deitelhoff and Zimmerman (2020: 52) have pointed out the difference between contesting "the application of a norm" versus contesting the validity of "questioning the righteousness of the claims a norm makes."[85] They go on to make the argument that "[i]f the core of a norm is increasingly questioned, noncompliance is likely to spread and go unquestioned, leading—over time—to a weakening of norm robustness" (52). Nonetheless, when recalcitrant states occupy the subaltern position, the power of legitimising any kind of norm contestation lies with the audience of normals. Also, for a basic understanding of any successful contestation to have taken place, it requires the performers of the deviant and the audience of normals to commonly share this social understanding. Specifically, in the nuclear context, Sauer and Reveraert (2018: 445-448) point out that NWSs often choose to opt out from such social processes of contestation by using strategies of avoidance, rejection, and evasion.[86] As a result, performers of the deviant find it much harder to normalise their transgressive identities, challenge dominant discourses, and/or overcome the subaltern position of stigma.

Also, as performers of the deviant are rendered voiceless by the audience of normals, one of the most dominant ways that these states can move towards partial normalisation of their stigmatised identities is through action. However, when states occupy the subaltern stigma position, any aspect of recognising their acts as socially compliant does not happen automatically. Rather constructing and giving meaning to an act as being compliant, social, and normative occurs when the audience of normals deem so. Unlike what Hansen proposes (2006: 15-19) in terms of merging the distinction between language and policy acts, the language of deviant performers must be followed by continuous acts of nuclear compliance in wanting normal associations. In trying to show compliance and moving towards social acceptance, recalcitrant nuclear states may lose their sense of agency and justifications of risking going nuclear in the first instance. Performers of the deviant undertaking compliant acts also brings one to the notion of what Onderco (2014: 182) identifies as a "parolee" state. In fulfilling this parolee status, Onderco (2014) argues that a wicked status from a state needs to be disassociated, the normative framework that identified the wicked acts should still be existent, and there needs to be a creation of a new friend status for the once non-compliant state. To put it briefly, "while for the orderly citizen, there is no retrospective re-analysis; for a paroled criminal, past crimes are not forgotten" (Onderco, 2014: 180).

Very recently, Smetana (2019: 38) has conceptualised the imposition of stigma on a nuclear deviant

[85] They state that norm application asks whether a particular norm is applicable in a specific instance, the kind of reaction a norm requires in a given situation, and if a particular norm may require a non-permanent degree of prioritisation; while "norm validity discourses deal with the question of which norms a group of actors wants to uphold" (Deitelhoff and Zimmerman, 2020: 56).

[86] These strategies have already been mentioned in Chapter 1.

India as being a combination of "stigma message"[87] and "rule enforcement."[88] He then goes to state that the way in which India escaped the long-term effects of stigma imposition partially was through "neutraliz[ing] its guilt by regional security justifications and normaliz[ing] its deviant image toward a responsible, non-NPT nuclear-weapon state" (215). Albeit his work remains one of the first comprehensive studies on India's stigma imposition and its subsequent management, it leaves several questions unanswered: If New Delhi is indeed a normal identity after Washington's "de-stigmatization" (Smetana, 2019: 194), what explains India still not being an official member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) overseeing the sensitive transfer of all nuclear-related exports? Why do tensions between a deviant India since its 1974 nuclear test and the audience of normals still remain? Does normalisation of a stigmatised identity equate to its de-stigmatisation? As India still remains a non-signatory of the NPT, how can the change of India's identity be understood apart from the problematic logics of de-stigmatisation and "stigma reversal" (Smetana, 2019: 204)? Also, Smetana's (2019) conceptualisation of stigma and its subsequent management is rarely useful in ontologically understanding the embedded implications of India being a stigmatised identity in the normative hierarchy.

While much has been already written — and as I have highlighted — about how the attribute and/or process of stigmatisation is brought about, it is important to underline that this thesis conceptualises the subaltern stigma position being gradually created by the inter-linkage of the three identified social factors: i) an act of nuclear non-compliance that is recognised as deviant in the normative space of social conduct by the audience of normals; ii) condemnation whereby there is a shared and wide-spread outcry of verbally shaming and sanctioning the performer(s) of the deviant; and iii) the emergence of the *other* identity, whose system of normative values and world view is perceived by the audience of normals to be *radically* different from other norm abiding states. Nonetheless and albeit difficult, it may still be possible for performers of the deviant to come out of their subaltern stigma position. Therefore, I try to identify an extremely understudied way of how performers of the deviant can successfully manage their stigmatised identity, move towards partial normalisation, and reclaim their position as being a part of the audience of normals.

2.3. Towards a New Way of Managing Stigma

Stigma management strategies as an anthropomorphic approach in international politics were rarely

[87] Smetana (2019: 38) identifies stigma message as being a combination of labelling (a symbolic distinction from the audience of normals), stereotyping (being part of a group that shares negative characteristics), separation (an ideational distinction between *them* versus *us*), responsibility (a state stops being responsible towards the common causes of the in-group), transgressive linkage (a continuous reinforcement of a deviant characteristic(s)), norm linkage (connects deviant behaviour to the existing norms and rules), and threat linkage (reinstating that the existing dissonance can be extremely disruptive in the prevailing normative system).

[88] Rule enforcement has been understood by Smetana (2019: 38) as the audience of normals resorting to sanctions and other attempts to control the deviant state.

used before Adler-Nissen's (2014) work in *International Organization*. Furthermore, stigma management theories in the domain of nuclear politics were also relatively ignored and overlooked to examine how deviant performers manage their stigmatised identity in nuclear governance. In her influential work, Adler-Nissen's (2014: 143) develops three distinct typologies in explaining how states strategically manage their stigmatised identities in global politics — "stigma recognition" (states resorting to corrective behaviour), "stigma rejection" (states refusing to accept being stigmatised), and "counter-stigmatisation" (states converting the imposed stigma as an emblem of pride and honour).

International politics, and particularly nuclear governance has not studied the notion of what I term as *stigma redaction* being a strategy of stigma management. In furthering the existing literature and unlike the three earlier categories of managing stigma suggested by Adler-Nissen (2011), stigma redaction only allows a state to partially come out of its stigma position. Also, unlike stigma reversal, stigma redaction does not refer to stigma recognition where states completely resort to changing their behaviour to make it corrective or compliant. Neither is stigma redaction similar to stigma rejection whereby states refuse to accept being stigmatised. Rather, it is somewhere in between. After the deviant performer finds itself in the subaltern stigma position, stigma redaction refers to a strategic semi-correction of stigma and partial efforts of this stigmatised state to resort to corrective behaviour. If one were to make this analysis consistent with the already developed conceptualisation of deviant performers, there are several observable aspects of states managing their subaltern stigma position through stigma redaction.

When states undertake stigma redaction, they signal and demonstrate the intent of foregoing some aspect of their world-view in making their international perception more socially congruent. However, bridging the gap of different expectations of reality with the audience of normals does not occur in entirety. In specific terms of compromises, none of the sides are still willing to completely separate themselves entirely from their own ideational and/or material aspirations. Therefore, while there are visible improvements between the interactions of performers of the deviant and the audience of normals, the former still occupies the subaltern position. Nonetheless, non-compliant states do show the ability of being able to overcome the subaltern stigma position in the long-run. Furthermore, when this intent of change is showcased via compliant acts, the audience of normals *may* pay heed to deviant performers contesting a norm and decide to enter discussions with the latter. Yet, the power equations do not change as the scope and conditions of legitimising this contestation still depends on the will of the audience of normals. Also, when acts have been recognised as legitimate and compliant by the audience of normals in the first instance, the deviant state is in a rather tricky situation. If it continues to engage in socially congruent acts over longer periods of time, it may risk moving into the typology of stigma recognition. Similarly, if it stops engaging in occasional doses of legitimising its identity through compliance acts, the deviant performer(s) may slip into the typology of engaging in

stigma rejection and/or counter-stigmatisation. Furthermore, the notion of stigma redaction also remains very different to Onderco's (2014: 182) characterisation a "parolee" state. While a parolee state may be out of scrutiny from the audience of normals for good behaviour, a state undertaking stigma redaction may again revert to undertaking nuclear deviance, contributing to global proliferation, and consequently foregoing the parolee status in the future.

Hence, the deviant undertaking stigma redaction is based upon *routinising* legitimate and illegitimate forms of behaviour to gradually escape the subaltern stigma position. In the process of doing so, they also need to be patient in recognising strategic opportunities of cementing a de-facto recognition status with the audience of normals. As I mention before, and without conditions of legitimate as well as illegitimate forms of behaviour existing in the behavioural routines of performers of the deviant, they may risk moving into the categories of stigma recognition, stigma rejection, and/or counter-stigmatisation. To specifically understand how performers of the deviant routinise compliant and non-compliant forms of behaviour with their significant others, I turn to the recent flurry of works on ontological security in international politics. Much of this literature borrows from an anxiety/uncertainty management theory, psychoanalytical theory, and terror management theory, in conceptualising states as social agents that seek certainty/security of their own ontology along with physical security.[89]

Mitzen (2006: 341) defines ontological security as a strategy of uncertainty management whereby states routinise "relationships with significant others, and actors therefore become attached to those relationships." Kinnvall and Mitzen (2016: 4) suggest that the era of globalisation often make actors prone to crises of identity and anxieties and states feel ontologically secure when "they have a sense of biographical continuity and wholeness that is supported and recognised in and through their relations with others." Steele (2008: 6) has expressed this routinisation as a reflexive approach in IR, whereby states construct social meanings "through a ''biographical narrative,'' [of] how actors decide upon certain actions to promote a healthy vision of the self to others." In a recent symposium publication in *International Theory* titled, "Anxiety, fear, and ontological security in world politics", Rumelili (2020: 270) has called for a return of using a Hobbesian notion of anxiety as "a building block of explanatory theories of IR." Contrarily, Cash (2020) points out that theories of ontological security renders states as perpetually insecure, downplays their sense of agency in international politics, and says very little about how states use ideational learnings to reinstate security routines.

Even though Cash (2020) has pointed out why theories of ontological security are rather problematic, Kinnvall and Mitzen (2020: 240) distinguish between the notion of fear and anxiety in noting that theorising the subjectivities of "anxiety manifests in different emotions and leaves room for a range of

[89] See also: Giddens (1991); Huysmans (1998); Laing (1969); McSweeney (1999); Manners (2002).

political possibilities."[90] Also, thinking about structural uncertainty complexes in international politics offers a valuable avenue in examining socially constructed power relations between states within a broader international hierarchy. Therefore, when recalcitrant states occupy the subaltern stigma position, they get attached to deviant routinised performances to sustain a sense of biographical continuity vis-à-vis their significant other, i.e., the audience of normals. However, Arfi (2020: 291) has turned the definition of ontological security on its head by arguing that to exist and "to feel secure in one's being is quite paradoxical since it means to engage in everyday practices of surviving through a continual movement of always becoming otherwise, which might end in death." States engaging in stigma redaction fear this notion of death or rather an irreversible and a perpetual subaltern position. Unlike counter-stigmatisation whereby states wear deviance as a badge of honour, the intent of survival through non-compliant acts for the performers of the deviant is relatively weak and may gradually erode away. Hence, occasional legitimisation practices also become a part of the ontological securitisation routine and a survival strategy for these states. In other words, performers of the deviant do not solely engage in socially compliant acts outside of their routines to gain recognition from the audience of normals. This argument can also be extended in terms of performers of the deviant looking out for strategic openings to (partially) normalise their subaltern stigma position. Because of the probability that performers of the deviant may resort back to deviant performances, the audience of normals prefer conferring de-facto and/or normative status of recognition.

As a result, there is a perpetual presence of anxiety in the ontological performances of deviant states. Only the degree of uncertainty tends to get regulated — based on whether an act has been rendered as recognised and legitimate by the audience of normals. Complete normalisation of stigmatised nuclear identities does not occur because the issues of dissonance between with the audience of normals and the state(s) occupying the subaltern stigma position remain unresolved. Complete normalisation also does not happen as both parties are unwilling to heavily disrupt their own socially constructed view of interpreting and perceiving (nuclear) norms. Rather, there is very little or almost no compromise that happens from either side in terms of drastically altering ideational and/or material capabilities. Stigma redaction occurs without the social expectation of the performers of the deviant having to break away from their performative routines. Similarly, the audience of normals do not alter their social perceptions of what is constituted as normal. Therefore, *change* towards partial normalisation happens amidst the unforgotten history of uneasy political tensions between both sides. Also, the ambivalence and the anxiety in the relationship are only forgotten momentarily, do not completely disappear, and risk the probable chance of reappearing again in the future.

[90] In distinguishing between anxiety and fear, Kinnvall and Mitzen (2020: 241) state that "[a]nxiety …. is less an emotion than a general psychic condition or mood, a 'fear of fear' or unease that can trigger a range of emotions and behaviors."

2.4. Stigma Redaction: Conditions and Scope

For states to undertake stigma redaction by foregoing some aspect of their world-view, improving interactions with the normals, and running the risk of reverting to incongruence, regime type remains a fundamental basis on which performers of the deviant identify the feasibility of making their international behaviour more socially congruent. In the same context, Cho (2010: 232) argues that "to explain the rare conditions of cooperation among self-interested states is to look into similarities of domestic political (and economic) regimes." With specific reference to democratic regime types, the literature is filled with studies of democratic regimes being more prone to fostering cooperation and dialogue in the international arena (Mousseau, 1997; Polacheck, 1997; Remmer, 1998). Nonetheless, for performers of the deviant, identifying similar regime types also highlights their dramaturgical performance in seeking recognisable agency to eventually escape the subaltern stigma position. Secondly, to amend incongruent behaviour for a short-span of time and seek legitimacy, performers of the deviant invest in identifying common normative baggage with the normals. In the same context, Chapter 3 details how deviant performers negotiate the identification of common normative baggage with specific members of the normals in order to achieve a de-facto accommodation in nuclear governance. However, while similar regime types may be an important starting point to examine overlaps in domestic and foreign decision making, mutual normative recognition is based on the time and extent of how much performers of the deviant are willing to forego their own belief systems. Thirdly, because the dramaturgy of deviance is enacted through agency, stigma redaction cannot fully transform into compliant forms of behaviour. Forced disruptions of semi-compliance through coercion exercises from the normals may push the deviant in being more stringent against *redacting* the latter's already parsimonious world-views. This could either translate into performers of the deviant moving into stigma rejection and counter-stigmatisation and/or lessening the time and extent of displaying (partial) compliance to existing norms.

Deviant states may resort to showcasing compliant behaviour as well as remaining extremely cautious in justifying non-congruent social behaviour. However, while stigma redaction may enable maintaining momentary instances of de-escalation of tensions, these strategies become increasingly important in the contemporary international order. The world is currently seeing the collapse of major treaties and agreements in recent times which include the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the Treaty on Open Skies, and very recently the New Start Treaty.[91] While stigma redaction and reasoning of instance may not immediately solve these problems, it does have potential in reinstating social trust as a starting point for government and bureaucrats to enter negotiations of preserving a viable international order. Using stigma redaction and reasoning of instance as tools in decision-making, also provides an added benefit to decision

[91] Russia recently decided to suspend the New Start Treaty but announced that it would still abide by the restrictions laid down by the Treaty on the number of deployable nuclear warheads (BBC, 2023).

makers of quickly reversing policy choices if the other parties remain in violation of an agreement. While such a decision could potentially be detrimental to the existing system, the achievement of stigma redaction would be in bringing back concerned parties to the table to reignite previously failed policy discussions.

Issues like trade, environmental politics, and human rights (Biermann et al., 2009; Bulmer and Lequesne, 2020; Krueger, 2020) have varying levels of participation and commitment from different states. An excellent example is given by Epstein (2012:141) who argues that the International Whaling Commission's measures to conserve whales have ill-suited Japan as for the latter what is "at stake here is the erasure of an ancient whaling past (traced back by anthropologists to the 16th century." Hence, stigma redaction can enable Japan − lacking the same level of normative commitment as that of other states − to support marine conservation for short spans of time in building occasional forms of collaborative environmental ventures. Furthermore, it would also enable Japan to manage the stigma imposed upon it by the international community due to the former's cultural reasons of opting out of conversation projects relating to the prevention of whale hunting. More broadly and as I discuss with India exercising a sovereign foreign policy in the forthcoming chapters, it would enable other states reluctant in seeking permanent levels of cooperation (due to intersubjective as well as domestic circumstances), to engage in short-term status improvement exercises with the international community. Non-conforming states can also use these social strategies to understand the extent of social acceptability meted out to them from the normals. This would enable these incongruent states to gauge as to whether altering policy choices in relation to the invited degrees of acceptability can be sustainable and potentially rewarding in the long-term.

Using the case of Iran, Bowen and Moran (2014: 45) rightly state that "it is extremely difficult to accurately categorise proliferation behaviour because strategic decisions related to nuclear developments are highly secretive and limited to small groups of decision-makers." However, without analytical frames that help distinguishing state behaviour in terms of benevolent from ambivalent, it would be challenging to investigate questions of normative behaviour and cooperation in international politics.

Furthermore, using established policies of carrots and sticks to engage with performers of the deviant would be problematic in the absence of a mechanism to identify the level of threat they pose to the existing normative order. In the words of Schweller (1994: 103), the case of India falls in the category of "jackals" or "states that will pay high costs to defend their possessions but even greater costs to extend their values … [and tend to] be risk-averse and opportunistic." The constructed identity of India as a peaceful nuclear power, embedded in values of non-violence, and yet problematising trust relationships with the audience of normals, is indeed a case on point. This is because even though the first step towards nuclearisation through a peaceful nuclear explosion in 1974 saw New Delhi coming

under sanctions and occupying the subaltern stigma position, it was willing to bear these costs in ultimately developing a nuclear weaponisation programme.

2.5. Conclusion

Following from the previous chapter on constructivist norms, this chapter starts building the theoretical framework of this thesis in looking at the consequences that occur when nuclear non-compliant states do not follow these shared notions of normative interactions. This chapter is thematically underpinned by and combines the interdisciplinary research on IPS, stigma management, and anxiety/uncertainty management theories to further our understanding of how we perceive security of non-western states in nuclear governance. To do so, this chapter has i) conceptualised the importance of studying stigma as a relational position that is occupied by non-compliant states as well as characterised the stigma position in terms of the treatment meted out to these deviant states by the normals, ii) developed a novel understanding of how states manage their stigma position through editing the imposed stigma position through stigma redaction, i.e., simultaneously engaging in corrective and non-corrective patterns of behaviour, and iii) and discussed the scope and conditions of this new stigma management strategy.

This chapter has therefore deduced key elements from each of its sections in moving the thesis forward. In building the theoretical framework of this thesis, the first section firstly identified non-compliant states as performers of the deviant where their deviant performances and its strategic significance rest on the sum total of the deviant's as well as the normal's social, political, cultural, historical, economic, and cognitive learnings and interactions. Secondly, this section understood stigma as a relational position between the deviant and the normal. In characterising this stigma position, it argued that when performers of the deviant occupy this position their expectation of reality and belief system differs from that of the audience of normals. From this subaltern stigma position, deviants pose continuous challenges to norms. Nonetheless, relationship between the normals and the deviant remain unequal and hence, the power of recognising any norm challenge as valid solely rests with the audience of normals. Also, due to the prevalence of an equal power relationship, challenges from the performers of the deviant run the risk of being ignored, treated as illegitimate, or rendered voiceless by the audience of normals. Finally, the first section identified the position of stigma as created through a) an act of nuclear non-compliance, b) normative condemnation of the undertaken non-compliance from the normals, and c) the emergence of an identity whose world-view drastically differ from the normal(s).

The second section of this chapter moved towards conceptualising a new way through which performers of the deviant manage their subaltern stigma position. In doing so, it argued that performs of the deviant attempt a strategic semi-correction of the imposed stigma and undertake partial efforts

to resort to corrective behaviour. This section identified this stigma management technique to be stigma redaction whereby performers of the deviant simultaneously engage in corrective and non-corrective patterns of behaviour to prevent their deviant identity of being permanently cemented as rogue in nuclear politics. In doing so, performers of the deviant demonstrate intent of foregoing some aspect of their world-view in making their international perception more socially congruent. Nonetheless, the prevalence of the unequal power relationship still exists as the audience of normals may only choose to recognise some of the socially compliant acts undertaken by the deviant. The second section also drew on the theories of anxiety management in understanding how deviants ontologically routinise legitimate and illegitimate forms of behaviour through stigma redaction. In doing so, performers of the deviant try to escape the label of being a rogue that could permanently be cemented on them by the normals. Furthermore, this section argued that complete normalisation of the ambivalent relationship between the normal and the deviant as being uncertain and difficult. This is because there always remains a possibility that deviant performers may engage in recalcitrant routines in the unforeseen future due to strategic considerations and the security environment in which they operate in.

The third section discusses the scope and conditions of stigma redaction in greater detail. It argues that democratic regime type remains an important factor for a deviant state to fast-track the process of seeking legitimacy with the normals. Nonetheless, there always remains the question of how much the deviant is willing to forego its own agentic world-view in persistently making its behaviour socially congruent. Furthermore, stigma redaction becomes an extremely important policy exercise for the deviant to gauge social acceptability from the normals as it always offers the option of reverting back to incongruent forms of behaviour. Along with allowing states to exercise short-term status improvement exercises while simultaneously enabling them to hold on to individual normative baggage, stigma redaction also allows us to distinguish different kinds of state behaviour. If deviant states resort to corrective behaviour, it momentarily reduces the threat they pose to the existing world order. Yet, it makes one question as to how long the deviant would exercise compliance and seek policy discussions before reverting to incongruent behavioural routines.

After conceptualising the notions of stigma and deviance that remain interdependent on the notion of what is normal in the international system, the next chapter will look at how performers of the deviant implement stigma redaction in persuading the audience of normals in the nuclear domain to change identity perceptions of the former. To do so, Chapter 3 shall design a theoretically novel way of performers of the deviant using language and rhetoric as normative justifications of identity and behaviour management in global and nuclear governance.

Chapter 3| Reasoning Stigma and Identity Behaviour in Nuclear Governance

3.1. Introduction

"Actors do not leave their identities at the door when entering into dialogue, and they do not employ language unadulterated by earlier political contestation" (Krebs and Jackson, 2007: 39-40).

This quote from the influential work of Krebs and Jackson (2007) reinstates the importance of language, value systems, and persuasion that has formed a key focus of several constructivist works in understanding identity and behaviour. More importantly, it also serves as an important guide for this chapter in looking at "what actors say, in what contexts, and to what audiences" (Krebs and Jackson, 2007: 36). In furthering the theoretical framework from the previous chapter on the conceptualisation of stigma redaction, deviant behaviour, and the role of the audience of normals in international politics, this chapter aims to: i) conceptualise the ways in which performers of the deviant use language based on the undertaken behaviour to shape their identity perceptions with the normals, ii) characterise how this form of justification is defensive and cautionary in nature and employed by the deviants to reduce their social distinctiveness from the normals, and iii) explain how performers of the deviant emerge as successful norm innovators after engaging with various actors with differential power capabilities within the normals.

The previous chapter has already characterised a new kind of stigma strategy that nuclear non-compliant states use to manage their stigmatised identity in global governance. However, to move this thesis forward, it now remains important to understand how these states use behavioural justifications while undertaking stigma redaction. Since the late 1990s, there have been a heavy flow of constructivist works that focus on persuasion and public rhetoric to affect social change and decision making at the structural and the agentic level (Lynch, 1999; Keck and Sikkink, 1998; Risse and Sikkink, 1999). This cause was taken up more seriously by several IR scholars from the start of the twenty-first century in arguing that when psychological theories are imported into the domain of international politics, it helps in "identifying and responding to threats to security, recognising opportunities to achieve more effective economic coordination, and building transnational communities that are not readily reducible to a security or economic calculus" (Goldgeier and Tetlock, 2001: 69). In very similar terms, in a book edited by Shannon and Kowert (2012: 7), Shannon (2012) proposed an "ideational alliance" in writing its introduction. This alliance focussed on bringing theories of psychology and constructivist thought in international politics together, as they both build on ideational concepts in addressing sociological meanings of identities, norms, and cognition. This chapter goes a step further by integrating IPS approaches into the ideational alliance of psychology and constructivism to delve deeper into the study of stigma redaction in nuclear

governance. As scholars have mostly shied away in addressing India's nuclear relationship with the US with such an approach, this chapter addresses this research problem by theoretically understanding how dialogue and persuasion help change identity perceptions.

As I note in the previous chapter, any rhetoric or act to be made believable is a two-way process and only occurs when the audience of normals have also deemed so. The category of performers of the deviant seems to have the additional challenge of occupying the subaltern space and therefore risking any rhetoric or justification of being unheard and easily dismissed as strategic, irrelevant and/or self-serving in the liberal order. Therefore, one should ask: What are the effects of stigma redaction? Who pursues this stigma management strategy? What motivates states to undertake stigma redaction over other forms of stigma management? When and how does it work? What are its effects on audiences and on the position of the stigmatised?

Furthermore, it is also interesting to enquire what kind of justifications work or do not work when performers of the deviant occupy the subaltern stigma position. Do these justifications allow performers of the deviant to permanently escape the stigma position? To what extent are justifications of deviance acceptable to the audience of normals? What are their effects on the audience of normals and on the position of performers of the deviant? To answer all these questions, this chapter has been divided into three sections.

This chapter continues building the thesis' theoretical framework on the behavioural understandings of performers of the deviant in global governance. To do so, the first section introduces reasoning of instance as a dynamic course of communication and justification operating through stigma redaction. Reasoning of instance points to a dynamic course of communication and justification that is based on whether the deviant's act of the instant is rendered socially compliant or recalcitrant. Nonetheless, it operates with the assumption that deviant performers still occupy the subaltern stigma position and share an unequal power relationship with the audience of normals. In undertaking socially compliant acts, reasoning of instance is used by the deviant to communicate to the normals that the former is indeed capable of showcasing some form of compliance in the international normative space. The first section also points out that reasoning of instance is used by performers of the deviant to amplify the impact of (partial) compliance by continuously stressing on the undertaken form of behaviour in various summits, press meetings, governmental documents, etc. Contrarily, in case of making incongruent behaviour more socially presentable, reasoning of instance is connected to a previous act of compliance to make the audience of normals pro-actively respond to the norms being contested. However, the tense and ambivalent relationship between the normals and the deviant does not undergo any change as the latter may again disrupt the normative space through deviant performances.

The second section examines how performers of the deviant make reasoning of instance more socially

believable and acceptable to the audience of normals. Rather than demonstrating a complete and outright refusal of being bound by global (or specifically nuclear) norms, reasoning of instance is employed as a defensive strategy of justification used by the performers of the deviant. Performers of the deviant may want to minimise their social distinctiveness from the normals, project norm violation as an exception, enter discussions with the audience of normals for exploring viable excuses to norm violation(s), and/or stress how their identities show some congruence with the normal. When employing reasoning of instance, performers of the deviant expect to extract weak and momentary trust from the audience of normals and partially bridge the social gap with the latter. Hence, any form of recognition of normative identity rendered out to the deviants from the normals is implicit, de-facto, and a deviant state in question can only be semi-accommodated in the international community. Furthermore, performers of the deviant also try to convey to the audience of normals that the former's social standing is ontologically important and the constant attribute of deviance is socially uncomfortable to the performer of the deviant in the long run.

The third section understands how reasoning of instance affect the social dynamics of the audience of normals. It looks at the common normative commitments that bind together the audience of normals in the nuclear context through common historical, political, economic, and cultural baggage. Audience of normals remain collectively opposed to the violation of the same nuclear norms of non-use, non-proliferation, and deterrence that originate from the NPT. Hence, this section argues that when a deviant undertakes social non-compliance, it hinders the normals' collective and shared interpretation of values and belief systems. Nonetheless, reasoning of instance allows the deviant to enter discussions with the normals and provides an opportunity for the deviant state to undergo identity change in terms of normative perceptions. This section also identifies that engaging into discussions with the audience of normals can be done by identifying common agentic baggage with any member of the normals or very specifically engaging with the key actor within the normals. In the latter case, any form of partial normative recognition for the deviant is quicker due to the material and social status of the key actor within the in-group. However, in both cases, performers of the deviant may emerge as successful norm innovators upon being offered a socially acceptable de-facto (nuclear) identity by the normal members.

3.2. On Performers of the Deviant Justifying (Nuclear) Compliance and Non-Compliance

Sundaram (2020) has recently theorised three categories of norms through which actors interact with each other in the international system. He identifies these to be instrumental (the reason to action is based on self-serving strategic interests), institutional (actors invoking institutional and shared obligations for a cause), and moral (reasoning that is formulated with the inherent liberal values of the international society). However, each of these categories can say very little about performers of the deviant in global governance. Performers of the deviant stay embedded within the very normative

space created by the audience of normals and yet manage to reason with a different set of social tools to simultaneously manage compliance and non-compliance, in accordance with the existing norms. By virtue of being within the normative space and already being stigmatised, performers of the deviant justifying non-compliance through instrumental reasoning would invite provocative, strict, and immediate reactions from the audience of normals. The argument on institutional and moral norms would also fall through as non-compliance would be rendered as illegitimate, incongruent to liberal values, and automatically reduce the performer of the deviant's bargaining power when justified on the floor of an international or local institution.

Therefore, we should turn our attention to what I call *reasoning of instance*. Reasoning of instance calls for a focus on whether the undertaken act of the *instant* is rendered compliant or non-compliant with behavioural referents and then points to a dynamic course of *reasoning* or justification. Reasoning of instance is also underlined with the notions that performers of the deviant occupy the subaltern position, remain within the shared normative space of social associations, and as a result help in co-constituting the identity of the normal(s). Hence, it builds onto the idea of Kornprobst (2007: 75) who states that "[i]dentities are constructed through communicative acts that, by connecting events of past and present, as well as desires and expectations about the future, tell stories about Self and its relationship to Other." Drawing from Kornprobst (2007), reasoning of instance would require a sense of strategic vision that connects past and present events to the act of the instant and leaves room for strategic manoeuvring and ambiguity in the future.

When performers of the deviant engage in compliant acts, the compliant act is also used as a tool of memory correction against engaging in normatively deemed non-compliant behaviour in the past. However, the tense relationship between the performers of the deviant and the audience of normals do not completely disappear and is kept ambiguous for the future as the former may again disrupt the normative space through deviant performances. Kelman (1978: 170-171) perfectly characterises this ambivalent ontological relationship of identity binaries by stating that "neither side can be expected to make a move to accept the other unless and until it develops a sense of assurance that its own existence is secure."[92] Furthermore, reasoning of instance is used as a method of extracting momentary and weak trust from the audience of normals by conveying to the audience of normals that performers of the deviant are indeed capable of following (some) standards of normative behaviour. Compliance is also made more effective by amplifying its impact. This is done by continuously stressing on the undertaken behaviour of compliance in various summits, press meetings, governmental documents, etc.

In the specific domain of nuclear governance, reasoning of instance for performers of the deviant

[92] There has been a flurry of work on conceptualising memory and time in international politics. See, for example, Auchter (2014); Barkan (2000); Hom (2020); Phillips (2001).

remains incompatible with the routinised following of obligations that the NPT lays down for NNWSs.[93] In other words, there is always a referential presence of an act of non-compliance that the performer of the deviant(s) had undertaken in the near past and remained in violation of the obligations laid down by the NPT for NNWSs.[94] However, when NNWSs as performers of the deviant decide to follow some of the NPT obligations – whether partially accepting IAEA safeguards (IAEA Statute, 1989) or honouring the uranium enrichment limit for commercial use set by the IAEA for a specific period of time (IAEA, 2020) – reasoning of instance is used to continuously highlight these commitments in diplomatic forums. Also, following these NPT commitments momentarily leads to a weak expectation from the audience of normals that negotiations with performers of the deviant may lead the latter to further abide by international nuclear norms. Nonetheless, these expectations are not cemented with performers of the deviant due to the underlying anxiety that the latter may again resort back to nuclear deviance. As a result, recognition given to the performer of the deviant's compliant behaviour is only de-facto rather than the relationship with the audience of normals emerging as resilient to contemporary and changing times.

For performers of the deviant engaging in non-compliant acts, reasoning of instance operates rather differently in relation to events in the past and the possible decisions performers of the deviant may consider in the future. When performers of the deviant decide to undertake an act of non-compliance, the audience of normals would automatically assume that the act of the instant would be justified by what Sundaram (2020) understands as instrumental reasoning. This may erode the chances of performers of the deviant of seeking an identity of recognition from the subaltern stigma position with the audience of normals. Undertaking non-compliance could also cement the behaviour of the deviants as self-serving and being incapable of displaying social congruence. The problem of recognising the other identity is further compounded as Rosoux (2004: 162) argues that a "sense of mutual vulnerability leads each side to fear that by recognising the other's memory – and therefore the other's identity – it is denying its own." In the context of specific identities using arguments in international politics, Crawford (2002: 24-25) suggests that "[i]dentity arguments may apply to groups or to individuals, but they are specifically about the characteristics of those individuals and what those characteristics imply in terms of actions or reactions."

Therefore, in order to make incongruence more socially presentable, reasoning of instance of the undertaken social non-compliance needs to be connected with a previous act of compliance. Not only does this help erode the permanency of the link between stigmatised identities performing deviant

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[93] These include "not to manufacture or otherwise acquire nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; and not to seek or receive any assistance in the manufacture of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices" and "accept safeguards, as set forth in an agreement to be negotiated and concluded with the International Atomic Energy Agency" (Article II and Article III of the NPT: United Nations Archives, 1968).

[94] The act becomes non-compliant and is rendered in violation of the NPT principles only when the audience of normals have deemed so.

routines but also creates room for the audience of normals to pro-actively respond to the norms being contested. In other words, even though the audience of normals can resort to stigmatising the deviant identity further because of non-compliance, it creates an opportunity for deviant performers to use a reference point of previous compliance to enter normative discussions with the former. Through dialogue and connecting reasoning of instance with previous forms of compliant behaviour, it also allows performers of the deviant to constructively position their non-compliant behaviour for a de-facto social consideration[95] from the audience of normals.

Juxtaposing this to the context of nuclear governance, when performers of the deviant decide not to follow or break NPT commitments required from NNWSs, reasoning of instance is used to refer to the previous instances when these commitments were honoured. Reasoning of instance for nuclear non-compliance may also be linked to the specific security circumstances of the NNWSs, the failure to secure nuclear guarantees from the NWSs, and NNWSs putting emphasis on the specific pitfalls of the NPT (Abe, 2020).[96] Based on the severity of non-compliance, the audience of normals may decide to stigmatise the identity of the performer of the deviant(s) through imposing sanctions (Biersteker, 2015; Stiles and Kaplan, 1996) and passing multi-lateral resolutions of condemnation against the latter. However, reasoning of instance allows the performer of the deviant(s) to stress and connect its current non-compliance to its track record of partially abiding by NPT commitments previously. While the relationship between the performer of the deviant(s) and the audience of normals may be shrouded in anxiety due to the conflict in identity binaries, stress on compliant track records weaken the nuclear deviant label imposed on the performer of the deviant. As a result, reasoning of instance i) highlights the intent of performers of the deviant of having previously socially aligned their behaviour with the audience of normals, and ii) signals the cause to be acute for performers of the deviant going nuclear in the first place, even though the state in question remains aware that this may result in losing normal social associations. Also, in using this compliant track record of reducing the sociological gap between identity binaries, performers of the deviant may be able to enter negotiations with the audience of normals, successfully convince the audience of normals that their identities do exhibit some similarities, and pave way for a de-facto accommodation of their nuclear status along with the identity of the audience of normals.

3.3. Understanding Reasoning of Instance

In understanding the effects that arguments have on the preference of actors, Seymour (2014) provides a comprehensive study that explains the underlying social logics of communicative action,

[95] By de-facto social consideration, I follow the lead of Shannon (2000: 294) who claims that "oftentimes norms are what states (meaning state leaders) make of them" and Sending's (2002: 458) logic of arguing when he refers to "reflection and choice" being necessary for mutual constitution of identities and norm change.
[96] These include the inability to achieve nuclear disarmament for NWSs, the failure to control proliferation in the case of India, Pakistan and possibly Israel, and the lack of outlining a strategy for imposing stringent punishment for its violators (Abe, 2020).

bargaining, rhetorical action, and bullshitting.[97] More generally, the current literature has long been split as to whether preferences of actors are guided by rationalist explanations of being utility maximisers (Carr, 1946; Keohane, 1988; Morgenthau, 1948) and/or preferences being shaped by interpretations of social meanings, languages, and belief systems (Ashley, 1981; Bleiker, 2001; Campbell, 1998b).[98] After Chapter 1 has brought out the critical turn of actors contesting the unfixed nature of norms through agentic and structural interpretations, it is important to understand how reasoning of instance aids in this normative contestation.[99]

While rationalist works take utility maximisation at its centre to generate predictions on state behaviour, in traditional constructivist works, as proposed by Finnemore and Sikkink (1998: 914), the latter uses a persuasionist model in stating that norm entrepreneurs "seek to change the utility functions of other players to reflect some new normative commitment." The problem with such an approach is perfectly summed up by Müller (2004: 398) who argues that "[a]ctors know each other as strategists" and therefore it would be increasingly difficult to understand what an actor is *actually* seeking versus what the actor is projecting to seek.[100] Therefore, changing the utility function of an actor is not independent from what the other actor(s) believes and is convinced to be the strategic benefits that the former is pursuing. The second point of criticism is that the persuasionist model implicitly assumes that the normative aspects of social interaction is included in the utility seeking function of actors. However, etymologically, utility maximisation in international politics have been used by realists (Carr, 1946; Keohane, 1988; Morgenthau, 1948) to refer to power seeking strategies of states which were often kept independent from the unfixed and interpretive understandings of social behaviour.[101]

A lot of the present sociological literature have focussed on actors having a psychological need of wanting to maintain and as well as enhance their social image and self-esteem (Blake and Davis, 1965; Cialdini and Trost, 1998; Tetlock, 1992). This can also be viewed as one of the functions of reasoning of instance allowing actors to refer to past behaviours of occasional compliance and/or continuously stress on some form of undertaken socially congruent behaviour. Unlike what the rationalist school proposes, performers of the deviant remain aware that the audience of normals may further disintegrate social associations with the former if performers of the deviant continue following

[97] According to Seymour (2014), communicative action refers to arguing in order to reach a common consensus; bargaining is used to maximise collective gains; rhetorical action refers to how strategically motivated actors use logic of appropriateness to change behaviour; and bullshitting refers to arguments made without credibility and for the purpose of casting a (false) impression.

[98] Some scholars have also tried to fuse these approaches, see for example, Giddens (1984); Wendt (1987).

[99] I do not attempt to offer a way out from the long-standing debate of agency versus structure in international politics. My aim is to theoretically develop how the argumentation logic of reasoning of instance enables actors to justify and/or build on occasional non-compliant and compliant patterns of behaviour.

[100] Müller (2004: 398) distinguishes intent in terms of "authentic information from strategic deception."

[101] Jackson (2011) argues that the formulation of scientific enquiries in international politics should transcend these demarcations through political discussions and normative evaluations to make IR research coherent and more productive in nature.

any ostensible utility maximisation strategies through reasoning of instance. Another implication could be that performers of the deviant risk cementing an unescapable subaltern stigma position. Therefore, reasoning of instance is underlined with a cautionary approach of justifying norm contestations.[102]

Even though a cautionary approach may invite some form of rational judgements of taking into consideration the reactions of the audience of normals, Hart (1994: 124) makes the point that "general rules, standards, and principles ... of social control" follow an "open texture" of interpretation. This argument is similar to that of Jervis (1970: 19) who states that "actions are not automatically less ambiguous than words. Indeed, without an accompanying message, it may be impossible for the perceiving actor to determine what image the other is trying to project." Because of the prevalence of this ambiguity of how the audience of normals would react and interpret performers of the deviant (occupying the subaltern stigma position) justifying norm contestations, reasoning of instance is laced with arguments of minimising social distinctiveness rather than revisionist aims of power maximisation.[103] As I mentioned in Chapter 2, it would require performers of the deviant to heavily disrupt their own version of truth and reality through material and/or ideational compromises to bridge the perception gap with the audience of normals. Furthermore, performers of the deviant need to demonstrate continuous acts of compliance to make arguments of minimising social distinctiveness from the audience of normals more believable. Therefore, minimising social distinctiveness would refer to performers of the deviant stressing on following certain normative commitments, projecting norm violation as an exception, entering discussions with the audience of normals for exploring viable excuses to the violation, and stressing on how their identities show some congruence with the normal in international politics.

Shannon (2000: 300) argues that actors must be able to "sell [their] violation" for being granted an exception and that "[t]he ability to deny, justify, or excuse untoward behavior to oneself and others depends on two things: the norm itself and the situation at hand." In context to the nuclear norm of non-proliferation, it has a universalistic characteristic whereby the NPT has "established an international norm under which virtually all nations view the further spread of nuclear weapons a grave threat to regional and global security" (US Department of State Archives, 1992). Similarly, breaking the norm of nuclear non-use would mean that "one is immediately in a new world with all the unimaginable consequences that could follow" (Tannenwald, 2005: 8) and would consequently go

[102] On types of norm contestation, see Deitelhoff and Zimmerman (2020); Wiener (2014).

[103] Larson's (2012) idea of social distinctiveness departs from interactionism and is defined in terms of social comparison, where states of a lower-status group strive to achieve a more positive identity. However, my idea of social distinctiveness is rooted in social interactionism. I argue that employing social distinctiveness is in fact an essential aspect of states in the subaltern stigma position using the strategy of reasoning of instance while *interacting* with the audience of normals.

on to reflect the failure of the norm of nuclear deterrence.[104]

Onderco (2015) has highlighted how nuclear non-compliance is often treated as an extreme form of deviant behaviour rather than an opposition to Western projects of intervention and neo-liberalism. Therefore, breaking any nuclear norm would mean that reasoning of instance would have to be employed by performers of the deviant to counter sharp criticism and strict sanctioning from the audience of normals. Also, because of the strong resilience of the NPT since its coming into force in 1970, nuclear norms flowing from the treaty have long "provide[d] grammar for international political discourses" and have been "deeply internalized by actors as to become commonsense" (Budjeryn, 2015: 207). As a result, the international community would remain extremely vigilant in identifying utility maximisation strategies followed by performers of the deviant in the nuclear domain.

Due to these circumstances, reasoning of instance is often used as a defensive strategy of justification by performers of the deviant (already occupying the subaltern stigma position) rather than wearing deviance as a badge of honour and exhibiting a complete refusal to be identified by a common social identity. While social psychology research has identified how individuals behave in order to avoid changing perceptions of themselves in society (Goffman, 1959,1967; Tetlock, 1992), any nuclear norm violation – because of its long-standing institutionalised nature − would immediately and drastically reduce chances of performers of the deviant being identified as members of the in-group. Hence, after such violation has occurred, reasoning of instance is rather employed to *partially* bridge the social gap with the audience of normals.[105] In other words, after a norm violation has occurred in the nuclear arena, the strict stigmatising behaviour of the audience of normals automatically takes away a reversible part of the social constitution of the state in question. This is rather different from the notion of self-image correction and/or stigma correction strategies used by states. These categories of behavioural logics operate with the assumption that deviant identities can be retracted to a previous social standing among the audience of normals. However, because nuclear violations invoke severe reactions from the audience of normals, the argumentation logic of successful reasoning of instance in the nuclear arena operates with an implicit understanding that performers of the deviant may *only* be semi-accommodated in the international community through a de-facto recognition.

This recognition comes in the long term, is heavily dependent on how the audience of normals keep interpreting and re-interpreting compliant and non-compliant acts of performers of the deviant, and whether performers of the deviant themselves are constantly able to employ reasoning of instance effectively. Simply put, effective reasoning of instance demonstrates to the audience of normals from performers of the deviant what Backman (1985: 264) states as a "threat of attribution of negatively

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[104] In a rare study, Fitzpatrick (2009) has contemplated the after-effects of the breaking of nuclear norms pertaining to non-use, non-proliferation, and deterrence.

[105] I make the point in Chapter 2 that bridging the perception gap in entirety would incur severe ideational and/or material compromises from the out-group and as well as the in-group.

valued identity characteristics." In sum, post norm violations, by using reasoning of instance performers of the deviant try to convey to the audience of normals that they care for their social standing so as to follow a cautionary approach to reduce social differences. Furthermore, performers of the deviant exhibit that the deviant position attributed to them is ontologically anxiety inducing and socially uncomfortable in the long run.

3.4. Using Reasoning of Instance on the Audience of Normals

While this chapter has looked at how reasoning of instance is used by performers of the deviant to justify norm violations and partially amend their social identity – specifically in the nuclear domain – this section looks at the effects and social dynamics that reasoning of instance has on the audience of normals. It also enquires how audience of normals are bound together by common normative understandings, the ways in which performers of the deviant communicate to the audience of normals as being in partial fulfilment of these normative commitments for being (re)accommodated in the international order, and how performers of the deviant emerge as successful norm innovators in the process.

In understanding the interpretive nature of how the audience of normals perceive deviance and stigma, Goffman (1963: 49-50) states that "[w]e normals develop conceptions, whether objectively grounded or not, as to the sphere of life activity for which an individual's particular stigma primarily disqualifies him." He also makes the point that every in-group consists of "spokesmen" (112) which anthropomorphically demonstrates the unequal and hierarchical arrangement of states having varying power capacities. In very similar terms, Reus-Smit (1997: 578) puts forth the logic that the key reason as to why ideas in the international system become prevalent is "not because they are the only conceptions […] but because, in a narrow sense, they are embraced by the dominant coalition of states." While Goffman (1963)'s notion of the in-group spokesmen runs the risk of downplaying the normative values that other identities bring to that particular group, Fearon (1999: 15) highlights how homogenising identities essentially does not devalue the constructivist social assumption that "social categories change over time and are historically contingent."[106] Borrowing from Collier and Mahon (1993), Winston (2018: 647) has expressed a collective and an intersubjective social category in terms of a "norm cluster" which "is a bounded collection of interrelated specific problems, values, and behaviors that are understood to be similar enough that their adopters form a family group."

Therefore, the audience of normals form a norm cluster which are opposed to the violation of the same nuclear norms of non-use, non-proliferation, and deterrence that originate from the NPT

[106] The social category that I refer to here is the audience of normals, see Lebow (2016), who makes a contradictory point in arguing that a single actor in itself may have multiple identities whose relative importance may change over time.

entering into force in 1970.[107] Opposition to these norms are thwarted through Rogstad's (2022: 2) conceptualisations of "diffused stigma" (promoted through a range of established norms and institutional networks) as well as "direct stigma" (a direct social transaction between the norm-maker and the norm-taker).[108] Also, the international community as a whole − coming to a consensus about the language, implementation, and functioning of the NPT – is the result of distinct agentic and structural influences and considerations, prominently understood as *unfused diffusion* among states (Betts and Orchard, 2014; Checkel, 1997; Risse and Sikkink, 1999).[109] From the perspective of the audience of normals, nuclear non-compliance interferes with this complex and underlying historical process of unfused diffusion of nuclear norms that culminated into the NPT. Secondly, non-compliance hinders the collective social interpretation of the audience of normals in terms of their assumptions of reality, system of normative values, and how these assumptions and values help constitute interactions in nuclear governance. The important point of difference between any form of contestation and reasoning of instance is that, on the one hand, contestation can be broadly seen by the audience of normals as a deliberate involvement with the "range of social practices which discursively [and as well as intentionally] express disapproval of [the validity and/or application of] norms" (Wiener, 2014: 1). On the other, contestation through reasoning of instance is primarily concerned with partially reaffirming the audience of normal's intersubjective values, commitments, and demonstrating the need to be socially acceptable, albeit with a de-facto status.

Just like in the case of performers of the deviant, reasoning of instance offers the audience of normals to enter discussions concerning prevailing norms and re-interpret the identity and intention of the former, post norm violation. Yet, the utility and/or intent of the performer of the deviant(s) may change over time due to agentic and structural considerations. This process is not free from how the audience of normals interpret the deviant state's social constitution in the international community. In the nuclear arena, the NPT lays down a very distinct set of obligations for NWSs and NNWSs with an overarching aim "to make every effort to avert the danger of …a [nuclear] war and … [b]elieving that the proliferation of nuclear weapons would seriously enhance the danger of nuclear war" (United Nations Archives, 1968). However, any NNWS proliferating and endangering these obligations would be immediately treated as engaging in utility maximisation in the first instance by the audience of normals, irrespective of the justifications and/or explanations the performer of the deviant in question provides. Using reasoning instance against a collective social category such as the audience of normals may not only prove ineffective and further risk the performer of the deviant not being heard

[107] See also Winston (2018: 650-652).

[108] Direct stigma would refer to sanctions and condemnations from individual states imposed on India by virtue of the latter's deviant nuclear behaviour. Diffused stigma would refer to the usage of institutions like the NSG and the United Nations to curb India's nuclear ambitions. Empirical evidences pertaining to both the typologies of stigma imposition in the Indian nuclear case have been highlighted in Chapter 1.

[109] Unfused diffusion "assumes that the processes of reaching international agreement on norms and the processes of actually implementing them are subject to different influences from different actors" (Winston 2018: 649).

from the subaltern stigma position. It could also potentially strengthen the in-group's resolve to continue maintaining sanctions and strict condemnations against the former. In order to overcome this, the performer of the deviant could i) use reasoning of instance with the spokesmen of the in-group for a gradual seeping down of the deviant's social accommodation in the international hierarchy, or ii) specifically find a constituent actor within the audience of normals whose agency and background learnings show some social congruity with that of the performer of the deviant and then use reasoning of instance as a method of argumentation with that constituent actor.

Scholars – often grouped as the first and second wave of norms researchers − have extensively focussed on a number of norm diffusion models (Cortell and Davis Jr., 2000; Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998; Florini, 1996; Sandholtz, 2008; Wiener and Puetter, 2009).[110] In the specific domain of human rights violations, Risse and Sikkink (1999: 28) make the point that when norm violating governments enter into argumentation with their critics, the former is often pulled into making further concessions and enter into a process of "self-entrapment." In looking at global governance, Florini (1996: 375) argues in the context of norm entrepreneurship that "[n]orms held by powerful actors simply have many more opportunities to reproduce through the greater number of opportunities afforded to powerful states to persuade others of the rightness of their views." Unlike norm entrepreneurship and with lesser social capacity of persuasion that deviant states have access to, norm innovation can essentially contest existing norms as well as consequently change norms. However, this change may not be persuasive enough for other states to undertake for the fear of stigmatisation practises from the normals.

Studies often miss out in adequately looking at the role of performers of the deviant being norm innovators. Therefore, when a performer of the deviant uses reasoning of instance successfully for its own social accommodation in the international hierarchy, it becomes a norm innovator in the process. Also, after the hegemonic power(s) within the audience of normals recognise a performer of the deviant through a de-facto status for partial norm compliance after the latter's initial violation(s), what we observe is the flexibility and interpretive nature of norms.[111] In very similar terms, Hoffmann (2010: 11) states that studies of compliance and contestation allow "norms themselves to change and explor[e] the conditions under which norms will elicit conformance – but they do so in different ways."[112]

The performer of the deviant would initially use reasoning of instance to highlight the commonalities

[110] In Chapter 1, I have briefly characterised what these waves of norms research are and how they differ from one another.
[111] On the flexibility of norms, see for example, Hoffmann (2005); Lantis (2016); Bloomfield and Scott (2017).
[112] Here, one of the different ways of extracting momentary norm conformity from the performer of the deviant by the audience of normal is through recognising the performer of the deviant's social standing via a de-facto status. However, as I note in Chapter 2, there is a perpetual sense of anxiety in the relationship between the performer of the deviant and the audience of normal as the former may again resort to norm violation(s).

between itself and a constituent actor from the audience of normals. These commonalities are understood by Wiener and Puetter (2009: 6) as "normative baggage" referring to "[i]ndividual [e]xpectations, [e]xperience, [and] [b]ackground knowledge."[113] Apart from differences relating to interpretations of the NPT, common normative baggage could refer to similar interpretations of human rights norms, highlighting commitments to democratic values of liberalism and free and fair elections, taking proactive steps to fight global terrorism, and/or sharing common sentiments of ambivalence against a rival state. Once a theme of common normative baggage has been identified, efforts would be made by the performer of the deviant to use this theme in reducing the social distinctiveness between itself and the constituent actor by constantly harping on the mutual responsibilities they share as members of the international community. This is rather different from how Wunderlich (2013: 34-35) defines revolutionary norm entrepreneurs as deviant states which showcase "strong opposition to the prevalent normative order, aiming at overthrow of the existing system and the establishment of a new order that clearly defines boundaries separating it from the overthrown order." Contrarily, performers of the deviant may aim to be accommodated within the existing order and could rely on the constituent actor to bring about this accommodation by sharing the newly acquired information on reduced social distinctiveness with other members of the audience of normals.[114]

However, it may happen that the constituent actor(s) with whom the deviant state identifies and successfully uses reasoning of instance in sharing the identified common normative baggage, are the spokesmen of the in-group. In such a case, accommodation of the performer of the deviant is much quicker because of the higher social standing of the spokesman in the international hierarchy and wielding a higher intersubjective capacity for "argumentatively communicated ideas ... [being] … conducive to changes in substantial interests and consensus" (Panke, 2006: 316). Nonetheless, the performer of the deviant retains the label of being the norm innovator despite initially being identified as a norm violator and displaying non-conformity to existing norms; they remain innovators in initiating ideas of social change to (re) accommodate their (deviant) identities in the international system.

3.5. Conclusion

While the previous chapter has conceptualised the stigma position and developed a novel typology of stigma redaction as a way for stigmatised identities to manage their stigma in the nuclear domain, this chapter builds on this theoretical framework by introducing the concept of reasoning of instance. This

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[113] See also Adler (2009).

[114] A norm change may or may not correspond to the change of the entire normative order. In the case of the NPT, recognising a state's possession of nuclear weapons does not necessarily translate to the state in question becoming an NWS. The state still remains in violation of the NPT, would continue facing opposition in some quarters of the international community for *illegal* nuclear possession, and find gaining membership in related institutions as extremely difficult.

is done not by understanding political psychology, IPS, and constructivist norms as individual epistemologies but rather as interactive theoretical frameworks that inform identity change and behaviour in the realm of nuclear governance. To do so, this chapter has i) understood how language and rhetoric is used by performers of the deviant to influence the audience of normals about the intended identity projections of the former, ii) examined deviant states using reasoning of instance to minimise their social distinctiveness from the audience of normals as negative identity perceptions remain uncomfortable to performers of the deviant in the long run, and iii) shed light on the cohesiveness of the audience of normals and how performers of the deviant may emerge as norm innovators by gaining a de-facto status from the former.

Before Chapter 4 forms the methodological section of this thesis, this chapter completes its theoretical foundation. The first section looked at how performers of the deviant occupying the subaltern stigma position employ stigma redaction as a stigma management typology. To do so, this section developed the conceptualisation of reasoning of instance. Reasoning of instance focusses on a situational analysis of whether the act of instant is normatively compliant, is interlinked to past behavioural referents, and requires a dynamic approach to communication and justification. Nonetheless, while using reasoning of instance in the subaltern stigma position, deviant states still share an unequal power relationship with the audience of normals. This section also argued that when an act is rendered compliant to existing nuclear norms, reasoning of instance is used by performers of the deviant to continuously stress on the undertaken compliance in international forums as honouring normative (nuclear) commitments. Furthermore, deviants also try to use this compliance as a means of memory correction with the audience of normals against engaging in incongruent behaviour in the past. Contrarily, in order to make non-compliant behaviour more socially presentable, performers of the deviant argue that the undertaken non-compliance is an exception and/or also refer to previous (nuclear) commitments that they had adhered to. In doing so, deviants attempt to weaken the linkage of being perceived as black boxes and perpetually engaging in social incongruence. Finally, the first section explained that while reasoning of instance is used dynamically and is depended on the act of the instant, the ambivalent relationship between the audience of normals and the performer of the deviant persists. This is because deviant performers may again disrupt the normative space by engaging in recalcitrant behaviour.

The second section highlighted that while strategic goals may be pursued by states, the nature of social interactions often make the fixity of meanings on these revisionist ambitions hard to interpret. As a result, deviant states run the risk of easily being treated as utility maximisers that are perpetually engaged in undertaken incongruent social behaviour. To avoid falling into this audience perception, reasoning of instance is undertaken with caution and used as a defensive strategy of justification. This remains contrary to deviance being undertaken and worn as a badge of honour. Furthermore, this section pointed to how performers of the deviant may use reasoning of instance to not only enter

discussions with the audience of normals, but also reduce their social distinctiveness from the latter. If performers of the deviant are gradually able to extract weak and momentary trust from the audience of normals, any form of recognition of normative identity rendered out to the deviants from the normals is implicit and/or de-facto. Also, by using reasoning of instance, performers of the deviant convey that their social standing its ontologically important to the audience of normals.

The third section identified that common normative baggage in terms of learning, common historical experiences, and other agentic and structural influences make up the *stickiness* of the audience of normals. Because of this stickiness, normals remain collectively opposed to non-compliant nuclear behaviour from performers of the deviant. This section also argued that when performers of the deviant pose challenges to (nuclear) norms, it hinders the normals' collective and shared interpretation of values and belief systems. However, in order to partially overcome this hinderance, this section pointed to performers of the deviant using reasoning of instance to persuade members of the in-group for a gradual de-facto accommodation of the former in nuclear governance. This persuasion can be done in two ways. Firstly, performers of the deviant could use reasoning of instance with any member of the in-group to highlight their mutual *commonness* in the conduct of domestic and/or foreign affairs. Secondly, the same could be done by specifically targeting a key actor − in terms of the held material and social status − within the in-group. In this case, de-facto accommodation of the deviant state in question is far quicker due to the leveraging power the key actor exercises within the normals. Very importantly, this section pointed out that if the performer of the deviant finally succeeds in changing the identity perception of the normals in either case, the deviant emerges as a successful norm innovator in the process.

After Chapters 2 and 3 have built the theoretical framework of this thesis in the broader terms of characterising the stigma position, conceptualising a new typology of stigmatised identities managing their stigma, and developing a novel way in looking at how performers of the deviant use language to gain a de-facto status of recognition in the nuclear domain from the audience of normals, Chapter 4 forms the methodological section of this thesis. Therefore, it justifies the usage of an interactionist approach under the larger ambit of an interpretive methodology for the thesis and spells out the why and how of using Critical Discourse Analysis on archival sources for the later development of its empirical sections.

Chapter 4| Methodology and Methods

4.1. Introduction

"……[W]hen you cannot measure it, when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meagre and unsatisfactory kind; it may be the beginning of knowledge, but you have scarcely, in your thoughts, advanced to the stage of science, whatever the matter may be" (Thomson, 1889).

Contrary to this quote from William Thomson – a famous mathematician and engineer in the 19th century and also later given the title of the 1st Baron of Kelvin – this chapter moves beyond quantifying phenomenon in international politics in generating universal laws and prediction models. Rather, it spells out the epistemological and methodological choices this thesis makes in terms of data collection and its interpretation in the forthcoming chapters. More specifically, this chapter aims to: i) make a case for choosing the empirical case study of India's nuclear relationship with the United States within the thesis' analytical timeframe, ii) design a novel methodological framework that critically engages with the fluidity of state identities in social interactions in global governance, iii) identify the sources and sites of data collection and also spell out ethical hinderances and COVID-19 disruptions faced in the process, iv) the interpretive lens that was employed in studying the identified data sources, and v) assess the overall robustness and credibility of this thesis' research design.

Having already developed the literature review and theoretical framework of this thesis in the preceding chapters, Chapter 4 reasons the methodological choices this thesis makes, and the practicalities involved in the process of data gathering and its interpretation, especially relevant during the times of the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, it also answers the following set of pertinent questions in moving this thesis forward: Why is the empirical case of India's nuclear relationship with the United States within the chosen timeframe important to study? What are the methodological toolkits along with the primary and secondary sources of analyses being employed to study this case? How are the existing discussions on research methodologies in the social sciences being implemented, both practically and epistemologically? In times of the COVID-19 pandemic, how has the research project adapted to the challenges of physical barriers? What are the ethical discussions that this project considers for data gathering and its interpretation? How does the project make a case for its robustness and credibility? To answer these questions, this chapter has been divided into six sections.

The first section justifies the choice of this project's empirical case along with observing key instances within the thesis' historical timeline. It recognises the bias of existing explanations in looking at the change in the India-US nuclear relationship in terms of realpolitik. In stressing on the need for a plurality of explanations for examining the importance of the India-US nuclear relationship within the set historical timeframe, this section makes a case for itself in moving beyond materialistic understandings of international politics. Furthermore, in order to develop a more focussed analysis for

studying key instances within the chosen historical timeframe, it sets out a roadmap for dividing the studied historical timeframe into two comparable and inter-relatable components for the forthcoming chapters of this project.

In recognising the fluid and unfixed nature of identities and meaning making processes in global governance, the second section reasons the use of an interpretive methodology under an overarching approach to critical constructivism. Contrary to reducing the unpredictability of state behaviour into causal variables, interpretation of identified archival documents is guided by abductive reasoning and reflexivity. This has allowed the researcher to constantly question his own research assumptions, make derived conclusions only probable, be open to further discussions, and acknowledge how similar conclusions can be attained using other methodological toolkits.

The third section moves into the more specifics of data collection by looking at archives as sites of knowledge production. Therefore, it identifies the key archival sites that house the documents of analyses to be studied for this project and undertakes appropriate classification of primary and secondary sources of analyses. Furthermore, this section not only engages with the potential ethical dilemmas faced in using an archival method of data collection, but also discusses how the researcher has addressed these issues. With physical restrictions surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, the subsection under the third section discusses how data collection from the identified archival sites was conducted remotely.

After identifying primary and secondary sources of analyses, the fourth section looks at how these data sources would be analysed and interpreted. In doing so, this section argues that the use of Critical Discourse Analysis to study archival document would remain particularly suitable for the inter-disciplinary nature of this thesis. Nonetheless, it also recognises the limitations of using CDA on primary and secondary sources of analyses and suggests interactionism as an entry point for undertaking CDA on archival documents.

The fifth section develops a hunch, prior to interpretation and analyses in the forthcoming chapters. It also implements the epistemological and methodological discussions from the previous sections in studying primary and secondary sources of analyses. In doing so, and combining interactionism with CDA, this section identifies the dominant themes to be examined under the main research question and develops distinct coding categories in the NVivo data management software to study these themes. Furthermore, it also spells out how these coding categories serve as a guide in interpreting relevant documents and representing these instances of the India-US nuclear relationship in a historical and chronological narrative in the next two chapters.

The sixth section makes the case for this project's robustness and credibility, despite the cancelled fieldwork due to COVID-19. This includes explicitly spelling out the assumptions and research design

of the thesis and undertaking an informed and critical approach to the existing literature and developing its theoretical framework. Also, the underlying notion of reflexivity of this project has constantly made the researcher engage with and question existing biases in the process of knowledge production. The method of triangulation in making aspects of theory, evidence, and interpretation of this research project consistent to each other, further makes a case for this thesis' robustness and credibility.

4.2. Choice of a Single Case Study and Instances Within a Historical Timeline

This dissertation follows a single case study approach using a historical analysis that observes the gradual change of India's nuclear relationship with the United Sates from 1974 to 2008. George and Bennett (2005: 18) define case study as "a well-defined aspect of a historical episode that the investigator selects for analysis, rather than a historical event itself." In understanding the India-US nuclear relationship, the defined timeframe of 1974 to 2008, signposts the year of India's first nuclear test as being a non-signatory to the NPT to the year where the US *exceptionally* recognised India's nuclear programme with a 123 Agreement, in spite of the latter still being a holdout state to the NPT. Furthermore, this thesis employs a *complex* narrative that makes an "appeal to regularities in order to support specific factors in the narrative" (Currie, 2014 :1171) within and beyond the existing studies on Indian foreign and nuclear policy. In doing so, and by studying pertinent instances within a historical timeframe, this thesis observes the change of the Indian nuclear identity from being sanctioned by the US, to gradually gaining a de-facto US recognition of its nuclear programme. The existing narratives that focus on India-US cooperation often express the change in their bi-lateral ties in terms of India's partial integration into the global nuclear order, facilitation of bi-lateral economic gains, the usage of India as an effective counter-balance by the US against China, and the recognition of India's non-proliferation track record (Bhatia, 2013; Ganguly and Mistry, 2006; Leveringhaus and Sullivan de Estrada; 2018; Pant and Biswas, 2018; Perkovich, 2005).

Also parallel to such narratives dominantly featuring in the writings on Indian foreign policy, Ramakrishnan (2013: 155) has identified (rather problematically) that "Indian writings on normative International Relations (IR) theory are almost invisible [and] the normative realm of foreign policy is still Nehruvian in content." In employing a complex narrative of important instances within a historical timeframe that investigates the India-US nuclear relationship, this thesis particularly focusses on the ideational factors of this relationship. This includes understanding the constructions of India's nuclear identity, theorising the treatment meted out to India by the US (along with other members of the audience of normal) post the latter's first nuclear test in 1974, and designing the typology of stigma redaction as a strategy of norm contestation and justification in explaining the Indian nuclear behaviour. However, while targeting these ideational factors as a source of explanation of the gradual India-US nuclear cooperation, the problem that is encountered is the perpetual dilemma

of selection bias in deciding which explanatory factors to foreground and/or background. Therefore, Danto (1962: 167) states that "[n]ot to have a criterion for picking out some happenings as relevant and others as irrelevant is simply not to be in a position to write history at all." In the same context, this thesis treats Indian elites as the custodians of Indian foreign policy who tabled Indian concerns with the US in various diplomatic negotiations. In doing so, it runs the risk of obfuscating the historical, political, cultural, and social processes of how the concerns of the local populous gradually found its way into more contemporary conceptualisations of India as a social agent in international politics.

In overcoming these problems of selection bias, this thesis adopts a framework of epistemic pluralism that argues "there is no single privileged way of framing an historical episode" and there could be "multiple legitimate frameworks applicable to a single historical episode" (Currie and Walsh, 2019: 13).[115] This also builds into the introductory and contributing theme of this thesis constituting the globalness of IR conversations and combining disciplinary rigueur with empirical richness.[116] The Introduction and Chapter 1 of this work has already highlighted how nuclear norms are based on an unequal and racial system of power sharing responsibilities, the problematic ways in which identities from the Global South are represented in policy and academic discourse, and the need to develop more multidisciplinary studies in understanding the India-US nuclear relationship. In stretching the importance of this study further, there are three more specific reasons for the choice of this empirical case study within its historical timeframe.

Apart from this work being a timely contribution to the growing constructivist literature on Indian foreign and nuclear policy and filling the gap of moving towards more sociological and interdisciplinary explanations, the issue of controlling nuclear proliferation and disarmament needs urgent attention (United Nations: Securing Our Common Future, 2018). Important policy suggestions that could emerge from my empirical case could not only explain how deviant states bring about an implicit recognition of their nuclear programme (in spite of being non-signatories to the NPT) but also the changes required in policy making for the nuclear socialisation of the existing holdout states in the cases of Iran and North Korea. This could include designing effective policy mechanisms to counter deviant states engaging in stigma redaction by first developing a nuclear weapons programme and then seeking its implicit recognition through argumentation logics.

Secondly, as Chapters 5 and 6 would later elucidate the ways in which India sought recognition of its nuclear programme, it would help think about more effective explanations for hegemonic states in rendering a de-facto acceptance of a non-NPT signatory India's nuclear programme. This remains particularly important in contemporary times with the US and its European allies wanting to revive

[115] For a specific analysis of explaining a single phenomenon through the usage of multiple frameworks, see for example: Campbell (1998b).
[116] See also: Acharya (2015); Fierke and Jabri (2019).

the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in halting Tehran's nuclear ambitions (Liechtenstein, 2021) and repeated North Korean missile tests (Sang-Hun, 2021).[117]

The empirical case study of this thesis also offers valuable historical knowledge that can help understand the reappearing sociological ambivalence between India and the United States in a series of current and evolving geo-political developments. The Indian purchase of the Russian made Triumph S-400 air defence system re-instated this ambivalence of whether the United States would sanction India in late 2020. R. Clarke Cooper, US State department assistant secretary for political-military affairs, "caution[ed] other U.S. partners against making major purchases of Russian defence equipment in the future that would also put them at risk of sanctions" (Haidar and Peri, 2020). In more recent times, the Biden administration along with the United Kingdom promised the sharing of sensitive technological information to help Australia build nuclear powered attack submarines or Submersible Ship Nuclear, through the newly crafted AUKUS partnership (Tewari, 2021). However, the Biden administration made it clear that this sharing of information was rather "one-off" when India could have clearly benefitted from this information (Tewari, 2021).[118] In describing Washington's perpetual lack of trust in India's diplomacy, scholars have termed this relationship as "notoriously insecure relationship" (Chacko, 2014: 334) and a "low-level equilibrium trap" (Tellis 2015: 488).

The theoretical framing of this chapter along with the contextualisation of its specific empirical instances addresses the core of New Delhi's anxiety inducing relationship with Washington through a multi-disciplinary approach in what George and Bennett (2005: 273) describe as designing "actor-specific behavioral models." Furthermore, as the thesis advances the epistemics of stigma, identity change, and normative justifications by looking at India's relationship with the US, it allows the formulation of a clearer perspective of India's nuclear concerns, informs more "appropriate ways to communicate with and influence the other actor" and addresses "faulty image [constructions through sociological binaries]….often lead[ing] to major errors in policy, avoidable catastrophes, and missed opportunities" (George and Bennett, 2005: 273).

Choosing this empirical case along with its wide historical framework from 1974 to 2008, also allows the project to analyse the social dimensions of change and question the "sameness of states…across time and space" (Fierke, 2013: 189). Studying states in international politics may run the risk of treating them as isolated units of analyses in furthering causal logics of state behaviour (Keohane, 1989; Snyder and Diesing, 1977; Waltz, 1979, 1986). Following Taylor's (1971) lead of

[117] Post Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2018, Iran significantly breaching the stockpile, heavy water, and enrichment limits of uranium as outlined under the JCPOA, that was originally negotiated under the Obama government in 2015 (Arms Control Association, 2021).
[118] Unnithan (2021) provides an overview of the current and ongoing developments in India's naval defense capabilities.

understanding the unpredictability of behaviour being influenced by a wide range of internalised social inter-subjectivities, Bevir and Rhodes (2015) argue that behaviour and belief systems cannot be reduced to intervening variables to establish causal claims and can only be studied through the interpretations of empirical evidence as behavioural indicators of specific instances.

To do so, and observe instances of India-US interactions, this thesis divides its historical timeframe into two comparable and inter-relatable components. The first timeframe comprises of instances between 1974 to 1998 that would help observe two perspectives of India's nuclear identity. This includes its treatment by the US in 1974 when India justified its nuclear test as peaceful, and that of 1998 when India declared itself as having nuclear weapons capability. Instances under the second timeframe of 1999 to 2008 enables observing the change of India's nuclear perception as a nuclear weapons state (being outside the widely shared norms of the NPT) that was successful in eventually receiving a de-facto nuclear recognition from the US. In the same context, Kingdon (2014) notes the importance of using timeframes that help in analysing the differences as well as the inter-relatedness of generating a problem, studying various policy approaches towards the identified problem, and assessing its underlying political context. However, Kingdon (2014) acknowledges that ideas do not require a fixed point of origination and can be composed of "several related elements of meaning that typically do not reach a final stage of stability or equilibrium" (Carstensen, 2011: 596). While this thesis recognises that its developed sociological and normative aspects are rather unfixed and in constant flux, Béland (2016) argues that the analysis of ideas could potentially have a long life and be more fruitful if scholars are able to justify and assess appropriate timeframes of classification.

4.3. Choice of Methodology

In recognising epistemic plurality and the importance of the fluidity of the ideas, this research project uses an *interpretive* methodology along with an underlying approach of critical constructivism. While early conceptions of ideational research evoked strong criticism from realists as being bad science that is unscientific and was rather comparable to alchemy (Carr, 1946; Morgenthau, 1947, 1948), a more strengthened ideational approach in terms of interpretivism has allowed us to denaturalize universal meanings that shape as well as constitute actions and institutions. In denouncing objectivity and laws associated with the physical world, interpretivists rather focus on an "experienced reality" (Yanow, 2006b: 12) through meaning making. Hence, Bevir (2006: 283) argues that "[w]henever we interpret an action by describing the beliefs of the actor, we interpret the actor's interpretation of the world, for their beliefs are, of course, an interpretation of the world."

Furthermore, interpretivists also question the parsimonious nature of knowledge production associated with a linear process of identifying a research problem, producing a hypothesis, devising a research method, collecting evidence to test the hypothesis, and drawing conclusions through evidence analysis (Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2002). Rather, they develop a "hunch" that is grounded in prior studies

and observations, and the researcher is open to coming across new elements that challenges their loosely formed expectations while being in an identified study setting (Yanow and Schwartz-Shea, 2006: xvi). This thesis has performed an extensive literature review on the relevant scholarly themes, developed a novel conceptualisation on the position of stigma and states using a new typology of stigma identity management, and further expanded on how states use this stigma management technique. In doing so, the project recognises that using typologies to streamline and study identity behaviour may indeed be problematic. It also remains cognisant to the notion that the archival documents this project comes across may pose tensions to its designed theoretical framework. These could include discovering intergovernmental exchanges that could potentially de-rail the meaning making processes that this project has developed in the previous chapters, shed light on other missed sociological factors that constitute India's stigmatised nuclear identity, and/or open up newer perspectives through the researcher's interpretation of diplomatic language by which India was able to overcome some aspects of its imposed stigma.

As already discussed, this thesis exercises interpretive flexibility in looking at how language in key instances aids in dynamic social constructions of identity and behaviour and also examines the contexts of these interaction through archival research. Doing so, remains contrary to developing objective behavioural laws of state interactions. Furthermore, unlike what Cox (1981: 126) identifies as "divid[ing] up the seamless web of the real social world into separate spheres" or "conventional cutting up of reality", states are treated as social agents that interact with each other having individualistic "normative baggage[s]" (Wiener, 2007: 55) derived from a colossal range of historical, cultural, and economic experiences.[119]

In this web of social interactions and vast intersubjectivities, meaning making is in constant motion and therefore establishing causality not only becomes challenging, but also unfeasible. Contextualising this to the India-US nuclear case would include theorising the racial treatment of India's nuclear identity by the US through IPS and IR approaches, identifying India's hesitation to weaponise its nuclear programme through various disciplinary and interdisciplinary discussions on identity politics, and/or developing a multitude of interpretations on India's call to disarmament and yet choosing not to forego its nuclear weapons programme.

As a result, what one is rather left with are inextricable mix of observations, perceptions, and facts (Fay, 1996) or what Yanow and Schwartz-Shea (2006a: 212) refer to as fascinating "tales of analysis." Wagennar (2015: 36) argues that it is rather the "researcher's aim is to unearth the larger configurations of ideas, practices, artifacts, and doctrines that shape the texture of social reality as we recognize and experience it." Unlike the usage of deduction that follow from generalised and

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[119] On further applications of how states interact with each other through their normative baggage, see for example, Puetter and Wiener (2007); Wiener (2008).

universal truth statements, or induction that tries to develop rigid and parsimonious conclusions, this research employs *abductive reasoning* in making its conclusions rather probable and open to further scholarly and policy discussions.[120] Peirce (1965), often known as one of the earliest presenters of the notion of abductive reasoning, argues that its conclusions are often presented as conjecture through the identification of particular tokens of evidence. In very similar terms, Walton (2005: 36) argues that the commitment to an abductive proposition could be "retracted or altered at some future point … [whereby the] … acceptance of a proposition can be … [contradicted] …, leading to its 'defeat,' or the new evidence may yield additional reasons for its acceptance."

By using abductive reasoning this thesis identifies specific behavioural indicators, themes, categories, words, phrases, and other lexical elements in the archival documents, which stem from the designed theoretical framework in Chapters 2 and 3.[121] Secondly, abductive reasoning also enables observing the operationalisation of this project's developed conceptual understandings by looking at *meaning making processes at work* relating to change, identity, and political rhetoric in archival documents. [122] Finally, in linking concepts to its interpretation from archives and arriving at conclusions of probability, this thesis contributes to the openness of ongoing conversations in international politics and facilitates building of future research projects.

Conclusion making also entails an implicit notion of constantly questioning how knowledge claims are arrived at and one's own position in making them. Yanow (1997: 175) terms this position of reflection or reflexivity as "passionate humility" that takes into consideration "the passionate conviction that we are right, coupled with the possibility that we might be wrong." This would include scientifically enquiring as to whether sociological dynamics of stigmatisation and norms contestation are the only factors that led to India's change in nuclear identity. Other questions could also be asked, for example: Are there any other categories of stigma management that India used in gradually moving towards nuclear acceptance? How can these categories be thought of or designed? What are the other ways in which stigma redaction can be observed when applied to other states wanting a de-facto nuclear recognition? How does one move away from non-essentialising the kind of norm contestation and political rhetoric that has been associated with stigma redaction? Are there any other implicit and hidden observations that need to be made more explicit while discussing stigma redaction and/or reasoning of instance? Does assigning the subaltern position to India's pursuit of responsible nuclear identity downplay other heuristic and discursive elements of India's agency in the theoretical

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[120] For discussions that relate to deductive and inductive reasoning in the social sciences and international politics, see: Eun (2012); George and Bennett (2005); King et al. (1994); Lebow and Lichbach (2007).

[121] The choice for specific identifiers and reasoning for similar patterns and anomalies follow in the later sections of this chapter.

[122] Much of the discussion on concept formation in the social sciences relies on designing verifiable criteria of defining universally good social science practices rather than elaborating on the context of its usage. See, for example, Olshewsky (1969); Gerring (1999); Popper (1976). These differences have often resulted in what Gage (1989: 8) traces out as "paradigm wars" of quantitative-qualitative-interpretive ways of doing research.

approach of anthropomorphising states as social agents?

Furthermore, reflexivity also enables thinking about other ways in arriving at the same or different set of conclusions with a set or a combination of different methodological toolkits. For instance, using a quantitative form of analysis would allow the researcher to assign numerical values to the constitutive parameters of India's global nuclear perception. One could then move to performing regression analysis to understand its relationship variability with the United States and develop models that predict how India would behave with its new nuclear identity in contemporary times. Therefore, reflexivity endorses a healthy scepticism in all aspects of a research project that is holistic in nature and requires the researcher to revisit their predispositions in not falling prone to research designs that "represent ... no one's [subject of analysis] reality" (Lincoln and Guba, 1985: 315).

4.4. Data Sources and Ethical Considerations

Chapters 5 and 6 of this project develop India's positionality in relation to the United States and discusses how India eventually brought about its de-facto nuclear recognition from the United States through stigma redaction and reasoning of instance. To methodologically look at the construction of India's nuclear identity through these interactions, archival sources were studied. The documents of analyses (initially) identified for examination are housed in the Press Information Bureau, National Archives of India, and The Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, all located within few kilometres from each other in New Delhi. Moore et al. (2017: 3) state that "archival research is concerned with a collection of documents – texts of different kinds, including but not confined to words on paper, visual materials or physical objects; and it involves analysing and interpreting these so as to explore a particular topic or question or concern."[123] In theorising the epistemology of archival research, Stoler's (2002: 90) influential work understands archives as "not as sites of knowledge retrieval but of knowledge production, as monuments of states as well as sites of state ethnography."[124]

In using abductive reasoning for an agent-based analysis of states, the units of observation in the identified sites of knowledge production are divided into primary and secondary sources of analyses. The primary sources of empirical analyses pertain to announcements from Indian and US decision makers, press releases from the Indian Government, diplomatic exchanges between Indian and US political elites, and general addresses from key governmental representatives from India and the US on several international and local institutions which include the IAEA, UN General Assembly, UNSC, gatherings between Non-Aligned countries, parliamentary proceedings, and speeches of political elites in various educational institutes. Also, due to the limitations of funding and time to travel to the

[123] There remains a rich literature on conducting archival study for a multitude of practices, including social, political, economic, cultural, anthropological, and ethnographical. For some of the key works on conducting archival study, which by no means is exhaustive, see Derrida (1998); Kirsch and Rohan (2008); Steedman (2001); Tamboukou (2003).
[124] See also Mignolo (2002).

US along with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, documents were browsed online from the Library of Congress, The White House Archives, US Department of State, and the US Presidential Archives. Studying language in all these forms of communication is a more direct method in observing the meanings embedded in social interactions between both sides. Secondary sources are intended to fill the research gaps that arise in the process. These include more indirect forms of communication such as media reports from CNN, The Economic Times, The New York Times and The Times of India, policy papers from The Stockholm Peace Research Institute and the Federation of American Scientists, and academic works in terms of monographs, journals and edited books.

The following tables further clarify the source types, group sources based on where they are endemic to, discuss the number of times each source category has been cited, and the frequency of appearance.

Source Type	India based	US based	Others	Total cited
Online manuscripts and archival sources	Abhilekh Patal, Archive of the Prime Minister's Office: Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs: Government of India, Embassy of India: USA, National Archives of India, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Press Information Bureau, Parliament of India: Lok Sabha Digital Library	John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum Archives, National Archives and Records Administration, Nuclear Weapon Archive, The Library of Congress, The White House Archives, U.S. Department of State Archives	Atomic Archive, United Nations Archives	120

Table 1.0: Primary sources (Online manuscripts and archival sources)

Type of source	Total cited
Monographs and individual chapters	209
Journal Articles	291

Table 1.1: Secondary Sources (Books and academic journals)

Type of source	India based	US based	Others	Total cited
Working papers and policy paper prescriptions	Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, Observer Research Foundation	American Foreign Service, Arizona Legal Studies Discussion Paper, Arms Control Association, Brookings Institute, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Central Intelligence Agency, Council on Foreign Relations, Federation of American Scientists, Harvard Kennedy School. Mill	Copenhagen Peace Research Institute, European University Institute, Institut Francais des Relations Internationales, International Atomic Energy Agency, International Studies Association, National University of Singapore, Potsdam Research Group, S. Rajaratnam	64

		Center, Standford University, The National Bureau of Asian Research, United Nations, US Congressional Research Service, Wilson Center	School of International Studies, The Institute for Security and Development Policy, The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, World Bank, World Health Organisation,	

Table 1.2: Secondary Sources (Working papers and policy paper prescriptions)

Type of source	India based	US based	Others	Total cited
Commentaries, opinion pieces, and news articles	Deccan Herald, India Today, National Hearld, Scroll, The Economic Times, The Hindu, The Hindustan Times, The Times of India	CNBC, CNN, Los Angeles Times, National Public Radio, Politico, The Diplomat, The National Interest, The New York Times, The Washington Post, World Socialist Website	BBC, Duck of Minerva, E-International Relations, Eurasia Review, Korean Central News Agency, Middle East Monitor, Reuters, Sky News, The Guardian	62

Table 1.3: Secondary Sources (Commentaries, opinion pieces, and news articles)

Type of source	Frequency	Weighing percentage (correct to 2 decimal points)
Monographs and individual chapters	209	28.01%
Journal articles	291	39.00%
Online manuscripts and archival sources	120	16.08%
Working papers and policy paper prescriptions	64	8.57%
Commentaries, opinion pieces, and news articles	62	8.31%
Total	**746**	

Table 1.4: Overview of Sources

For interpreting these sources, Merttens (2004: 27) has written "An interpretation, to be useful or sensible, rests upon a notion of faithfulness to the text." Along with grappling with the intended meaning in the primary and secondary sources of analyses, interpretation also includes a "sensitivity of context" that involves "following through a complex of meaning, setting, and action as it develops

in a specific time and place" (Adcock, 2006: 61). Therefore, the researcher has immersed himself in the studied sources to understand the context and language of interactions and judge its relevance to the main research question. Furthermore, this project remains cognisant of the notion that any form of recorded events cannot be a "mirror of nature" but only an interpretation of it (Rorty 1979: 126).

Apart from obtaining the necessary ethical clearance and following COVID-19 guidelines to conduct archival research, as laid down by King's College London, the relevant instructions for researchers to conduct archival research were judiciously followed (NAI, n.d.; NMML, n.d.(a)). Furthermore, being an Indian by nationality and having immersed oneself in the history of India's colonial struggle, it remained imperative that I question how I used archival sources and to what purpose. Therefore, rather than advancing emancipatory causes of justifying Indian foreign policy choices on the global stage, I have remained cognisant of the epistemological, ontological, and methodological aims of this project. Tales of analysis through a historical and pluralist framework were examined and interpreted in context to the developed theoretical and empirical questions that this project asks and seeks to answer.

As the archives from where relevant documents were obtained are funded and maintained by the Indian government, underlying ethical questions that were asked included "Who included this document in the archival record, and why? Why is this document included in this location? Who created this document originally and for what purpose/audience?" (Tirabassi, 2010: 174). Other questions also addressed how choices were made as to what documents should be preserved and why, the way these documents were kept and arranged, and as to whether they made a conscious attempt to draw the researcher in citing and including these sources in their own research. This could be particularly problematic as the resultant publication could decrease the overall scholarly merit of systematic scientific enquiry and unconsciously justify and further governmental political agendas.

Another point relates to the security relating to the sensitivity of archival information that a researcher may come across, during the process of analysis as well as the ethical challenges relating to the final publication result. Wood (2006) warns researchers of the political implications if the sensitivity of the data is compromised and falls into wrong hands. Rather than storing any scanned copies of archival documents on the laptop or portable storage devices, these were stored in an e-cloud, maintained, and protected by King's College London. Secondly, as this project deals with state interactions at the structural level, I came across several important historical figures in the context of India and the United States. Therefore, related ethical questions that were considered included "[s]hould reputational protections exist for the dead?" (Rösler, 2009: 154) and "[h]ow long should records containing personal information be protected from public disclosure" (MacNeil, 1992: 115). In answering both these questions, this thesis employs Smolensky's (2009) *time principle* in arguing that the longer time passes, the less likely will matters of security and sensitivity relate to the process of

declassification.

Finally, through the process of reflexivity, I have constantly grappled with the perennial historical and scholarly debate of having the responsibility of informing the society versus maintaining the privacy associated with the documents of analyses. Also, determining the copyright status of materials that I found in the archives was an ethical issue that I had to persistently work with.

4.4.1. Implications of COVID-19 on Data Collection

This project was originally conceived in 2019 for obtaining a PhD in War Studies degree at King's College London. The archival research of this project was scheduled to take place in New Delhi during the third year of doctoral study. As already stated previously, the identified places of doing archival research included The Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, National Archives of India, and the Press Information Bureau. Also, the months of conducting the entire archival research in New Delhi was scheduled to take place between February 2022 to April 2022. Furthermore, before the upgrade/mini-viva for the examination was conducted in November 2021 for conferring the status of a full-time and advanced PhD candidate, necessary ethical clearance for conducting archival study was also obtained from King's College London.

In November 2019, the first case of COVID-19 was detected in the Wuhan city of People's Republic of China and by early March 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the disease as a global pandemic (Listings of WHO's response to COVID-19, 2020). With world-wide sweeping restrictions being immediately introduced on physical interactions and international travel to reduce disease transmission, I had estimated that the situation would soon be under control before the commencement of my archival study in February 2022. However, by the beginning of 2022, COVID-19 had caused a total cumulative global death toll of 5.5 million deaths (WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard, n.d.) as research and development organisations around the world rushed to develop and administer vaccines to reduce morality rates (Gilbert and Green, 2021). More particularly, the Omicron variant of the COVID-19 virus, albeit causing milder medical symptoms, was risked having more mutations along with reducing the potency of ongoing vaccination efforts (Zimmer et al., 2022).

This resulted in the second series of major restrictions on physical interactions and international travel across the world being brought back in late December 2021 (Mehta, 2021). New Delhi, the city of conducting the project's archival work, was recording more than 13.5 thousand cases a day with an increased positivity rate of 23.86%, by the end of January 2022 (The Hindustan Times, 2022). In enquiring through email and phone call, it was conveyed to me that The Nehru Memorial Museum and Library was closed till further notice and the National Archives of India (along with its wing of the Press Information Bureau), was only allowing restricted access for only three hours for just six days in an entire month for a single researcher. In considering the COVID-19 infection rates, the

restrictions put in place, the overall costs of travelling to and from Delhi each month via flight, and further expenditure on accommodation and other costs made conducting the archival study unfeasible.

However, in consultation with the supervisors of this project, remote measures of collecting data were employed to design the chapters on interpretation and moving the thesis towards its final completion. To do so, the website of Abhilekh Patal, an initiative of the National Archives of India, was used to remotely access the relevant documents (albeit, by no means exhaustive) available online (Abhilekh Patal, n.d.). On the website, this was done by first refining the search using the time-period of 1974 to 2008, selecting the department and branch as *External Affairs*, and browsing the documents under the *Americas* category.[125] In the case of conducting remote archival study at The Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, the catalogue for the list of holdings in its repository was browsed online (NMML, n.d.(b)). Under the timeline of the thesis, the files of interest pertained to Prime Ministers of India, Foreign Ministers of India, Foreign Secretaries of India, Principal Secretaries to the Prime Minister of India, Chairpersons of the Atomic Energy Commission of India, National Security Advisors, and Indian Ambassadors to the United States. Email requisitions for scanning these documents were sent to Ms. Jyoti Luthra, Research Associate in the Reading Room (Manuscripts Section). While Ms. Jyoti Luthra replied promptly to all email requisitions and was immensely helpful in digitalising and emailing back most of the requested documents, some documents under the requested categories were classified, unavailable to be sent online, unsorted, uncatalogued, or could only be sent partially. These included collections pertaining to Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, Karan Singh, Kocheril Raman Narayana, Vishwanath Pratap Singh, Abid Hussain, Jyotindra Nath Dixit, and Homi Sethna. Hence, to fill the resulting research gaps, data was also collected online from the Press Information Bureau website (PIB, n.d.). To do so, records under the Department of External Affairs were browsed year wise and the documents pertaining to the timeline and topic of the thesis were securely stored for further analyses. Additionally, on the website of the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (Ministry of External Affairs: Government of India, n.d.), under the category of *Media Center*, the sub-categories of Bilateral/Multilateral Documents, Press Releases, and Speeches and Statements were browsed within the timeline of the thesis to collect additional analytical evidence.

4.5. Interactionism as a Point of Entry for Critical Discourse Analysis

For studying archival documents through an interpretive methodology and keeping ethical considerations in mind, this project employs Critical Discourse Analysis, developed by the seminal work of Fairclough (2013). In differentiating discourse from its more critical variant, Fairclough (2013) argues that while "[d]iscourse brings into the complex relations which constitute social life:

[125] The National Archives of India, under the direct operation of the Government of India, follows that "records should ordinarily be declassified in 25 years. Records older than 25 years should be appraised by archival experts and transferred to the National Archives of India once the war/operations histories have been compiled" (PIB, 2021).

meaning, and meaning making" (3), Critical Discourse Analysis focusses on "dialectical relations between discourse and other objects, elements or moments……cuts across conventional boundaries between disciplines…[and]…..entails….'dialogues' between disciplines, theories and frameworks which take place in doing analysis and research" (4). Therefore, the broader theme of doing CDA remains particularly suitable for this project as it combines approaches in IR theory, IPS, and anthropomorphic techniques of anxiety/uncertainty management, in giving rise to an interdisciplinary analysis of state behaviour and identity.

In his influential collection of essays, Fairclough (2013) identifies a dialectical relationship between semiotics and other social elements in understanding meaning making processes towards a construal reproduction of reality. In taking off from this lead, this thesis characterises this dialectical relationship as a process of constant *interaction* in identifying a *point of entry* for its analysis. Fairclough's (2013) usage of a semiotic point of entry aims to identify, address, and strategize solutions for social wrongs in question within an existing social order. Unlike Fairclough's (2013) approach, employing interactionism as a point of entry in this thesis has been used in advancing epistemological understandings as to how social identities become deviant, the dynamics of their interactions with the audience of normals, and the ways in which these interactions influence social perceptions. Also, differing from Fairclough's approach to CDA that treats correcting a social wrong as an imperative emancipatory cause, interactionism allows a more in-depth study in understanding the factors constituting the social wrong, in relation to what is considered as normal behaviour in society (Becker, 1963; Dotter, 2004; Goode, 2015; Lemert 1967).

Dotter and Roebuck (1988) argue that norms of social interactions allow for a multitude of outcomes including some deviant acts to be punished while others to be ignored and certain identities being falsely accused of committed deviance. They also state that while some identities deny the imposed stigma, other identities may purposely seek the deviant label. While Chapters 2 and 3 already develop seeking stigma redaction through reasoning of instance as one of the novel outcomes of existing social norms, combining interactionism with CDA for analysis offers various advantages. Firstly, having pointed out how the *criticality* of CDA revolves around fulfilling a specific aspect of the problematic functioning of society, as opposed to designing research geared towards observation and interpretation, Hammersley (1997) contends that CDA does not provide a particular justification of its intrinsic criticality. Due to the prevailing social conditions associated with specific geographical locations and different kinds of social struggles during distinctive historical time-periods, CDA may make it increasingly difficult for the reader to connect to this type of research. However, using interactionism in removing the cause of pushing emancipatory agendas, allows more flexibility in pursuing an abductive form of reasoning. Furthermore, because of the universality of ongoing social interactions, the reader recognises that "[e]stablished patterns of group life exist and persist only through the continued use of the same schemes of interpretation" (Blumer, 1969: 67).

Another problem that stems from pushing an agenda of emancipation is the issue of explicitly reasoning the underlying choice of using post-modernist theories of understanding. This is also reflected in the work of Slembrouck (2001: 40) who identifies how Fairclough (1992) is not "exclusively Marxist … devotes a complete chapter to Foucault, but overall he relies more on a Gramscian model based on hegemony." In doing so, Slembrouck (2001: 40-41) argues that "CDA continues to be unclear about its exact preferences for a particular social theory." Furthermore, Fairclough (1996: 52) himself makes the point that CDA emerged as a left-leaning political practise and that practitioners of CDA often carry explicit political commitments.[126] Therefore, as a researcher, one is left wondering as to whether inherent personal ideological inclinations favour the usage of CDA rather than a commitment to the spirit of scientific enquiry and methodological rigorousness. While the previous chapters have already spelt out why exceptionalist explanations of behaviour remain inadequate for understanding how states construct ontological routines, combining interactionism with CDA lends more strength to this argument. In the context of interactions of deviant identities, Ben-Yehuda (1990: 5) makes a very pertinent observation in noting that "the study of deviance must consider total social structures and/or processes by examining deviance as a relative phenomenon and as part of larger social processes of change and stability." Furthermore, rather than isolating deviance as an exceptionalist form of sociological behaviour, Chapter 2 makes several theoretical connections as to how deviance is dramaturgically enacted in a wide normative space and the management of deviant behaviour being practised through the enactment of opposing and conflicting societal learnings.

Also, in arguing how discourse can be constantly enacted and re-constituted across a plethora of social fields, institutions, and organisations, Fairclough (2013) places an important emphasis on meaning making across different contexts. As a result, the researcher is confronted with the problem of understanding as to what counts as the underlying *relevant* context for the studied objects of analysis, in a limited time and space for research. This issue is perfectly summed up by Schegloff (1997: 183) who states that "[d]iscourse is too often made subservient to contexts not of its participants' making, but of its analysts' insistence. Relevance flies in all directions; the text's center cannot hold in the face of diverse theoretical prisms through which it is refracted." Therefore, using an interactionist approach that focusses on the structural aspects of norms, stigma, and identity change in the nuclear domain help streamline and sharpens the focus of what this project's main research question seeks to answer. On the flip side, it comes with the disadvantage of making the researcher turn a blind eye to other domains of international governance that may contribute to explaining the aforementioned aspects of this research project. In order to resolve this dilemma, this thesis follows the lead of Schegloff (1997). Schegloff (1997) argues that the virtue of doing social science research

[126] Fairclough's (1996) article was in response to a scathing criticism of CDA by Widdowson (1995: 158) who wrote that the concept of CDA "is extremely fashionable and at the same time extremely uncertain: widespread but spread very thin."

is to be able to capture interactions (albeit partly) as internally grounded and built around the understandings of the objects of analysis, that are also demonstrable through the import of specific events and contexts.[127]

In employing these aspects of interactionism and CDA to the specifics of the India-US nuclear case study within the time-period of 1974 to 2008, would mean first taking into account how a total of 191 states currently recognise the NPT, after it came into force in 1970 (United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law, 1968). Also, debates of the relevance of the NPT, its hierarchal nature, and as to how much it has been able to arrest horizontal proliferation, have not lost its significance in an increasingly polarised world in contemporary times (Abe, 2020; Craig and Ruzicka, 2013; Ikenberry, 2018). Furthermore, in relation to how the NPT continues spelling out a distinct set of responsibilities for the NWSs and NNWSs, India still feels a need to clarify why it wants to stay out of these established nuclear norms of interactions. Therefore, in conforming to India's historical position of being a non-signatory to the NPT for its hierarchal and racial nature, Amandeep Singh Gill, Permanent Representative of India to the Conference on Disarmament, as recent as October 2017, argued that "[t]he international community should take a united stand against those who indulge in or benefit from clandestine proliferation linkages" (The Hindu, 2017). In the case of the United States, it continues to hold states accountable to the NPT, whether or not they are currently part of this treaty. Classic examples include strict sanctions and condemnation against repeated North Korean missile tests and thwarting Iranian efforts of uranium enrichment (Liechtenstein, 2021; Smith, 2022).[128]

Apart from staying removed from discussions on exceptionalism in Indian foreign policy that characterise a nuclear Indian identity, using CDA combined with an interactionist approach is not to offer solutions to the policy community of what the norms of a *fair* NPT would consist of. Rather the *criticality* of wanting to use CDA for this project constitute two interactive components. The first refers to the constant interactions with the self while writing this thesis. This process has allowed a deep pursuit of scientific questioning and a reflexive exercise of its importance, rationale, empirics, explanations, bias, and choice of evidence. The second is more organic and embedded within the project that ties together its literature review, theoretical framework, methods and methodology, and understandings that flow from examining appropriate evidence. All these aspects of the thesis remain in constant conversation with each other that drive the engine of this PhD endeavour forward. There have been several times of often going back and editing the previous chapters in making them more congruent along with the advancement of this project, whether in the context of new emerging

[127] Rather than treating India and the US as isolated objects or units of analysis, this project understands them as social agents having distinctive political, cultural, historical, and economic learnings that shape their interactions in the global nuclear context.
[128] North Korea withdrew from the NPT in 2003 (Text of North Korea's Statement on NPT Withdrawal, 2003).

information and/or accommodating more useful theoretical and practical insights. Furthermore, in treating India and the US as social agents in the international system, the aim of this thesis lies in i) advancing more fluid and reflexive understanding of deviant identities in global politics, ii) contributing to open-ended and ongoing conversations in the discipline (Fierke and Jabri, 2019), and iii) enriching the study of international politics by combining theoretical rigour with empirical awareness (Acharya, 2014).

4.6. Developing an Interpretive Hunch to Study Data

In developing an interpretive research project, Yanow and Schwartz-Shea (2006b: xvi) argue that researchers usually start their work with informed "hunches" and "puzzles or a sense of tension between expectations and prior observations….and some prior knowledge of the study setting." Following from the developed theoretical framework of this thesis, the foremost observation lies in analysing the differential position of power in the nuclear hierarchy between India (as being the performer of the deviant) and the United States (as constituting the audience of normals). This is evidenced through the various instances of India being sanctioned and condemned by the US (for the former's first nuclear test that ultimately led to its weaponisation). Furthermore, *who* has the power to impose normative judgements and political control on *whom*, represents the unequal power structure of the NPT that has continuously allowed the non-proliferation regime to permanently subordinate NNWSs. In order to escape this position of stigma, stigma redaction has been discussed in two subsequent chapters.

Chapter 2 characterises stigma redaction as the stigmatised state i) wanting to forego some aspect of their world-view in making its international perception more socially congruent, ii) resorting to partial efforts to correct deviant behaviour, iii) having an ontologically anxiety inducing relationship with the audience of normal(s) whereby legitimate and illegitimate forms of behaviour are routinised, and iv) its relationship with the audience of normal(s) being given a de-facto recognition rather than a parsimonious and a multi-party agreement − contingent upon the audience of normal(s) recognising the undertaken form of social behaviour as legitimate. In observing these aspects of stigma redaction, it would be interesting to note how diplomats from either side have framed the nuclear issue in documentary exchanges, if and how the nuclear issue concerning India's 1974 and 1998 nuclear tests have either been subverted and/or required further clarification and communication on either side, understanding the nature of anxiety that continuously prevented both nations to strengthen their bi-lateral relations, and identifying the instances where India demonstrated a socially conforming behaviour to the global nuclear order.

Chapter 3 advances the conceptualisation of stigma redaction further by characterising the language of justifications as reasoning of instance, employed by the stigma redactor in the following ways: i) re-

iterating undertaken compliant acts in the past, ii) expressing the deviant label as being ontologically uncomfortable in the long run, iii) using reasoning of instance as a cautionary approach of norm contestation in reducing the stigma redactor's social distinctiveness from the audience of normals, and iv) the stigma redactor emerging as a successful norm innovator through the way(s) in which it establishes itself as a de-facto power within the cluster of the audience of normals. Observing these aspects would correspond to looking for evidences as to how India often invoked its history of non-violence in the nuclear domain, the justifications it used in inter-governmental exchanges with the United Sates to seek recognition of the former's nuclear programme, how these justifications were presented in terms of security threats, the common governance goals it identified with the United States in moving towards a gradual de-facto nuclear status, and why India could ultimately emerge as a successful norm innovator in the process.

As the investigating timeline chosen for this thesis purposely remains broad to gradually observe India's semi-accommodation in the global nuclear order vis-à-vis its social dynamics of interactions with the United States, the chapters of empirical study are divided into parts. The first encapsulates observing specific instances from the time period of 1974 (India's first nuclear test) to the year 1998 (India's second nuclear test). More generally, this period is marked by a period of re-appearing tensions in the India-US nuclear relationship with the second nuclear test de-railing the diplomatic achievements of normalisation, post India's first nuclear test in 1974. Observed instances from the second timeframe from 1999 to 2008 can be understood as a more focussed and vigorous period of renewed bi-lateral engagement where there was a simultaneous accommodation of India's nuclear identity along with changes in the strategic interests of the US. In examining governmental documents and press reports, this research design remains cognisant of what Scott (1990: 4-5) identifies as "hidden transcripts" that consist of "those offstage speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript." While unearthing offstage interactions that translated into formalised diplomatic endeavours would be a Herculean task that remain outside the scope, time, and financial boundaries of this PhD project, studying recorded interactions in the identified documents follows a *double hermeneutics* approach.

The seminal work of Giddens (1984) argues that theories and findings of social sciences follow an inter-related notion of understanding: "a field of study phenomena which are already constituted as meaningful" (284) and specialised frames of meaning and vocabulary developed by social scientists to make sense of the already constituted social phenomena. The double hermeneutics approach in reading archival documents could also be contextualised in the India-US nuclear case study. This would translate into the notion that while diplomatic practises and understandings are already internalised in the way nuclear governance functions, using the frame of stigma redaction can be helpful in understanding the dynamic relationship of the stigma redactor (as India) with the audience

of normal(s) (as the US). It also remains important to point out that while this thesis employs an interdisciplinary approach that combines approaches in IR theory, IPS, and nuclear governance, the researcher also familiarises himself with the diplomatic culture of writing and understanding by immersing oneself in collecting, reading, and contextualising the gathered archival evidence. Therefore, the interpretation of empirical evidence through the developed framework in the previous chapters is not alienated from what Hollis and Smith (1990: 72) argues that "action must always be understood from within."[129]

In order to understand the recorded meaning processes in archival documents and use the discussed CDA method of Fairclough (2013), his roadmap of using this method remains of particular interest. Therefore, Fairclough (2013: 235) points to the following constitutive steps to perform CDA: "1. Focus upon a social wrong, in its semiotic aspect 2. Identify obstacles to addressing the social wrong 3. Consider whether the social order 'needs' the social wrong 4. Identify possible ways past the obstacles." By combining interactionism as an entry point to CDA and in analysing the India-US nuclear relationship from 1974 to 2008, this thesis has already highlighted the unequal power sharing structure of the NPT and problematised the positional relationship dynamics between the performer of the deviant and the audience of normals. Furthermore, Chapter 2, has also focused on how the notion of stigma is deeply institutionalised, normatively shared, and gradually consolidated through the continuous social enactment and re-enactment of nuclear norms vis-à-vis state interactions. While changing this social order would require de-valuing nuclear weapons through a more humanitarian lens, this thesis proposes a more regulated way of managing the unequal nuclear hierarchy through stigma redaction. [130]

In doing so, and rather than pushing discussions on India's exceptionalist nuclear identity, an abductive form of reasoning provides more leeway in tying the methodological choices of this project together. More specifically, employing CDA on the identified primary and secondary sources of analyses tries to analyse and interpret the following set of questions: How do India and the United States talk about issues relating to nuclear norms? How do their ideational and material concerns relating to nuclear (and international) security manifest in terms of the language used in archival sources? What are the different ways of identifying these markers of discourse in archival documents? How did India contest, challenge, and ultimately change the historical nuclear discourse in successfully gaining a de-facto nuclear recognition? What were the underlying political conditions and context that enabled a favourable change in US foreign policy towards India? Can employing

[129] For more perspectives on inter-subjectivity and understanding action and practices from within, see for example, Adler and Pouliot (2011); Lechner and Frost (2018); Winch (1958).

[130] In referring to further scholarship on humanitarian approaches to move towards the gradual elimination of WMDs (including nuclear weapons), see for example, Borrie, (2014); Carpenter (2011); Ritchie (2013); Sauer and Reveraert (2018).

similar dynamics of argumentation work in the case of other deviant states and/or non-signatories of the NPT? If not, why so?

In performing CDA, all primary and secondary sources of analyses were coded in the NVivo data management software to create main nodes and constituent themes/sub-nodes that emerge from the project's main research question and theoretical framework. As highlighted earlier, doing so follows an abductive form of reasoning, i.e. using the theorisation of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance in creating these nodes for conducting preliminary analysis. Patterns of similarities as well as anomalies were then observed within these nodes and themes along with subjecting them to further refinement to develop coherent categories of analyses. As listed below, this thesis identifies the following main nodes along with their constituent themes/sub-nodes to understand actors' interactions, shifting (nuclear) identity, formulation of justification and rhetoric, and relevant context:

a) Context: neighbourhood; security; tense
b) Identity: common; co-operation; de-facto; non-signatory
c) Justification and normative baggage: commitment; peaceful; responsibility
d) Normative challenge to the global nuclear order: hierarchical; racial; unequal
e) Nuclear norms: disarmament; non-proliferation; non-use
f) Stigma: condemnation; deviant; sanctions

The main nodes underline key concepts that make up the stigma management behaviour of states undertaking stigma redaction and reasoning of instance. The sub-nodes within the main nodes enabled observing more specific aspects under these broader theoretical conceptualisations that are affected when deviant states undertake stigma redaction with the normals. For example, stigma redaction and reasoning of instance is embedded in an interactional *context* whereby the deviant may specifically argue of undertaking nuclear incongruence by virtue of an anxious *neighbourhood*, its immediate *security* concerns, and a *tense* relationship with other powers or with the normals themselves. The entire process of coding borrows from the suggestions of Boyatzis (1998: 31) who argues that a good coding scheme "should be a) conceptually meaningful to the phenomenon being studied; b) clear and concise, communicating the essence of the theme in the fewest words possible; and c) close to the data."

Subsequently, CDA was undertaken on the specific areas of primary and secondary sources that were *flagged* by NVIVO after using the previously listed set of developed coding categories. More specifically, these nodes and sub-nodes served as highlighting tools to: i) identify the relevant sections of the collected archival documents for analysis, ii) interpretively read these sections by employing CDA and its levels of analyses to understand the construction of discourse and its context, and iii)

delve into the underlying interactional meaning making processes in relation to the thesis' main research question and theoretical framework. Along with remaining sensitive to the ethical considerations of the collected archival documents, a linear narrative was adapted to organise the emerging interpretations into empirical sections in the forthcoming chapters. These chapters constitute a historical and chronological flow of instances for the India-US nuclear case study within this thesis' timeline. Hence, in reading the empirical chapters, it remains imperative that one remains cognisant that the employed narrative through the process of CDA combines the scholarship on nuclear politics with the interdisciplinary research on constructivist and International Political Sociological approaches (including norm dynamics, approaches to stigmatisation, and anxiety management) in reconstructing the India-US nuclear case study. This style of presentation, although incorporates all aspects of Fairclough's (2013) CDA model, does not clearly distinguish aspects of discourse[131] as often found in popular CDA applications.[132]

Following Schegloff's (1997) lead who argues about the loss of relevance in the vast analytical field of CDA, this research purposely uses nodes and sub-nodes to narrow its analytical frame and choose pertinent instances to study India's nuclear behaviour and its interactions with the US. Furthermore, presenting the emerging interpretations from the events within the timeline of this thesis through a historical and chronological narrative also serves as an important ordering mechanism for its adopted linear flow. There are also several practical concerns that the usage of this narrative tries to address that is associated with distinguishing each aspect of discourse in popular CDA applications. As the timeline of the thesis is purposely kept wide in closely observing India's technique of stigma management and identity construction, making distinctions in all the collected archival documents in terms of descriptions, interpretations, and explanations would be a herculean endeavour beyond the scope and time-period of this PhD study. Secondly, making such distinctions rather than using a narrative encompassing the interdisciplinary nature of CDA does not achieve the goal of demonstrating how the theoretical components of this doctoral project relate to the undertaken empirical study. This is because, while a popular application of CDA would help in identifying the layers of meaning in each of the archival documents, it would do very little in lending a focussed framework in analysing how these layers of meaning interconnect in the construction of India's nuclear identity. Finally, in introducing a historical and chronological narrative as an ordering mechanism, the undertaken empirical analysis also intends to: i) disrupt familiar CDA usages in the existing literature, as well as ii) argue on the criticality of guiding the reader in making them more accessible to historical events that shape structural discourses in global politics.

[131] Fairclough's CDA model is based on three steps: "description (text analysis); interpretation (processing analysis) and explanation (social analysis)" (2013: 133).

[132] See for example, Janks (1997); Mirhosseini (2017); Strange (2022).

4.7. Examining the Research Design's Robustness and Credibility

The fourth section of this chapter already addresses how using an interactionist approach within the ambit of CDA helps overcome several research biases. Nonetheless, it is important to reflect on how the project's data collection and data representation techniques compare, when analysed through a dedicated lens of developing a robust and credible research design. In breaking off from the positivist tradition of what should constitute as a robust research project, the seminal work of Lincoln and Guba (1985) define four criteria for evaluating an interpretive research project: credibility (steps taken to ensure an appropriate construction of the social world being studied), transferability (the degree to which the identified conditions and findings can be mapped on to another context), dependability (the coherence of studying, interpreting and representing data), and confirmability (the extent to which the studied data and its results can be reviewed and confirmed by others).[133] After studying several works relating to the designing of evaluative research criteria, Schwartz-Shea (2006) identifies several overlapping terms and concepts, and in turn comes up with the following set of categories: thick description, trustworthiness, reflexivity, and triangulation.[134]

Thick description refers to the underlying aspects of the research project that inform the researcher's lens of interpreting interactions and events. This project explicitly spells out its assumptions of social reality in treating states as social agents operating in a complex web of social meanings. It also justifies its methodological choices in using CDA combined with interactionism, identifies the importance of the study being undertaken, and recognises a gap in the literature for its scholarly contributions. Secondly, this project has not just limited itself in studying specific areas of Indian foreign policy and its relationship with the United States. Rather, it takes a broader approach in looking at the literature on constructivist norms, nuclear politics, and IPS. Furthermore, it offers a novel examination of how stigmatised states manage their stigma in social interactions and then maps its conceptual understandings to the India-US nuclear case. Finally, it undertakes an extensive analysis of archival documents to complement its conceptual and empirical discussions.

Defining trustworthiness would include the logical and systematic scientific spirit of enquiry that this project embodies in every step of its study. As already evident from its structure, this thesis employs an established scientific form of analysis that consists of an extensive literature review, informed development of concepts, appropriate methodology and methods of study, data collection and its critical analysis, and drawing a conclusion with its findings. Nonetheless, in underlining an interpretive form of study that focusses on the changing nature of the social world, this project

[133] Rather than using the word "interpretive", Lincoln and Guba (1985: 189) argue for inquiry to take place in a "natural setting" that "take their meaning as much from their contexts as they do from themselves." The work of Lincoln and Guba (1985) has influenced several scholars to develop their own research criteria. See, for example, Lincoln (1995); Riessman (1993); Brower et al. (2000).

[134] Schwartz-Shea (2006) also focusses on several aspects that is intended to improve the sole trustworthiness purpose of doing social science research.

employs an abductive form of reasoning. This not only embodies scientific humility of leaving space for undertaking future revisions to this work but also allows more flexibility for future research projects to build on. Also, throughout the various stages of this doctoral project, there has been a constant back and forth reference to the existing literature and the analyses offered have remained grounded around the subjects of study. Often, direct quotes have been provided from the existing literature and the analysed archival documents to further improve the credibility of the interpretations and conclusions being drawn. In terms of research ethics, all requisite permissions for data collection were obtained, the due secrecy of sensitive documents was maintained through secure and protected storage, and informed choices were made regarding trade-offs relating to informing the society versus withholding sensitive information.

Reflexivity takes into consideration questions about the self as the project proceeds towards completion. Apart from recognising the sociological analysis that this work provides may not be the sole explanation that led to the change of India's nuclear identity, reflexivity also challenges the researcher to question his/her own biases and techniques of further refining scientific enquiry. Furthermore, it not only exposes the pitfalls of the project, but asks the researcher of the ways in which these gaps can be filled and how he/she grows as an independent scientific analyst, along with the development of the project. Having already pointed out how a specific document of interest may not be housed in a particular archive along with cases of incomplete paper trail, the COVID-19 pandemic has added a further physical barrier to being present on-site in the archival sites of knowledge production. These gaps were filled with close identification of secondary sources. From an internalist point of view, this project that has developed for a span of four years. This has allowed me to network and engage in several intellectually stimulating conversations with peers, attend workshops and conferences to showcase my work and gain from feedbacks, and think about future directions relating to my project and research career. All these aspects have remained pivotal in aiding my growth of becoming an independent and informed researcher in the field of international politics.

Triangulation refers to understanding the studied phenomenon using three or more analytical tools. In designing its theoretical framework, this work draws and combines approaches in IPS, IR theory, and nuclear governance, to study key instances of the India-US nuclear relationship within the timeframe of 1974 to 2008. Also, in studying the archival documents of interest, triangulation followed borrowing from the discussed aspects of combing Critical Discourse Analysis and interactionism, employing them to understand the archival sources of evidence, and interpreting the evidence in the context of its social setting. This three-step process can be termed as triangulation of the social phenomenon being studied through a consistent *theory-evidence-interpretation chain*. Furthermore, all facts that appear in this work have been triangulated vis-à-vis the exiting literature, archival documents and secondary sources.

4.8. Conclusion

This chapter moves the overall thesis forward in developing a methodological and methods toolkit, along with relevant epistemological considerations. To do so, this chapter has i) reasoned why India's nuclear relationship with the United States along with the chosen timeframe remains an important case study, ii) designed a methodological framework that remains cognisant and reflexive of the researcher's own theoretical assumptions while engaging with the dynamic nature of social interactions and state identities in nuclear governance, iii) identified the relevant archival sites and undertaken a classification of data sources that are to be subsequently studied, along with discussing the ethical challenges and COVID-19 disruptions that were encountered in the process, iv) combined CDA with interactionism in developing an interpretive lens to study data sources, and v) examined the overall robustness of this thesis in the development of its interlinked chain of theory, evidence, and interpretation.

Chapter 4 not only developed a methodological design rooted in a strong epistemology, but also highlighted the practicalities involved in studying the identified empirical sources for the forthcoming chapters. To do so, the first section justified why the India-US nuclear case along with its chosen analytical timeframe is an important empirical study that can inform theoretical works on international security, as well as contribute to policy making in nuclear governance in contemporary times. Furthermore, this section recognised the need to develop a plurality in explanations to move beyond examining the change of India's nuclear identity as deeply rooted in terms of material interests. Also, in order to develop a more focussed analysis towards the study of the gathered empirical evidence and examining key instances within the India-US nuclear relationship, this chapter divided the chosen historical timeframe into two comparable and inter-relatable components for the forthcoming chapters of this project. In making the case for this chapter's epistemological choices towards the employment of a methodological design, the second section argued for a more flexible research design that moves beyond classifying the dynamism of state identity and social interactions into causal variables and formulating a testable and stringent hypothesis. Rather, this section justified developing a hunch from the undertaken theoretical framework of the preceding chapters. It also characterised this hunch as based on probable conclusion making through abductive reasoning, being open to challenges to the research design of the project, and constantly questioning the pre-existing biases of the researcher in terms of reflexivity.

Following the epistemological discussion, the third section discussed the more practical aspects of data gathering and its interpretation. To do so, it identified the archives of interest as sites of knowledge production and classified the data to be studied as primary and secondary sources of analyses. In studying these data sources, this section also highlighted the ethical dilemmas faced and how the researcher has addressed them. Furthermore, in recognising the challenges of conducting

fieldwork during the times of COVID-19, this section also laid out a remote method of data collection from the identified archival sites. In order to study the identified sources of analyses, the fourth section included a discussion on the methods to be employed under an interpretive methodology. This section also highlighted the limitations of using CDA and argued why combining an approach of CDA with social interactionism would remain particularly suitable in studying the empirical sources in forthcoming chapters. The fifth section undertook the role of developing a hunch from the previous sections by pointing out the empirical indicators that can be studied in relation to India's nuclear relationship with the United Sates. Therefore, distinct themes have been identified from the primary and secondary sources of analyses and coded into the NVivo data management software. These coding categories have also been identified as a guide in interpreting relevant documents and representing these interpretations in a historical and chronological narrative in the next two chapters. The last section discussed how the researcher has subjected his own research project to the essentials of developing a robust and credible scientific endeavour. This has included engaging in reflexivity to question existing research biases, and making the components of theory, evidence, and interpretation of this research project consistent to each other.

After spelling out the methodological choices that this thesis makes, along with the epistemology as to what guides these choices, the next chapter starts forming the thesis' components of data analyses and interpretation. In using the gathered empirical sources and the first timeframe of analysis from 1974 to 1998, the next chapter examines inter-governmental exchanges and relevant press reports that discuss the India-US nuclear relationship at various instances of the timeframe. Through these sources of analyses, the next chapter also observes how India came to occupy the subaltern stigma position post the 1974 nuclear test, the ways in which India undertook stigma redaction by contesting the newly formed nuclear norms with the NPT coming into force in 1970, and the bargains India employed in order to be perceived as a peaceful nuclear identity.

Chapter 5| India's Interactions with the United States from 1974 to 1998[135]

5.1. Introduction

"One of the main objectives of much interpretive research in IR … is to denaturalize dominant explanations, exposing them not as truth but as narratives that are discursively constructed, assigned particular meanings, and reproduced from partial or limited evidence and with particular stakes or purposes in mind, and to provide evidence that indicates the possibility or plausibility of other articulations and meanings of the phenomena in question" (Lynch, 2014: 14).

This quote by Lynch (2014) succinctly sums up the methodological choices of this thesis in developing an epistemic plurality of explanations to examine the shifting trajectory of India-US relations from 1974 to 2008. In dividing this analytical timeframe, this chapter studies its first phase spanning from 1974 (India's first nuclear test) to 1998 (India's second nuclear test). In doing so, it aims to: i) study India's position in the nuclear hierarchy, after its first nuclear test in 1974, ii) import the discussions from the previous chapters in examining how India used stigma redaction and reasoning of instance in its social interactions with the United States, iii) highlight the intense ontological challenge that India faced in wanting to maintain its non-violent nuclear perception in the international context while simultaneously managing its agentic and security concerns, iv) understand how India's non-violent perception in global governance lost credibility with India's nuclear tests in 1998, and v) argue why India was not successful in conveying to the US of being a compliant nuclear identity.

Carrying forward the methodological discussions from Chapter 4 in representing how India undertook stigma redaction and reasoning of instance from 1974 to 1998, this chapter starts demonstrating the usage of CDA on the collected archival sources. After employing coding in NVivo to identify key theoretical concepts as well as more specific aspects under these concepts that underline the India-US nuclear case, this chapter implements a historical and chronological narrative for the representation of the identified events. In doing so, it builds a more focussed and contextual discussion of India's nuclear behaviour that directly links archival interpretation to the theoretical sections of this thesis. Furthermore, in exercising a pluralistic and interdisciplinary spirit of scientific inquiry, this chapter begins demonstrating how the India-US nuclear relationship can be understood as a combination of perspectives from IR theory, IPS, and international nuclear governance.

[135] Minor parts of subsections that appear under this chapter have been re-written and appeared in a shorter format *in E-International Relations* and *International Studies Quarterly*. The articles can be accessed here: i) Saha, A. 2021. "In the Shadow of Sanctions? US–India Relations and the S-400 Purchase", *E-International Relations*, 29 January. Retrieved from https://www.e-ir.info/2021/01/29/in-the-shadow-of-sanctions-us-india-relations-and-the-s-400-purchase/. Last accessed date: February 16, 2021, and ii) Saha, A. 2022b. "Nuclear Stigma and Deviance in Global Governance: A New Research Agenda", *International Studies Quarterly*, 66(3): sqac055. doi:10.1093/isq/sqac055.

After explicitly underlining the epistemological assumptions, theoretical framework, and methodological choices in the previous chapters, this chapter examines India's nuclear identity through the identified primary and secondary sources of analyses. More specifically, it studies instances of interactions in these documents between Washington and New Delhi within the chosen timeframe. In doing so, this chapter demonstrates how the previously developed theoretical discussions play out and shape state identities in global governance. This chapter also remains cognisant that these interactions cannot occur independently and may occur as a consequence of the agentic experiences of the actor in question. Therefore, this chapter asks: Where does one observe stigma redaction and reasoning of instance in India's social interactions with the United States? Through these social interactions, how did India construct its justifications for the 1974 nuclear test? How did India modify its justifications when it ultimately decided to weaponise its nuclear programme? How did India's justifications for the 1974 and the 1998 nuclear tests affect the bi-lateral relationship between New Delhi and Washington? As part of these effects, did India's cautionary use of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance result in India's discourse being perceived as conforming to global nuclear norms by the normals in nuclear governance? To answer these questions, this chapter is divided into five sections.

The first section revisits the empirical instances that demonstrated the hierarchical relationship between the United States as part of the audience of normals and India as a deviant identity. Post India's 1974 nuclear test, these instances played out in the form of Washington curtailing food assistance to New Delhi and arguing how the test violated global efforts towards non-proliferation. Washington also curbed the supply of low-enriched uranium to the Indian Tarapur Atomic Power Station and differed from New Delhi's understanding as what constitutes as peaceful uses of nuclear energy. These actions from Washington risked pushing New Delhi's position being permanently cemented as a stigmatised subaltern nuclear identity in nuclear governance.

The second section studies how India employed stigma redaction and reasoning of instance to manage its stigmatised identity in order to escape being permanently perceived by the US as occupying the subaltern stigma position. To so, India continuously stressed its compliant nuclear track record and highlighted how the 1974 nuclear test differed from the actual uses of nuclear technology in war time. As a result, India's usage of reasoning of instance resulted in some improvement in its interactions with the United States. This is because the Reagan administration asked France to replace Washington in continuing nuclear shipments to the Indian Tarapur Atomic Power Station.

Albeit India's employment of reasoning of instance and stigma redaction resulted in some visible improvement in its interactions with the United States, the third section highlights India's frustration of being unable to completely reduce its social distinctiveness from the United States. India being a non-signatory to the NPT, receiving nuclear shipments from abroad, and yet keeping an active missile

development programme made itself attract a further round of sanctions from the US. As a response to this continued stigmatisation, India continued to use stigma redaction and reasoning of instance to carefully move towards gradual nuclearisation. These included highlighting the need to cultivate a scientific temperament by moving beyond international constraints, New Delhi's lack of strategic choices due to the global reluctance towards complete disarmament, and framing security threats as mostly nuclear while sharing a conflict prone neighbourhood with China and Pakistan.

With India's nuclear tests in 1998 and the United States tightening sanctions on the former as a consequence, the fourth section highlights how India faced an intense challenge of socialisation to maintain its own perception as a non-violent nuclear identity. This section also discusses how India's crusade of equal norm advocacy in the cause of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament suffered a severe loss of credibility after the 1998 nuclear tests. Fears came true among the audience of normals that India's nuclear ambitions could not be trusted and the latter could potentially repeat the horrors of the Hiroshima and the Nagasaki bombings.

Albeit India's show of semi-compliance in various instances through the usage of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance in the previous sections, the last section argues why India cannot be understood as a conforming identity to existing global nuclear norms. The reasons include India's confrontational tone in challenging the global nuclear order, continuous requests for granting exceptions in nuclear trade, loss of international perception as a credible power in curbing global proliferation and disarmament after its 1998 nuclear tests, and permanently foregoing a normal NPT abiding NNWS as India now required a special system of recognition in nuclear governance.

5.2. India's 1974 Nuclear Test and the Subaltern Stigma Position

Ganguly (1999: 158) writes that India's decision to test a nuclear device in 1974 was a result of "[b]oth structural and proximate factors." India's loss to China in 1962, the war in 1965 with Pakistan, failure to receive guarantees from the existing NWS, and the change in India's political leadership are all important factors that paved the way for India to conduct its first nuclear test in 1974 (Ganguly, 1999). Earlier chapters characterised stigma as an ontological position within a broader hierarchy that is constantly enacted through the interactions between performers of the deviant and the audience of normals. Post India's 1974 nuclear test, India gradually came to occupy the subaltern stigma position by virtue of an act of nuclear non-compliance, a normatively shared outcry against the act by the audience of normals, and the emergence of India's other identity. Defending the 1974 nuclear test, India's then Foreign Minister, Sardar Swaran Singh, and Ambassador to the United States, repeatedly stated that "developing nuclear energy resources [was] entirely for peaceful purposes [and] … [t]he underground test was conducted in carefully controlled conditions and is designed to develop technology for various economic uses of nuclear energy" (NMML,1974b).

In response to India's 1974 nuclear explosion, the US as a hegemon played an important role in shaming and sanctioning India, along with other members of the audience of normals. This included Japan, Sweden, and most notably, Canada (Perkovich, 1999: 183-187). The US Deputy Secretary of State Kenneth Rush remarked, "The Indian test is a setback to non-proliferation; we had made it clear to the Indians that we opposed a test by them, even one labelled as in this instance a peaceful nuclear explosion" (The Times of India, 2007). In immediate opposition to India's Peaceful Nuclear Explosion (PNE) explanation (Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization, n.d.) and the inability of the NPT to prevent horizontal proliferation, the US rallied "other leading industrial states to build on the August 1974 agreement by the Zangger committee to establish a 'trigger list' of items that would not be supplied to non-nuclear weapon states", ultimately leading to the incorporation of this trigger list in the formation of the NSG (Perkovich, 1999: 191; Saha, 2021). However, it is important to note that rather than a direct result of India's 1974 nuclear test, "the Zangger committee had its origins in 1971 when major nuclear suppliers regularly involved in nuclear trade came together to reach common understandings" on the use and transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes for the NNWSs (IAEA, 2000: 3).

When India came to occupy the subaltern stigma position via its nuclear deviance, its justifications of a PNE was not heard, a "military intent was imputed to the pne and, …[t]he more India protested this meaning, the less it was believed" (Abraham, 2010: 54). Similarly, India's indigenous solution to the abolition of nuclear weapons was also turned a deaf ear by the US (Dikshit, 2010) when in 1988, Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's Action Plan suggested on the floor of the UN "spanned over 22 years with the target year of complete disarmament being achieved in 2010" (Saha, 2020).

The reactions to India's nuclear test of 1974 from the United States not only highlight the imposed stigma position on India, but also how this position was constantly re-enforced through policy interactions at the inter-governmental level. Beginning with the notion of a hierarchical international system as to which states can afford a nuclear programme with the pre-requisite of adequate economic strength, Charles Wilson, then member of the Democratic Party from Texas in the House of Representations Foreign Affairs Committee, argued that the Indian government was channelising its already scarce funds into developing a nuclear bomb (NAI, 1974b).

Also, in re-instating the hierarchical power relationship among states, Wilson was joined by several other members of the Congress in efforts of thwarting a $75 million loan to India for developmental assistance (NAI, 1974b), albeit the United States Embassy highlighting the rather stark ongoing food crisis and famine conditions affecting millions of Indian people (Weinraub, 1974). Furthermore, the US State Department argued that stalling humanitarian aid to condemn the 1974 Indian nuclear test was rather an unconnected form of response. Originally introduced by the Nixon administration in the US Foreign Aid Bill as a development loan, continued opposition to lending credit to New Delhi as a

sanction for the 1974 nuclear test resulted in the House of Representations Foreign Affairs Committee ultimately voting in curbing the loan amount for India to $50 million (NAI, 1974b). All these instances also remain demonstrative of the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 2 that any kind of contestation from a performer of the deviant occupying the subaltern position is often dependent on being rendered legitimate by the audience of normals. As evidenced through archival research, India's excuse of legitimising the 1974 nuclear test as a PNE clearly faced challenges from the United States and pushed India towards the direction of occupying an inescapable subaltern stigma position.

In the existing literature, the overall gap between heavily industrialised states versus *other* states has often been compared to a core-periphery structure in global governance (Nexon and Wright, 2007; Wallerstein, 1974). In advancing this literature forward, Mattern and Zarakol (2016) have argued for a more specific approach towards understanding the roles states play and the nature of bargains they strike, depending on the position they occupy within a broader hierarchy. Chapter 2 has characterised the position that states occupy − post stigmatisation and due to their performances − as being deemed deviant by the audience of normals. To do so, Chapter 2 borrows from the seminal scholarship of Spivak (2005) in arguing that states occupying the stigmatised position are often treated as subaltern by the audience of normals. As a result, perfomers of the deviant and the audience of normals do not imbibe a shared reality and the norm challenges that performers of the deviant undertake are often rendered illegitimate by the audience of normals. Post India's 1974 nuclear test, the case of India-US nuclear relations was no different. While India affirmed its nuclear policy of undertaking the 1974 nuclear test for peaceful purposes only, then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, under the US Ford administration, remarked in May 1975 that the Indian explosion brought "anew the spectre of an era of plentiful nuclear weapons in which any local conflict risks exploding into a nuclear holocaust" (NAI, 1975c). This incident was preceded by a dispatch from then US Ambassador to India D.P. Moynihan who wrote to Kissinger in 1974 that India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi "will accordingly proceed to develop nuclear weapons and a missile delivery system, preaching non-violence all the way" (NMMAL, 1974b).

Furthermore, in resisting joining the NPT that came into force in 1970, India's reasons included how the chasm of NWSs versus NNWSs was increasingly moving the world towards "common doom", questioning why nuclear energy cannot be used as an economic transformative tool by all, the ways in which the NPT is "discriminatory" and "repugnant" that automatically divides the world "in several subclasses", and states deemed as nuclear by virtue of the NPT lacked visible disarmament measures (NAI, 1977a; NAI, 1977b; NAI, 1977c; NAI 1977d).[136] The words and phrases used by India in

[136] Other key phrases used by the Indian Government to more broadly construct its challenge to the existing international order post its 1974 nuclear test included "[t]he remnants of colonialism and racialism, where they still exist, must go", "disparities in economic strength that exist amongst nations, must be bridged … to secure

remaining a non-signatory of the NPT can be interpreted not only in terms of a having a political and strategic undertone, but also a strict ideational opposition as to how power relationships are socially bargained. However, with India occupying the subaltern stigma position, its strongly worded norm challenge to the NPT fell on deaf ears. Not only did the US spearhead the formation of the Zangger committee mentioned before, but also throttled the display of India's nuclear identity in several ways. Evidence of this remains especially visible in the interactions between US President Carter and Indian Prime Minster Desai, as opposed to the often described "bonhomie" of their relationship in the existing scholarship (Pant and Joshi, 2018: 87).

When Carter met Desai in Delhi for in-person talks in January 1978 relating to the agenda of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, it remained very evident that either side would have to heavily disrupt its own belief system for reaching a normative consensus in nuclear governance. With India occupying the subaltern stigma position, Carter pushed Desai to understand that "full scope comprehensive safeguards are necessary" and the "time has come to end all explosions of nuclear devices whether peaceful or military" (NAI, 1978a). While Desai had previously reassured the US government of imposing a self-moratorium on nuclear testing and that India had no desire to acquire nuclear weapons, there were doubts in the US policy circle as to whether India would stick to this pledge (NAI, 1977a). To make matters worse, New Delhi not only refused to accept full scope safeguards for all its existing nuclear facilities but argued that full scope safeguards were "even more restrictive than [the] NPT" and that the international focus should be more on cutting down existing stockpiles, stopping vertical proliferation, and encouraging universal disarmament (NAI, 1977c).

While India continued to occupy the subaltern stigma position, contestations that it undertook in terms of not joining the NPT and refusing to accept full scope safeguards fell on deaf ears. There is evidence that India wanted to be recognised as a *great power* in the international system in exchange of letters in late 1978 between Nani A. Palkhivala, India's Ambassador to Washington DC, and A.G. Asrani, Joint Secretary in the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (NAI, 1978a). All these concerns seemed to be brushed aside when Carter told Desai that Washington put India "in the same category as the great nations like Germany and Canada" (NAI, 1977c) unlike those *greater* power states which were deemed NWSs and wielded nuclear weapons as "international normative symbols of modernity and identity" (Sagan 1996/1997: 55).

After Desai's discussion with Carter on the morning of January 02, 1978 whereby New Delhi refused to accept full scope nuclear safeguards on its nuclear programme, a sensational incident occurred. One of the microphones in the discussion room had inadvertently picked up a piece of private conversation

international peace", and "reject the thesis that … only some countries can he trusted to behave in a responsible manner in … implementing programmes in the area of the peaceful uses of the nuclear energy" (NAI, 1976b; NAI, 1977a; NAI, 1977e).

where President Carter told US Foreign Secretary Cyrus Vance that "when we get back, I think we ought to write him another letter, just cold and very blunt" (NAI, 1977c).[137] While the Indian Ministry of External Affairs tried to cover up this incident stating that "[w]e had a bit of a crisis" (NAI, 1977c), it was unambiguously evident that Washington and New Delhi could not come to a normative understanding of lending legitimacy to India's contestations against hierarchical nuclear norms. Not surprisingly, a range of phrases were used in the press to describe the meeting between Carter and Desai as "cliche-ridden little joint declaration which commits neither side to anything", "does not speak of any specific area of cooperation at all", "good for nothing collection of sentences", and "has nothing but meaningless and beautiful verbiage" (NAI, 1977b).

India's performance of deviance through the 1974 nuclear test, refusal to accept international safeguards on its nuclear programme, and being a non-signatory of the NPT, was not acted out in a space solely consisting of and conceived by socially deviant inter-subjectivities. Carranza (2006) highlights the key empirical instances where the US played an important role in advocating for an international mechanism of controlling the spread of nuclear weapons by conceiving the NPT. This was further reflected by a landmark speech by then American President John F. Kennedy, who stated on the floor of the UN in 1961 that "every man, woman and child lives under a nuclear sword of Damocles, hanging by the slenderest of threads, capable of being cut at any moment by accident or miscalculation or by madness. The weapons of war must be abolished before they abolish us" (John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum Archives, 1961). When the NPT was opened for signature in 1968, more than 50 signatory states accepted the NNWSs' status along with the five permanent NWSs (United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law, 1968). However, India remained the first NWS country that had conducted a nuclear test within a span of four years, after the NPT coming into force in 1970 (Nuclear Testing Tally, 2020).

India's brought about subaltern stigma position further risked being cemented with the immediate steps that the US government took as a result of New Delhi's rejection of accepting full scope safeguards on all its nuclear facilities and refusing to sign the NPT. Discussions already underway in 1977 in the US Congress "to provide for more efficient, and effective control over the proliferation of nuclear explosives" (NAI, 1977f) reached its fruition with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act coming into force in 1978 (Public Law 95-242, 1978). Soon, the US legislation invoked Section 3b of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act of 1978 "authorizing the United States to take such actions as are required to ensure that it will act reliably in meeting its commitment to supply nuclear reactors and fuel to nations which adhere to effective non-proliferation policies" (Public Law 95-242, 1978). By using the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act of 1978, the US Administration also implemented an

[137] While interacting with the press entourage in his aircraft while heading back to the United States, Carter stated that it was a mistake on his part and what he rather meant was writing "a very frank and factual letter" (NAI, 1977b).

embargo in delaying shipments of low-enriched uranium fuel to the Indian Tarapur Atomic Power Station (Weinraub, 1982). The delay ultimately culminated into the United States taking a more resolute stance in ceasing all shipment of supplying low-enriched uranium to the Tarapur Atomic Power Station due to what Washington termed as "an irreconcilable problem on safeguards" (NAI, 1981a). By the end of 1980, it was clear that New Delhi would be brought within scope of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act. Contrary to stopping nuclear trade, Washington had originally signed a bi-lateral agreement with New Delhi in 1963 to keep providing low-enriched uranium supplies to the Tarapur Atomic Power Station until 1993 (IAEA, 1981).

5.3. Indian Attempts in Overcoming Its Subaltern Stigma Position

Interestingly, India's undertaking of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance in showing partial compliance towards existing nuclear norms started even before the 1974 nuclear test. Nehru's call for disarmament in the 1950s and his famous speech in the United Nations General Assembly in 1961 of how nuclear weapons "must be ruled out … or humanity has to submit to the ending of all it has laboured for thousands of years", are instances of India's showcasing of compliant behaviour in the international arena (Indian Ministry of External Affairs, 1961; Johnson, 2014). With Nehru's proposal of a Standstill Agreement, India was not only able to demonstrate a commitment to being a peaceful and non-aligned nation but was also able to trigger a series of action plans from the US government. This included Democratic nominee Adlai Stevenson having an agenda of disarmament in the 1956 US Presidential Campaign (Steiner, n.d.), then US President Eisenhower proposing a suspension of WMD testing to the Soviet Union in a letter on April 28, 1958 (The White House Archives, 1998), and President John F. Kennedy, in a commencement speech at the American University in June 1963, stating "where a fresh start is badly needed, is in a treaty to outlaw nuclear tests" (John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum Archives, 1963a).

Also, after India's non-compliant behaviour of exploding a nuclear device in 1974, India was quick to react. This prevented India from permanently cementing it's just occupied subaltern stigma position through non-compliance, and shifting into categories of managing its stigma through stigma rejection and/or counter-stigmatisation (Adler-Nissen, 2014).

In using reasoning of instance as a tool of memory correction after the 1974 nuclear test, the official stance of the Indian Government was not just that the test was a PNE. New Delhi also linked the 1974 nuclear test to its historical position of non-violence as being "firmly committed to only peaceful uses of atomic energy" (Perkovich, 1999: 178). Also, on the day of India' nuclear test, the Indian Atomic Energy Commission, the apex body responsible for governing all research relating to nuclear energy in India, announced that the explosion was intended for the specific "use in the field of mining and earth-moving operations" (United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, 1976: 146). It also re-iterated India's opposition to military uses of nuclear technology and that India "had no intention of

producing nuclear weapons" (United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, 1976: 146). A couple of days later, on May 21, 1974, the Indian delegation to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament again highlighted India's position of not intending to become a nuclear power and limiting itself to exploring only the peaceful applications of nuclear energy (United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, 1976). Interestingly though, what stands out in this immediate justification of India's nuclear test is not that New Delhi entirely forwent its position of challenging the global nuclear order as hierarchical and unequal. Even though its justifications showcased some compliance towards global non-proliferation norms, the word "right" was used thrice in just nineteen lines of this statement, along with once employing a stronger phrase in terms of India's "inherent right" to explore the peaceful uses of nuclear energy (United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, 1976: 150).

The construction of India's response to the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament on May 21, 1974 is a classic empirical instance of states clinging on to some aspects of ideational agency, while occupying the subaltern position and demonstrating stigma redaction. Furthermore, it serves as evidence as how interpreting meaning in international discourse and action remains radically different for the performer(s) of the deviant, as compared to the audience of the normals. While reacting to the statement of its Indian counterpart and the Indian Atomic Energy Commission, the US delegation chose to make "a brief statement" on the 1974 nuclear test mentioning how Washington has always been against nuclear non-proliferation and its impact on "world stability" (United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, 1976: 152).

This statement automatically assumes that it is rather the great powers or the NWSs entrusted with the duty of serving as legal possessors of nuclear weapons and making rational decisions as being the entrusted protectors of maintaining world stability. However, the muted response of the United States was not the immediate counter to India's nuclear test. Dennis Kux, then Director of the India Desk in the State Department, writes in his book, *India and The United States: Estranged Democracies 1941 – 1991*, that the initial inclination of the State Department was to "criticize the Indian test as a damaging breach in the non-proliferation wall" (Kux, 1992: 315). Overruling the idea of a critical response, Henry Kissinger, then Secretary of State under the Nixon administration, adopted a softer stance in arguing that "public scolding would not undo the event" and may consequently "reduce the influence Washington might have on India's future nuclear policy" (Kux, 1992: 315).

While the previous section has highlighted how Washington later tightened the noose on India's nuclear policy to strengthen the imposed subaltern stigma position on New Delhi, India's employment of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance discouraged further curtailments on its nuclear programme. This played out significantly after Desai refused to accept full scope safeguards and subject all of India's nuclear facilities to IAEA inspections. Within a week of Carter's visit to New

Delhi, Desai wrote an amicable letter to Carter. The letter stated that while there remains a difference in nuclear policies between the two states, they share "the ultimate objective of preventing the dangers of war from the proliferation of nuclear weapons", a large potential of furthering cooperation in diverse fields, and mutual development of solutions towards the most pressing problems of the world (NAI, 1977c).

The Carter Administration showed some dependence on India's previously declared self-moratorium on further nuclear testing and pursuit of peaceful nuclear ambitions. In doing so, Carter briefly approved an order of the sale of 38 tons of low-enriched uranium to India and rendered the PNE justification as legitimate, much to the disapproval of the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NAI, 1978b; O'Toole, 1980). By 1981, the United States administration nonetheless made it clear that New Delhi should not expect "any such hope for further fuel supplies" as Washington was now bound by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act, coming to force in 1978 (NAI, 1981b).

The instances of Carter relying on India's self-moratorium as well as Kissinger refusing to further stigmatise India through condemnations and sanctions are key conditions on which India's stigma redaction is hinged upon. In other words, the Desai administration imposing a moratorium on nuclear testing, foregoing India's security concerns, and believing that "peaceful nuclear explosions are unnecessary" (NAI, 1979) can be attributed to the US imposing self-limits against pressurising India into undertaking full compliance. As a response in *redacting* its world-views in terms of security concerns, New Delhi was reluctant to weaponise its nuclear programme, despite going to war with China in 1962 and Beijing becoming a part of NWSs in 1964 (Basrur, 2018). To make matters worse, India had already fought three wars with Pakistan by mid 1990s along with New Delhi getting wind of Islamabad reaching an advancing stage of enriching uranium and producing plutonium for using in nuclear weapons (The Economic Times, 2015). Yet, India's pursuit of a "wait and see strategy" (The Economic Times, 2015) is indicative as to how states undertaking stigma redaction and reasoning of instance in the subaltern stigma position often decide to forego security concerns in making their social perception more internationally congruent.[138] Furthermore, this strategy is also representative of the time and extent that performers of the deviant are willing to undermine their own belief systems as India eventually declared itself as having nuclear weapons in 1998.

As a consequence, it was not surprising that, even though the Carter administration had to ultimately stop clearing fuel supplies to the Tarapur Atomic Power Station, Washington recognised India's "greater guaranty for the long-term objectives of non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament than any

[138] Nonetheless, it is also important to state that before ultimately pursuing a "wait and watch strategy", a Central Intelligence Agency report noted that Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi considered a pre-emptive strike on Pakistan's nuclear facilities and also started preparing for a 40-kiloton nuclear test within a week if Pakistan had gone nuclear (Central Intelligence Agency, 1981).

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international inspection or safeguards" (1978a). However, the hierarchical relationship between the United States (as member of the audience of normals and responsible for legitimising norm contestation) and New Delhi (being the performer of the deviant while occupying the subaltern stigma position) remained unaltered. What is interesting to observe is that in spite of India's non-compliance of not signing the NPT and accepting full-scope safeguards for all its nuclear facilities, New Delhi's ideology of non-violence in showcasing social congruence resulted in visible improvements with the United States as constituting the audience of normals. Empirically, this translated into Jack Miklos, US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, suggesting to Nanabhoy Palkhivala, Indian Ambassador to the United States, as to whether both countries could "think of some solution" through which "the Non-Proliferation Act is regarded by the United States Government as having been fulfilled in the case of India without having to subject India" to "immeasurable difficulties for the present Government with public opinion and from the point of view of national self respect" (NAI, 1978a). Nonetheless, even when talks ultimately broke down for the United States continuing to ship low-enriched uranium to the Tarapur Atomic Power Station, this crisis was solved in a "friendly, relaxed, informative and constructive" manner whereby the Reagan administration allowed the French to succeed as the new Indian supply partner for the Tarapur Atomic Power Station (Weinraub, 1982).

Archival sources throughout the 1980s are filled with evidence as to how India continued pursuing an array of non-violent measures in the pursuit of international disarmament and non-proliferation. In revisiting India's proposal in 1982 for a universal cut-off in the production of fissionable material, India's External Affairs Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao argued how "the problem of existing stockpiles of nuclear weapons could then be contained and tackled more effectively" (PIB, 1983a). Addressing the Press Conference during the Seventh Non-Aligned Summit in New Delhi in March 1983, India's Prime Minister Indira Gandhi stated that while India was against nuclear warfare and only supported peaceful uses of nuclear energy, "growing economic disparities amongst countries is an equal threat and equal cause of tension" (PIB, 1983b). Other significant empirical examples include Khurshed Alam Khan, India's Minister of State for Commerce, speaking at the UN General Assembly in September 1985 about how the US-Soviet rivalry was creating "[h]ostile military blocs [that] are posed against each other with an armada of nuclear weaponry that can wipe out all life on this planet many times over" (PIB, 1985a). Perhaps, the most famous of all, is Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's 1988 address on disarmament to the UN General Assembly where he spoke about stopping the "madness" of nuclear arms race and how this "road will take us like lemmings to our own suicide" (PIB, 1988).

What stands out in the analysis of all these speeches is the sense of urgency that India attached in wanting to make NWSs disarm in an almost chorographical fashion. The speeches evoke imageries of stark economic and technological inequalities among states, the world being simply reduced to a barren land with unhabitable levels of toxins and atomic radiation, and NWSs being black box entities

that are products of heavy industrialisation in feeding their own insatiable hunger of nuclear weapons.[139] Interestingly, one can also interpret India's speeches containing a strategic, historical, and ideational element of non-violence as contrarily reducing foreign policy decisions of NWSs being simply driven by realpolitik and an insatiable appetite for international power.

However, a more general aspect to consider in the case of New Delhi's employment of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance is that if it continued to hesitate in developing or acquiring nuclear weapons after the 1974 nuclear explosion, New Delhi would have risked moving into the typology of stigma recognition. Nonetheless, this was not to be as using the 1998 nuclear test, India not only weaponised its nuclear programme, but also created a huge contradiction while preaching non-violence, non-proliferation, and universal disarmament for more than five decades. [140]

5.4. The Indian Disguise in Efforts Towards Nuclear Weaponisation

The justification of the 1974 nuclear test as *peaceful*, and India's reluctance to weaponise its nuclear programme until 1998 can be traced back to the non-violent struggle of its independence from British colonial rule (Pant and Joshi, 2018). Very specifically, Ganguly (1999) argues that there are three key factors that paved the way for India to weaponise its nuclear programme: i) India's influence to acquire relevant nuclear technology and its homegrown capacity to develop nuclear weapons, ii) pressure on Indian leaders of making ideological choices and decisions relating to national security, and iii) considerations of the security environment and the failure to secure nuclear guarantees from the existing NWSs

While on the road to weaponising its nuclear programme in 1998, there are several empirical instances where India undertook stigma redaction and reasoning of instance. In order to examine these instances, it remains important to draw on discussions from Chapter 3, as to how states present compliance and non-compliance through stigma redaction and reasoning of instance in nuclear governance. India's contributions in negotiations relating to the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, CTBT, and the indefinite extension of the NPT allowed New Delhi to showcase socially compliant behaviour to erode suspicion of gradually declaring itself possessing nuclear weapons capability in 1998. For example, India played a comprehensive role in sponsoring the negotiations of the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty to ban the production of fissile material used in nuclear explosions and found immense encouragement from Canada and non-aligned states (Ghose, 1997; Hippel, 1999; Indian Ministry of External Affairs, 2015). Also, India was the co-sponsor of UN Resolution A/RES/48/75 adopted by the General Assembly in January 1994 that called for the "[p]rohibition of the production

[139] See Buruma and Margalit (2004: 10) for a conceptual understanding of Occidentalism that speaks about stereotyping heavily industrialised states consisting of "cold, arrogant, materialistic, mechanical", godless, and soulless people.

[140] Instances within the timeline of 1999 to 2008 is discussed in the next chapter in terms of this thesis' theoretical framework and analysis of empirical evidence.

of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices” (United Nations Archives, 1994). As India demonstrated these instances of nuclear conformity, stigma redaction and reasoning of instance also enabled it to reference this conformity in later instances of non-compliance.

In relation to discussions for the implementation of a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing, Satish Chandra, Indian representative to the Conference on Disarmament Plenary Session, argued for the ban being “comprehensive and not establish thresholds”, “the closure of nuclear-weapon test sites” and verification being “universal in its application, non-discriminatory in character and should guarantee equal access to all States” (United Nations: Final Record of the Six Hundred and Eightieth Plenary Meeting, 1994). Furthermore, even though India was opposed to the NPT due to its discrimination between NWSs and NNWSs − within five months of discussions leading to indefinite extension of the NPT − India endorsed the spirit of disarmament and non-proliferation. This played out in the speech of Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao on the UN’s 50th anniversary, who stated that “[t]here can be no security for anyone in a world bristling with nuclear weapons” and time-bound disarmament should be followed as nuclear exclusivity “becomes a tempting objective for others too, leading consequently to proliferation which is impossible to police for all the time” (PIB, 1995).

What remains important to note in this speech is that despite contemporary challenges including unemployment, environmental degradation, poverty, India not only framed security in terms of the nuclear question, but the word “nuclear” appears in the speech ten times stressing the agenda of complete disarmament. Using all the above key measures as stigma redaction and reasoning of instance, New Delhi simultaneously hoped to: i) maintain a consistent argument by drawing from Nehru’s call for disarmament in the 1950s-1960s and use these compliant acts a tool of memory correction for its 1974 nuclear test, and ii) employ these instances of compliance to make incongruence more socially presentable and later enter normative discussions with the US (as part of the audience of normals) with preparations already underway for New Delhi’s second nuclear test.[141] Nonetheless, even by propagating a universal notion of time-bound disarmament and unequivocally supporting nuclear non-proliferation, India was not unable to overcome its subaltern stigma position as a performer of deviance.

With India’s Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme picking force in the 1990s (PIB, 1996), the United States placed sanctions on the Indian Space Research Organisation and the Russian space organisation, Glavkosmos, as Moscow exchanged cryogenic rocket engine technology with

[141] A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, Secretary of the Indian Defence Research and Development Organisation, recollects that in 1996, Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Roa made a phone call to Kalam saying “Kalam, be ready with the department of atomic energy and your team for the N-test … [y]ou wait for my authorization to go ahead with the test” (Jain, 2013). However, it was not until 1998 that India ultimately conducted its second nuclear test. This is because just two days after the phone call was made, the result of the Indian 1996 general elections brought Vajpayee as the new successor to the Indian Prime Ministerial position (Jain, 2013).

New Delhi (Federation of American Scientists, 1992). While India argued that the rocket propulsion technology would allow launching commercial space satellites, the US maintained that "the engines are powerful enough to be used for rockets capable of carrying a nuclear warhead at least 186 miles" (Smith, 1992). More specifically, Richard Boucher, US State Department deputy spokesman, argued that sanctions remained essential "in curbing the dangerous proliferation of missile technology" (Federation of American Scientists, 1992). Sanctioning India's space programme also serves as a reminder to what has been termed as India-US relations being characterised as "notoriously insecure" (Chacko, 2014: 334), shrouded in "suspicion and distrust" (Kapur and Ganguly, 2007: 642), and trapped in a "low-level equilibrium" (Tellis, 2015: 488) in the reviewed secondary literature in the previous chapters. Furthermore, these sanctions also marked a step back from 1990 when the Indian Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh stated that India's "political dialogue with the United States has resulted in a better appreciation of mutual concerns and shared perceptions on a number of issues" (PIB, 1990).

While on the path to nuclear weaponisation, India's technique of employing stigma redaction and reasoning of instance to reduce social distinctiveness from the United States (as part of the audience of normals) not only played out in the international arena, but also at the domestic front. In accordance with the theoretical framework developed in Chapter 3 on reasoning of instance, India was cautious in contesting dominant understandings on NPT norms. Furthermore, it took into consideration that its non-compliant form of behaviour in gradually becoming an NWS outside the NPT could give rise to an unanticipated "open texture" of interpretation from the audience of normals, including the United States (Hart, 1994: 124). Therefore, New Delhi took an approach of gradually conditioning its domestic populous and the international community of its need to nuclearise rather than openly framing its nuclear ambitions in the context of revisionist aims of power maximisation. As a result, a year before 1998, a series of documents were released by the PIB chronologically from January 1997 to October 1997 that reflected India's strategies of undertaking stigma redaction and reasoning of instance in soon becoming a nuclear power. In these documents, India first highlighted the need to develop "a scientific temper in the nation" by moving beyond "concerted efforts for limiting such interchange of knowledge and experience by subordinating it to commercial or strategic considerations" (PIB, 1997a). Secondly, in advancing the sociological divide between NWSs and NNWSs, New Delhi advanced the argument of drawing "a clear distinction" between the current tenets of the NPT and "the objectives of genuine non-proliferation" (PIB, 1997b). Furthermore, New Delhi also stressed on how it may be "constrained" to keep afloat its nuclear ambitions until "total elimination of all nuclear weapons" is achieved (PIB, 1997b).

Thirdly, in order to use a recent statement as a tool of memory correction against any form of previous non-compliance – even before conducting the 1998 nuclear test and while its preparations were underway – Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral gave a speech in New York that consisted of

stressing on India-US cooperation on commercial trade, the various instances where India contributed to global efforts of non-proliferation, and how the end of the Cold War could potentially re-shape US ambitions towards disarmament and the abolition of Washington's nuclear arsenal (PIB, 1997c).[142] In 1997, the Indian government released a series of press reports identifying how concerns of sharing a tense neighbourhood with China and Pakistan should be of "highest priority" and it was becoming increasingly necessary to "equip the [Indian] armed forces with modern and upgraded weapon systems" (PIB, 1997d).[143] By employing these techniques of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance chronologically since January 1997 through all these press releases, India successfully kept the United States guessing as to when New Delhi would finally test its nuclear weapons capability − while continuing to remain outside the scope of the NPT − and ultimately announce to the world of becoming an NWS.

As a result, post India's nuclear test in 1998, Richard C. Shelby, the chairman of the Senate intelligence committee, called the inability of the United States to get wind of the test as "the intelligence failure of the decade" and "a colossal failure on the part of our intelligence agencies" (Weiner, 1998). Similarly, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan of New York and former US Ambassador to India exclaimed how the test had fooled "the entire U.S. Government" as New Delhi led Washington to believe that the former "wouldn't do anything regarding nuclear weapons … they were not going to do anything precipitous [and] [w]e made the mistake of assuming they would act rationally" (Weiner, 1998). Furthermore, these reactions from the US administration in the case of India going nuclear remain evidence as to how the relationship between the audience of normals and the performer(s) of the deviant is purposely left ambivalent and ontologically anxiety inducing. This is because deviant performances undertaking an act of non-compliance risk disrupting prior progress made on discussions in identifying areas of mutual cooperation to reduce their social distinctiveness from the audience of normals.

5.5. India's 1998 Nuclear Test and Consequent Challenges

After the 1998 nuclear test and along with declaring itself as a nuclear power (Ray, 2018), Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee imposed a self-abiding moratorium on further nuclear testing (Jayaramu, 1999). He also explained in a letter dated May 13, 1998 to the Clinton administration explicitly the underlying reasons for the test and yet wanting to "work with … [the US] … in a multilateral or bilateral framework to promote the cause of nuclear disarmament" (The New York Times, 1998b). As already evident, these immediate steps by Prime Minister Vajpayee after India's May 11, 1998

[142] This could also be viewed as a step towards reducing the differences of how India and the United States perceived challenges relating to the prevalence of nuclear weapons with an improved security environment (after the Cold War) and the NPT not containing a time-bound framework for making NWSs disarm.
[143] However, India wanted to be viewed as a social agent embodying distinctive belief systems and normative baggage, rather than as a black box entity in the international system that is "pathologically obsessed by security" (1997c).

nuclear tests were marked by a rather defensive tone of how India has and will continue complying with nuclear norms, as compared to having developed “international normative symbols of modernity and identity” (PIB, 1998a; Sagan 1996/1997: 55). Vajpayee’s statement can be interpreted as if New Delhi had almost accepted that it needed to justify why its nuclear ambitions were *not* “irrational” and “childlike” (Said, 1978: 40) by giving a detailed account of the *mature* steps New Delhi would continue taking in arresting proliferation and the global arms race. In the same letter, Vajpayee also stated to US President Clinton, that “[w]e hope that you will show understanding of our concern for India's security” and how India is “ready to participate in the negotiations to be held in Geneva in the Conference on Disarmament for the conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty” (The New York Times, 1998b).

The cautionary tone of undertaking stigma redaction and reasoning of instance continued with India’s further two nuclear tests on May 13, 1998. After these tests, a press release from the Indian Ministry of External Affairs read that “the tests have been carried out to generate additional data for improved computer simulation of designs and for attaining the capability to carry out subcritical experiments” (Nuclear Weapon Archive: Official Press Statements, 1998b). Chapter 1’s mention of India immediately cancelling peaceful nuclear trade agreements with Latin American countries after the 1974 nuclear test, Rajiv Gandhi’s Action Plan, and Vajpayee’s letter to the Clinton Administration after the 1998 nuclear explosion, are empirical instances of how states engaging in stigma redaction and reasoning of instance often use (nuclear) compliance as an identity management strategy. While all these acts reinforced India’s “sense of responsibility as a nation committed to the principles of UN Charter and to promoting regional peace and stability” (Singh, 1998: 46), it cannot be ignored that the Indian nuclear tests simultaneously deviated from the NPT in advocating an “exercise of the principle of equal and legitimate security for all” (Singh, 1998: 42).

After a statement from the President of the United Nations Security Council – being jointly held by Bonaya Adhi Godana and Njuguna Mahugu from Kenya − that “strongly deplore[d]” the 1998 Indian nuclear tests and “strongly urge[d] India to refrain from any further tests” (United Nations Archives, 1998), India’s attitude underwent a gradual shift.[144] In countering the stigmatising effects of this statement, for the first time after its 1998 nuclear tests, New Delhi was defiant in declaring that the statement was “completely unacceptable to us” and criticised the Council of how the latter was biased in never thinking “it necessary even to take cognizance of the many hundreds of nuclear tests carried out over the last 50 years” (Nuclear Weapon Archive: Official Press Statements, 1998b). While the phrases used can be treated as far from being cautious, India followed up on these normative challenges by again presenting its track record of compliant behaviour. What implicitly underlines

[144] The notion of stigma refers to how the statement treated India as being a deviant that undertook the 1998 nuclear tests to destabilise “the de facto moratorium on the testing of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, and to global efforts towards nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament” (United Nations Archives, 1998).

these responses is the ontological challenges that states face in managing their agentic concerns as well as simultaneously developing a social strategy to manage their stigmatised identities.

The response from the United States against India's 1998 nuclear tests were no different in evoking vehement opposition from Washington's policy circle. After the US imposition of sanctions on India through Section 102 of the Arms Export Control Act, Karl Inderfurth, US Assistant Secretary for South Asian Affairs, further testified to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as to how the Indian tests "will have a significant impact on the substance of our relationship with India" (US Department of State Archives, 1998). However, within these international condemnations, what is missing are the sporadic references to the invoked imageries of the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki carried out by the US Truman Administration in 1945 (Miller Center, 1945). With an indirect reference to the United States, Khurshed Alam Khan, then holding the portfolio for India's Minister of State for External Affairs, mentioned in an address in 1985 to participating countries of the Non-Alignment Movement as to how "[m]emories of the catastrophe that struck Hiroshima and Nagasaki forty years ago pale into insignificance when we consider the mindboggling destructive potential of nuclear weapons in existence today" (PIB, 1985b). As part of the audience of normals and condemning the Indian nuclear tests in 1998 at the UNSC, Japan used the same imageries of the colossal destruction that unfolded in Hiroshima and Nagasaki after the US bombings in 1945 to highlight the "unspeakable horrors of nuclear weapons [that the Japanese people had witnessed first-hand] and were determined not to allow the nuclear tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki ever again to visit the globe" (United Nations, 1998a).

By analysing both instances of evoking the times in human history when nuclear bombs were deployed during warfare, its interpretations in each case differed, depending on the position within the power hierarchy that states occupy in the international system. Furthermore, it is also demonstrative of how memory is used as a tool of pursuing foreign policy in the nuclear arena.[145] Therefore, while India evoked the imageries of the Hiroshima and the Nagasaki bombings to *urge* NWSs to disarm and further prevent proliferation across the globe, Japan used the same historical instance to *condemn* the Indian nuclear tests. Tokyo also seemed to link that New Delhi as a new nuclear power would use nuclear weapons *irrationally* to repeat the nuclear catastrophes of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and which Tokyo was historically *determined* to stop.[146] Secondly, New Delhi's employment of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki incidents supports the theoretical framework of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance in the preceding chapters. In invoking these imageries, not only did New Delhi use stigma

[145] Rather than looking at stigma redaction and reasoning of instance as an argumentation technique for studying an actor specific way of influencing memory in international politics, Hom (2020) has developed a comprehensive account of theorising time. He argues that time can be viewed as "a privileged change continuum, governing principle, theme, or idea that provides the organising rubric for stitching disparate changes, processes, and agents together into a coherent and orderly whole" (35).

[146] This notion of irrationality seemed absent when India associated the actual usage of nuclear weapons to the United States during World War II.

redaction and reasoning of instance as a tool of memory correction against its previous nuclear test in 1974, but also exercised an agentic responsibility in remaining cognisant of the nuclear horrors of World War II. Finally, by using these imageries New Delhi strategically attempted to employ stigma redaction and reasoning of instance to shift attention from what it termed as a PNE in 1974 and further acquiring nuclear weapons capability in 1998, as differing from Washington's *actual* usage of nuclear weapons on an opposition target.

By ultimately weaponising its nuclear programme in 1998, India blurred the lines between declaring that the 1974 nuclear test was a PNE "in the field of mining and earth-moving operations" (United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, 1976: 146) versus the road to ultimately fulfilling its nuclear ambitions to become an NWS. Therefore, the problem lay in the clarity of India's contestation to global nuclear norms. Before the 1998 nuclear tests, several documents from the PIB pointed to a change in Indian foreign policy in the face of the Cold War arms race as "present approaches to addressing such problems like technological fixes or regional arrangements can no longer suffice" (PIB, 1992a), efforts "need to be continued taking into account our national interests and the dynamics of the international situation" (PIB, 1992b), and the urgent "need for the big powers to demonstrate their intentions for global denuclearisation" (PIB, 1994). While these statements may be interpreted as instances of realpolitik for India to ultimately weaponise, it also feeds into the wider problem of constructing a credible Indian non-violent nuclear identity to actually make the US (as part of audience of normals) instil further trust and diplomatic resources in the India-US bi-lateral relationship.

Therefore, borrowing from Deitelhoff and Zimmerman (2020), Saha (2022c: 5) writes that "it is not exactly clear whether India is critical of the norms that underwrite the NPT and/or the application of NPT norms on itself and other states rendered NNWSs." Not only does maintaining this ambiguous nature of contesting nuclear norms invoke an issue of credibility for the audience of normals in understanding India's nuclear identity, it also perpetuates a wider problem in the constitution of the international hierarchy of states. India has consistently pursued a foreign policy in arguing that "[t]he growing chasm between the developing and developed world may in the future lead to increasing dangerous tensions" and "[t]he remnants of colonialism and racialism, where they still exist, must go" (NAI, 1977a). However, in holding onto a notion of norm contestation that refuses to lend clarity to India's nuclear ambitions in the global arena − while continuing to remain non-signatories to the NPT and the CTBT – makes it harder for New Delhi to pursue equal norm advocacy to abolish the hierarchical system of states in nuclear governance. Secondly, as stigma redaction and reasoning of instance stresses on a cautious line of argumentation, an ambiguity in India's contestation of nuclear norms contrarily contributed to the audience of normals being unable to differentiate India's nuclear ambitions in terms of "authentic information from strategic deception" (Müller, 2004: 398). Both these aspects raise several questions on the compliant nature of India's nuclear identity and whether

India was successful in convincing the United Staes of the former persistently conforming to global nuclear norms.

5.6. An Emergent Non-Compliant Indian Nuclear Identity

When it exploded the 1974 nuclear device, India constantly projected itself of only wanting "to utilize all applications of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes" (PIB, 1974), stressed on a policy based on "cooperation" rather than "confrontational" and explicitly pledged to "never manufacture atomic weapons nor proliferate the technology of weapon development" (NAI, 1977g). Similarly, in conducting nuclear tests in 1998, India defensively argued how the tests should not be seen as an opposition to global nuclear norms, were conducted in light of its anxious security environment, and would additionally be used to generate additional scientific data. However, Adler-Nissen (2014) comprehensively points out that any process of socialisation and identity needs to be shared between the stigmatised and the audience of normals.[147] Having demonstrated in the previous sections how India showcased semi-compliance in various instances through the usage of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance, India's nuclear identity remained far from being perceived by the US as persistently conforming to global nuclear norms.

Firstly, constructing India's identity as conforming requires a social understanding of whether the constitutive elements of this identity was actually believed by the United States, as being part of the audience of normals. In looking at the archival evidence, New Delhi's justifications in context to its nuclear intentions as being non-violent have always been questioned in Washington. Just after a month of India's reasoning of conducting the 1974 nuclear test as a PNE, Daniel Parker, administrator of the United States Agency for International Development, called the Indira Gandhi-led Indian government "controversial" for spending millions of dollars on exploding a nuclear device while simultaneously requesting food aid from Washington (NAI, 1974b). He was further supported by Congressman Charles Wilson who argued that New Delhi's attitude was very "chauvinistic and military-minded" that only praised the Nixon administration "when we wrote off $2 billion in bad debts" (NAI, 1974b).

Another key reason that continued hindering Washington's acceptance of India's identity as socially compliant was because of how India constructed its norm challenge to the global nuclear order, while simultaneously seeking exceptional considerations. Albeit using stigma redaction and reasoning of instance allowed India to constantly stress its compliant non-proliferation record, arguing that it is time for "arresting, and eliminating" the "remnants of colonialism and racialism" (NAI, 1977a) evokes a confrontational nature of norm challenge to the United States and more generally, to the global nuclear order. Furthermore, not only did New Delhi refuse to sign the NPT (and later the

[147] See also: Acharya (2012); Epstein (2012); Hoffmann (2010).

CTBT) but seemed to constantly seek exceptions while harbouring its own nuclear ambitions. After managing to stay out of ceding to Carter's proposal in accepting safeguards on all Indian nuclear facilities post the 1974 nuclear test (NAI, 1977c), then Indian External Minister Vajpayee had asked Washington if the latter could "explore the possibility of amending the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act" (NAI, 1979). Had this exception been considered, the Tarapur Atomic Power Station would have continued receiving uninterrupted low-enrichment supplies from the United States. While this proposal fell through, a report from the Ministry of External Affairs for the Americas Division pointed out how "because of our economic links with Vietnam there is an adverse feeling against India amongst some Congressmen" as Washington had recently concluded a war with Hanoi in 1973 (NAI, 1979).

As already shown in the previous sections, one can observe the gradual shift of India's policy stance in abhorring WMDs before its nuclear explosion in 1974, adapting an approach of looking for exceptions and continued accusations on the global nuclear order throughout the late 1970s and 1980s, to finally conditioning its domestic populous and the international community of its need to nuclearise. Albeit using a defensive approach of reasoning of instance to ultimately nuclearise, New Delhi's years of showcasing compliant behaviour and using discourse to frame itself as a reliable global partner towards non-proliferation and disarmament lost international credibility after its 1998 nuclear tests. In reacting to the Indian nuclear tests, US President Clinton remarked how the tests "directly challenges the firm international consensus to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction" (US Department of State Archives, 1998). States opposing India's 1998 nuclear tests and the accompanying international organisations as audience of normals can, in fact, be understood in terms of "norm clusters" (Winston, 2018: 647) that Chapter 3 highlighted. The US was part of this norm cluster that unanimously adopted Resolution 1172, and came to an overall normative consensus that "that the international regime on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons should be maintained and consolidated … [and] … that in accordance with the NPT India … cannot have the status of a nuclear-weapon State" (United Nations, 1998a). The nuclear tests of India as non-compliance not only interfered with the historical process of unfused diffusion that had originally led to the negotiation and implementation of the NPT, but also served as a hinderance to the social expectations that states had from the treaty. Karl F. Inderfurth, Assistant Secretary for South Asian Affairs, who testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee argued how these tests were "a serious violation of international non-proliferation norms, and a repudiation of international efforts to contain the further spread of nuclear weapons and pursue nuclear disarmament" (US Department of State Archives, 1998).

A further aspect of India's non-conforming nuclear identity is losing the label of being a reliable partner in arresting global proliferation and re-armament. New Delhi was now being treated as an emerging key contributor in reviving international nuclear testing and starting off a South Asian arms

race. Therefore, an undisclosed US Senate member argued that the Indian nuclear tests triggered a US law for the United States to be "legally free to engage in nuclear testing" in bringing back the US-Soviet Cold War rivalry (Gertz, 1998).[148] Furthermore, with India-Pakistan relations remaining perpetually shrouded in animosity and China having completed nuclear testing in 1964, Henry Sokolski, Director of the Nonproliferation Policy Education Center, speculated how the Indian nuclear tests and non-compliance would now propel Pakistan to go nuclear in "looking at a nuclear arms race in South Asia" (Gertz, 1998).

Alongside losing credibility of its internationally self-constructed perception of a peaceful nuclear power dedicated to efforts of global non-proliferation and disarmament, New Delhi could not trace back its steps in claiming that it is does not wish to develop an indigenous nuclear weapons programme. The implications of this newly gained irreversible social identity after developing a nuclear weapons programme were several. Firstly, no longer was India's pursuit of its nuclear identity covered in ambiguity and hinged on whether the United States believed in this socially constructed perception of India's peaceful nuclear intentions. Therefore, contrary to New Delhi's statement on the "inherent right to use nuclear explosion technology for peaceful purposes" (PIB, 1974), Washington's scepticism of New Delhi's further nuclear intentions was confirmed – now that "the decades-old 'peaceful' pretense [was] stripped away" (Gilinky and Leventhal, 1998). Secondly, the Indian nuclear tests served as an instance of norm violation in the context to the NPT coming into force in 1970. Consequently, sanctions were imposed on India by the US as well as the other audience of normals. As the theoretical framework of this thesis had earlier discussed how the imposition of strict stigmatisation takes away a reversible aspect of the social constitution of the state in question, New Delhi permanently lost pursuit of being a *normal* NPT abiding NNWS in nuclear governance.

Hence, as discussed in the next chapter, the only ways that India's newly weaponised nuclear programme could now be (semi-)accommodated in the international arena was either through a de-facto recognition and/or an extremely arduous process of amending the NPT and risking other states similarly proliferating and then bargaining for an NWS status. Finally, the 1998 Indian nuclear tests also demanded that India now restructure the way in which it challenges the role of the US within the global nuclear regime. Contrary to the statement put out by the Indian Atomic Energy Commission in defending India's 1974 nuclear test as a "inherent right" in conducting a PNE (United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, 1976: 150), employing a similar justificatory strategy would mean that India believed that all nations had the right to weaponise. Not only would this translate into New Delhi making a complete shift in its deep-rooted historical stance of curbing proliferation but would

[148] This is a reference to The Hatfield-Exon-Mitchell Amendment (signed by President George H.W. Bush into law in 1992) that suspended all US nuclear testing by September 30, 1996, on the condition that other countries do the same (The Library of Congress, 2020; von Hippel, 2019). Before this moratorium could come into force, the United States signed the CTBT on September 24, 1996 (von Hippel, 2019).

also intensify the social challenge New Delhi needed to overcome in the subaltern stigma position to move towards de-facto recognition. Hence, New Delhi had to explicitly point out that *despite* these nuclear tests, it still wanted to "promote the cause of nuclear disarmament", was committed "to participate in non-discriminatory and verifiable global disarmament measures", and willing to engage "in the negotiations to be held in Geneva in the Conference on Disarmament for the conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty" (The New York Times, 1998b).[149]As discussed previously, the problem of India's commitment to non-proliferation and disarmament and at the same time refusing to disarm, has been often been characterised by scholars as *nuclear duality* and/or Indian *civilisational exceptionalism* (Chacko, 2014; Chacko and Davis, 2018; Malik, 2010; Mohan, 2007). However, this shift of stance of New Delhi from the 1974 nuclear test to the 1998 nuclear test was indeed problematic. This is because India was not only making an exceptional argument, but also an unpopular and non-normative one with the majority of NNWSs asking a very small number of existing NWSs to disarm within the nuclear hierarchy.

Having already pointed out the instances through which New Delhi tried to employ reasoning of instance and stigma redaction to constantly rebrand itself of possessing limited nuclear ambitions, the pursuit of India's persistently compliant nuclear identity was never successful, especially after its nuclear test in 1974. Therefore, post the 1998 timeline, and as the next chapter discusses, it took New Delhi almost half a decade after its second nuclear test to again convince Washington that the former could be trusted as a reliable global partner in advancing non-proliferation and disarmament agendas in the international context.

5.7. Conclusion

After Chapter 4 underlined the methodological choices that guides this thesis' data collection and interpretation, Chapter 5 analysed the empirical evidence while taking into consideration the already developed theoretical framework of this thesis. Thus, this chapter has i) shown the important instances that re-instated India's international hierarchical position and how this position risked further being cemented with India's differing world-view from that of the United States, ii) demonstrated how post India's 1974 nuclear test, India employed stigma redaction and reasoning of instance to constantly stress on its compliant nuclear track record in improving its relationship with the United States, iii) discussed as to why in spite of using stigma redaction and reasoning of instance as an identity management technique, India-US bi-lateral relations continued to induce ontological anxiety as India gradually proceeded towards its second nuclear test in 1998, iv) traced the gradual shift of tone that India undertook in justifying its 1998 nuclear test, as compared to reasoning its earlier nuclear test as a PNE, and v) critically underlined why India was never successful in conveying to the US of being a

[149] The reference to India's participation was in context to the upcoming conference in Geneva in August 1998. This conference was under the leadership of the Conference on Disarmament that decided to establish an ad-hoc committee to further talks on reaching an agreement for a fissile material cut-off treaty (United Nations, 1998b).

compliant nuclear identity.

To shed light on these key points, this chapter has been divided into five sections. The first section identified the instances that demonstrate the hierarchical relationship between New Delhi and Washington. This particularly played out after India's 1974 nuclear test, when the United States curbed humanitarian aid to India, argued that the Indian nuclear test was a big setback to nuclear non-proliferation, opted for measures to curtain Indian nuclear ambitions, and suspended shipping low-enriched uranium to the Indian Tarapur Atomic Power Station. Hence, because of this differing worldview, the Indian subaltern stigma position risked being permanently cemented in nuclear governance.

The second section studied how New Delhi constructed its response to the stigma imposed on it by Washington through the discussions on stigma redaction and reasoning of instance in the preceding chapters. While the hierarchical relationship between the United States and India remained unaltered, there was some visible improvement in the interactions between both states. This included the Reagan administration asking France to succeed the former in continuing low-enriched uranium shipment to the Indian Tarapur Atomic Power Station.

Moving on from the 1980s to the 1990s whereby India consequently weaponised its nuclear programme, the third section examined why this was the case. In doing so, it discussed how India's missile and space programme was sanctioned by the United States in curbing international proliferation as well as delegitimising India's global ambitions. Hence, in cautiously proceeding towards acquiring nuclear weapons, this section also highlighted the arguments India used in gradually conditioning the domestic and global populous of the former's need to nuclearise.

The fourth section examined the change of New Delhi's tone in justifying the 1998 nuclear tests, as compared to arguing that the earlier conducted nuclear test in 1974 was a PNE. This section argued that India's ramped up tone of responses to the condemnations and sanctions from the US is evidence as to how India struggled to maintain its peaceful nuclear image as well as simultaneously manage its security and agentic concerns as a new nuclear power. Nonetheless, post the 1998 nuclear tests, New Delhi's credibility of a peaceful nuclear power undertook a severe blow in confirming Washington's fear as to why India could no longer be trusted as a global partner in curbing nuclear proliferation.

Albeit India's show of semi-compliance in various instances through the usage of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance, the last section discussed the hinderances that prevented India from being understood as a conforming nuclear identity by the United States. This included New Delhi's i) problem of instilling trust in Washington of the former's peaceful nuclear ambitions, ii) confrontational tone in challenging the global nuclear order while being a non-signatory to the NPT and the CTBT as well as simultaneously requesting Washington for exceptions in terms of nuclear

trade, iii) loss of credibility as a reliable partner in the global fight towards non-proliferation after its own nuclear tests in 1998 and feeding Washington's fears of contributing to an arms race in South Asia, and iv) a permanent and irreversible identity loss of being a normal NPT abiding NNWS and now requiring an amended status of recognition in nuclear governance.

After analysing Indian nuclear identity from 1974 (India's first nuclear test) to 1998 (India's second test) and examining how India constructed a different set of responses for each of these tests, this chapter concluded why India's identity cannot be characterised as being compliant to global nuclear norms. Furthermore, it also employed discussions from the previous chapters in identifying the key instances through which India's responses to the United States (in justifying the former's nuclear tests) can be understood as stigma redaction and reasoning of instance. In employing the same conceptual discussions from the previously designed theoretical framework of this thesis, the next chapter is underlined by the analyses of India-US nuclear relations between the time-period of 1999 to 2008. By studying the primary and the secondary sources of analyses, the next chapter looks at how India moved to gaining a de-facto recognition of its nuclear programme from the United States, the involved dynamics of India emerging as a successful norm innovator, and if at all this de-facto recognition corresponded to India overcoming its subaltern stigma position.

Chapter 6| India's Interactions with the United States from 1999 to 2008[150]

6.1. Introduction

"I … [undertake analysis not as] an experimental science in search of law but an interpretive one in search of meaning. It is explication I am after, constructing social expressions on their surface enigmatical. But this pronouncement, a doctrine in a clause, demands itself some explication" (Geertz, 1973: 5).

This quote by Geertz (1973) not only serves as a reflection of the methodological choices that this thesis makes in understanding the India-US nuclear case from 1974 to 2008, but also provides a strong backdrop of how this chapter seeks to accomplish its empirical aims. In building on the previous chapter, this chapter studies important instances of India-US interactions within the second half of the analytical timeframe of this thesis. This timeframe spans from 1999 (after India's second nuclear test in 1998) to 2008 (the operationalisation of the India-US bi-lateral 123 Agreement). In doing so, Chapter 6 aims to: i) highlight New Delhi's construction of a more transparent security policy after its emergence as a non-compliant nuclear identity in the previous chapter, ii) point to the nature of social irreversibility of New Delhi's nuclear identity even though Washington removed all nuclear relations sanctions on the former by 2001, iii) look at the specific instances of New Delhi's emergence as a norm innovator within the global non-proliferation regime and the specific norms it affected in the process, iv) examine why the emergence of India as a successful norm innovator did not automatically correspond to a more explicit de-facto acceptance of its nuclear programme by the United States, and v) argue why New Delhi's norm innovation through stigma redaction and reasoning of instance eventually allowed itself of not being perceived as occupying the subaltern position.

After Chapter 5 started building the empirical section of this thesis, Chapter 6 discusses the India-US nuclear case further. These discussions are carried forward through the continued usage of a historical and chronological narrative under the ambit of CDA to examine India's nuclear identity and behaviour vis-à-vis its interactions with the United States. In doing so, this chapter further reinstates the importance of studying India-US nuclear relations through an interdisciplinary lens of IR theory, IPS, and international nuclear governance. After looking at why India was unable to reduce its social distinctiveness from the US as part of the audience of normals through stigma redaction and reasoning

[150] Minor parts of subsections that appear under this chapter have been re-written and appeared in a shorter format *in E-International Relations* and *International Studies Quarterly*. The articles can be accessed here: i) Saha, A. 2021. "In the Shadow of Sanctions? US–India Relations and the S-400 Purchase", *E-International Relations*, 29 January. Retrieved from https://www.e-ir.info/2021/01/29/in-the-shadow-of-sanctions-us-india-relations-and-the-s-400-purchase/. Last accessed date: February 16, 2021, and ii) Saha, A. 2022b. "Nuclear Stigma and Deviance in Global Governance: A New Research Agenda", *International Studies Quarterly*, 66(3): sqac055. doi:10.1093/isq/sqac055.

of instance in the previous chapter, Chapter 6 aims to argue the opposite in studying the second half of this thesis' timeline. More specifically, it looks at why and how India-US interactions in the nuclear arena differed from the previous timeline in terms of discourse and policy practice. In continuing to remain cognisant to questions of agency in studying India's nuclear identity and behaviour through its interactions with the United States in the identified primary and secondary sources of analyses, this chapter asks: How did India attempt to reconstruct its social perception as a responsible nuclear power after conducting its second nuclear test in 1998 and therefore violating NPT norms? Why did Washington's removal of all nuclear related sanctions on India in 2001 not automatically translate into India becoming a part of the normals? Why and how can India be characterised as a norm innovator in nuclear governance? Why did India's successful norm innovation not lead to a more explicit recognition of its nuclear weapons programme from the United States? To what extent was India able to overcome its subaltern stigma position by rebranding itself as a responsible nuclear power after the 1998 nuclear tests? To answer these questions, this chapter has been divided into five sections.

The first section links the discussions from the previous chapter in demonstrating India's cautionary justification of nuclear norms through stigma redaction and reasoning of instance, post its 1998 nuclear tests. It also highlights New Delhi's cognisance of its lost social status after conducting the 1998 nuclear tests in violation of nuclear norms as laid out in the NPT. To amend this loss of social status, New Delhi undertook a policy of strategic transparency by giving advance notice to Washington about the former's missile test and incorporating an implicit acceptance of the nuclear hierarchy. Doing so, gradually paved way for the removal of all nuclear-related sanctions on India by the United States.

The second section argues that the removal of sanctions on New Delhi by Washington did not automatically translate into New Delhi constituting the audience of normals in nuclear governance. Several factors hindered India's transition into becoming a normal which included the absence of discourse that focussed on strengthening India-US bi-lateral ties, renewed sanctions by the US on Indian entities in suspicion of helping Iran develop WMDs, and India's continued distrust with IAEA safeguards. Furthermore, this section spells out an importance difference between India's irreversible social identity versus perpetual deviant behaviour in the subaltern stigma position. While New Delhi was far from being incorporated into the audience of normals, using stigma redaction and reasoning of instance still allowed room to negotiate this difference. This remains unlike the case of extreme deviance whereby states may consider themselves as being outside the nuclear normative space and wear this form of deviance as a badge of honour.

The third section specifically looks at how India's irreversible social identity and semi-compliant behaviour gradually gave way to India constructing itself as a successful norm innovator in

international politics. In doing so, it traces New Delhi wanting to assume a great power-like role within the global non-proliferation regime and how New Delhi justified that this role naturally occurred for itself to undertake. Pointing to discourses underlying the India-US relationship, this section demonstrates why New Delhi was able to make a case for itself in becoming a successful norm innovator and the steps Washington undertook to make this change of New Delhi's identity successful. In further building onto the empirical conceptualisations of norm innovation in nuclear politics, this section also underlines the specific norms that India affected by emerging as a norm innovator in nuclear governance.

The fourth section highlights why the emergence of India as a successful norm innovator did not automatically correspond to a more explicit de-facto acceptance of its nuclear programme by the United States. In doing so, this section underlines the dissonances that continued to remain in the India-US nuclear relationship and argues that India's emergence as a successful norm innovator was a case of a norm being semi-accepted that was reversible and conditional. Furthermore, this section constructs the norm of semi-acceptance being embedded in the broader idea of normative change as one cannot historically undo India's 1998 nuclear tests and its signing of the 123 Agreement with the United States.

With India's de-facto recognition from Washington now in place, the last section examines whether India's usage of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance can be characterised as a change in India's subaltern nuclear identity post its 1974 nuclear test. To point to the aspects as to what constitutes this change, the last section highlights India's shared ideational notions of governance with Washington, its war of positions with Washington as being ontologically insecure rather than a resistance to hegemony, the material and ideational aspects associated with possessing nuclear weapons, and India's continued persistence in seeking a high social status in nuclear governance.

6.2. Reducing Social Distinctiveness and Moving Towards a 'New' Form of Social Compliance

The previous chapter highlighted how India's justifications of the 1998 nuclear tests gradually moved into an aggressive tone of treating any opposing perspective of the tests as biased and "completely unacceptable to us" (Nuclear Weapon Archive: Official Press Statements, 1998b). However, in the last few months of 1998, the analysis of India's nuclear behaviour can again be related back to the theoretical framework developed in Chapters 2 and 3. Albeit using an aggressive tone to justify the 1998 nuclear tests, New Delhi carefully backed up these justifications through a cautionary approach of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance.

Therefore, the later months of 1998 saw New Delhi move back into showcasing some aspects of compliant forms of behaviour. After the 1998 nuclear explosion, India's then Defence Minister, George Fernandes, reiterated India's historical position in commenting – in rather contrary terms –

that the explosions rather enabled India to "pursue, with credibility and greater conviction, our long-term campaign to rid the world of nuclear weapons" (Pethiyagoda, 2021: 147). The words "long-term campaign" automatically evoked several Indian initiatives in the past towards gradually reducing the threat that the world faces from nuclear weapons. These include the first Prime Minister of independent India, Jawaharlal Nehru, asking the international community to halt testing of nuclear weapons at the peak of US-Soviet rivalry through a Standstill Agreement, as early as 1954 (United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law, 2009).

Another instance is India's active participation in the negotiations of the CTBT − where albeit ultimately choosing to remain a non-signatory – India "endors[ed] the spirit of [a] test-ban and self-imposed [a] moratorium on tests" (Ramesh, 2019). While mulling over the draft resolution and New Delhi's ratification to the CTBT, India took a proactive stance in arguing for complete global disarmament "within a specified framework of time", "halt[ing] proliferation of nuclear weapons through nuclear testing", and stating that "all [s]tates" (irrespective of their NWSs status from the NPT) should sign and ratify the CTBT (United Nations: Press Release GA/DIS/3134, 1998c).[151] In using these specific reasons of staying out of the CTBT, New Delhi not only conveyed as to how it remained opposed to revisionist agendas of global proliferation and rearmament, but also demonstrated evident commitment to the normative nuclear goals of the global nuclear regime.

These instances further demonstrate how an attributed outlaw status would remain ontologically uncomfortable to India in the long-term. Also, India justifying the 1974 and 1998 nuclear tests as remaining committed to nuclear non-proliferation is reflective of reasoning of instance and stigma redaction operating in defensive capacity to preserve the social values of the audience of normals. This, in fact, is different in terms of wearing deviance as a badge of honour, whereby a state such as North Korea defines periodic missile and nuclear testing as retaliating with a "thousand times with merciless military blows" and "blow[ing] up the strongholds of the U.S. imperialist aggressors" (Korean Central News Agency, 2009; Korean Central News Agency, 2013).

If seen from a military perspective, India has a lesser number of nuclear warheads in contemporary times compared to Pakistan − even though New Delhi was first in declaring itself a nuclear power (The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2021). Also, India's nuclear arsenal has been growing at a lesser rate compared to a more recent nuclear power such as North Korea (The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 2021). Therefore, India's nuclear ambitions not only go against Mearsheimer's idea of offensive realism that no amount of strategic power is enough to guarantee survival in the anarchic system (Mearsheimer, 2001), but also makes India's commitment to nuclear norms of global governance more socially believable. The demonstration of India's low

[151] These were the key phrases that India wanted the CTBT to incorporate in its final version. However, as these aspects were never incorporated, the Indian delegation argued that India could not join the CTBT in its current form as the treaty is "discriminatory and moulded in a coercive manner" (United Nations, 1998d).

reliability on nuclear arsenals made the US believe the former's commitment to nuclear norms. As I show in the subsequent sections, this later culminated into the issuing of a joint statement between President Bush and Prime Minister Sigh, where President Bush recognised "India's strong commitment to preventing WMD proliferation" and argued that "as a responsible state with advanced nuclear technology, India should acquire the same benefits and advantages as other such states" (US Department of State Archives, 2005).

Having recently lost credibility of a non-violent power after the 1998 nuclear tests, India seemed to take cognisance of this loss of its social status. Unlike the 1998 nuclear tests, New Delhi avoided conducting a weapons test in secret but gave advance notice to Washington of the former's intention to test Agni II − a medium-range and nuclear capable ballistic missile (CNN, 1999).[152] In speaking about the missile test, Indian Prime Minster Vajpayee argued how this was a "purely defensive step", "not meant for aggression against any nation", and remained proof "of our determination to strengthen our national security" (PIB, 1999a). Vajpayee also re-iterated India's nuclear doctrine – similar in lines from a draft report that would later be released from the National Security Advisory Board in August 1999 − of how "India remains committed to minimum deterrence, to no-first-use of nuclear weapons, and never to use them against non-nuclear weapon states."[153] As a result, the tone in the Indian stance underwent a gradual change. Unlike the analyses in the previous chapter, New Delhi's projection of itself as a non-violent nuclear power that believed in "nuclear energy resources [was] entirely for peaceful purposes" (NMML,1974b) and contrarily moved into developing nuclear weapons in secret in 1998, now constructed a policy of apparent transparency in enhancing its conventional and nuclear strike force capabilities.

This shift of reducing social distinctiveness on the basis of transparent foreign policy making seemed to end India's *nuclear ambiguity* since the 1950s.[154] This aspect of using transparency as a technique of demonstrating compliance through stigma redaction and reasoning of instance seemed to be initially well received by Washington. Therefore, even while maintaining a strict policy of non-proliferation for NNWSs (as deemed by the NPT), White House spokesman Nanda Chitre

[152] The US interest in developing ballistic missile technology gained speed in the late 1940s and the 1950s (Federation of American Scientists, 1997). Nonetheless, because of Washington's position as a hegemon in global governance, it never gave an advance notice to New Delhi in carrying out testing amidst escalating hostile relations between Washington and Moscow.
[153] India's nuclear doctrine was not formally adopted before January 2003 (Indian Ministry of External Affairs, 2003).
[154] Mukherjee (2019: 127) characterises India's nuclear ambiguity as "not to go nuclear but rather to keep the option open publicly while simultaneously pushing for disarmament as a serious foreign policy goal." However, Tellis (2001: 11) argues that nuclear ambiguity was maintained even after the 1998 nuclear tests, as India did not clarify as to whether it "already possessed a ready inventory of nuclear warheads or whether it intended to create such an inventory, to be maintained and deployed at certain minimal standards of readiness." My argument marks a caveat from the one made by Tellis as the end of nuclear ambiguity not only depends on the declaration of warheads but also the shift in India's social position in international governance as a new NWS, that was in violation of the NPT and the CTBT.

"appreciate[d] India's efforts to provide transparency" (CNN, 1999). Following India's press release on the safety standards of its operating nuclear power reactors, US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld stated that India had a "healthy respect" for the "power and the lethality of those [nuclear] weapons and the dangers that they pose to the world and [have] take[n] the appropriate steps to assure that they are managed and handled in a way it reflects the dangers that those weapons pose" (PIB, 2001).

What also characterised this compliance was India's continued implicit acceptance of a nuclear hierarchy that it still considered itself to be a part of – especially after ending its nuclear ambiguity with the 1998 nuclear tests. This argument borrows from the theoretical framework in the previous chapters that characterise the subaltern stigma position in terms of *who* has the power to impose normative judgements on *whom*. While India maintained how the current nuclear order was "discriminatory" (PIB, 1999b), it contrarily continued constructing stigma redaction and reasoning of instance in terms of stressing on compliant behaviour − as deemed socially congruent by the audience of normals. An example of this form of social compliance was when the Deputy Chairman Planning Commission of the Indian Prime Minister's office K. C. Pant argued in a speech at Harvard University that in contributing to global efforts of non-proliferation and disarmament "India's record on export controls and proliferation has been impeccable" (PIB, 1999b).[155]

In similar terms, the existing literature argues that India's compliant track-record, recognition as a strategic partner against Chinese ambitions, and mutual goals of fighting terrorism and nuclear proliferation as democratic states (Bhatia, 2013; Ganguly and Mistry, 2006; Leveringhaus and Sullivan de Estrada; 2018; Pant and Biswas, 2018; Perkovich, 2005) enabled the United States to ultimately remove sanctions on India in 2001 (Library of Congress, 2002: 1-3). While these explanations are not without its merit, one crucial aspect that is overlooked is New Delhi's reasoning of instance and stigma redaction (in terms of stressing on compliant behaviour and transparent foreign policy making) contributed to Washington's removal of all nuclear-related sanctions on the former. Hence, if India continued a policy of developing weapons in secret without giving an advance notice to Washington, denied the existence of a nuclear hierarchy through stigma rejection and/or counter-stigmatisation approaches, and explicitly claimed equal social standing to that of the NWSs, it remains doubtful if Washington would identify mutual areas of cooperation with New Delhi and withdraw sanctions on the latter by 2001. Furthermore, India may have risked falling into the perpetual rogue label and rendered incapable of gradually escaping the subaltern stigma position.

[155] It needs to be noted that there is a distinction between a non-violent nuclear country versus displaying a compliant track record. Non-violent would refer to India's reluctance to weaponise until 1998, that can also be traced back to India's agentic history of non-violent struggle for independence against British colonial rule. Displaying a compliant track record would specifically refer to the foreign policy decisions India undertook to maintain its non-violent perception in the global nuclear order.

Nonetheless this new form of compliance of transparency and implicit acceptance of the nuclear hierarchy still did not succeed in overcoming what Chapter 2 characterises as the relationship between the performer of the deviant and the audience of normals being shrouded in perpetual anxiety. Not only was this because the performer of the deviant may again resort to nuclear behaviour, but also a void in policy making as to how India's new nuclear identity (post the 1998 nuclear tests) could be accommodated in the global nuclear order. Hence, albeit Washington's response to the Agni II missile test was relatively muted as compared to the Indian 1998 nuclear tests (along with the removal of US sanctions on India by 2001), the underlying ambivalence in the India-US relationship constantly seemed to reappear in diplomatic negotiations. Talbott (2004: 121), then US Deputy Secretary of State, recollects in his book how this tense relationship constantly played out during negotiations in the late 1990s and early 2000s between himself and Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh. Talbott (2004: 121) states that Singh had argued that "a democratic, socially cohesive, politically confident [and now a transparent] India could be trusted with the bomb", Washington "should back off its insistence on India's acceptance of the nonproliferation benchmarks", and "stop pestering his prime minister for a timetable that required a public commitment to signing the CTBT within a year." Responding to the of lack of assurances from his Indian counterpart to sign the CTBT, Talbott (2004: 122) had sternly stated that "[y]our prime minister had no problem leading when it came to testing. Why can't he lead in dealing with the consequences of testing?"

6.3. Non-compliance and Social Irreversibility of India's Nuclear Identity

After India's nuclear test in 1998 and continued opposition to the NPT, Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee had written to the Clinton Administration citing "deteriorating security environment, specially the nuclear environment" that had forced India to go nuclear (The New York Times, 1998b). Vajpayee also imposed a moratorium on further nuclear testing as well as explained to the Clinton administration that the 1998 nuclear tests should be viewed in light of India's "atmosphere of distrust" in the neighbourhood (The New York Times, 1998b). Nonetheless, as a consequence of these tests and remaining in violation of the widely accepted NPT (and a simultaneous non-signatory), India socially lost a reversible part of being a *responsible* nuclear power.

India's de-facto nuclear status was only formalised in 2008 by the US (US Department of State Archives, 2008), and it was not until 2001 that the Bush Administration decided to remove all nuclear-related sanctions from India (The Library of Congress, 2002: 1-3). Also, the removal of sanctions on New Delhi by Washington did not immediately translate into the former becoming part of the audience of normals. In theorising this understanding, Chapter 3 points to how the strict stigmatising behaviour of the audience of normals automatically takes away a reversible aspect of the social constitution of the state in question. Following India's nuclear test in 1998 and the declaration of becoming a nuclear power outside NPT norms, India's accommodation into the audience of

normals was never complete. Empirical evidence supports this argument in several instances. In early 2002, a meeting between US Under Secretary of Defence for Policy Douglas Feith and India's Defence Secretary Dr. Yogendra Narain stressed on how "India and the United States have charted a new course in their bilateral relationship", "the importance of the U.S.-India relationship in building stability and security in Asia and beyond", the progress made "in military cooperation aimed at enhancing mutual capabilities in combating terrorism", and "their commitment to work together to prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems" (Indian Ministry of External Affairs, 2002). Furthermore, there were also other important phrases employed to describe the India-US partnership to show India's attempt in *partially* reducing its social distinctiveness from the US. This played out in New Delhi's joint declaration with Washington, in "re-defin[ing] the U.S-India relationship" in terms of "democracy, common principles and shared interests" of fighting "[g]lobal terrorism, state sponsors of terrorism, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction" (US Department of State Archives 2003). In redefining this relationship that changed US perception of India as a reliable partner rather than a strategy maximiser, Indian External Minister Salman Khurshid wrote in the New York Times that "[f]rom estranged democracies to engaged democracies, it has been a long and fascinating journey for India and the United States" (Khurshid, 2013). This continued stress on cooperation by highlighting the scope of regime types as Chapter 2 mentions, can also be understood as a key indicator for India as a performer of the deviant seeking mutual agency with the United States.

However, upon more careful examination of these phrases used to describe the India-US relationship post 2000, it remains evident that while some carefully hand-picked issues were identified for mutual cooperation, they were simply not enough to overcome the ambivalent relationship between the US (as the audience of normals) and India (as the performer of the deviant). Furthermore, words such as "friendship", "confident", "trust", "reliable", and "strong" do not appear even once in the same joint statement (Indian Ministry of External Affairs, 2002).

The irreversibility of India's nuclear identity as not being a part of the audience of normals was further cemented with India's continued display of non-compliance. Along with refusing to be a part of the CTBT, New Delhi evoked suspicion in Washington that two of its nuclear scientists, Dr. Y.S.R. Prasad and Dr. C. Surendar, were sharing sensitive information and equipment to Iran that had "the potential to make a material contribution to the development of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) or cruise or ballistic missile systems" (National Archives and Records Administration, 2004). Hence, these proliferation concerns brought back sanctions from Washington on these scientists having an Indian link within three years of the Bush administration deciding to remove all nuclear related sanctions against New Delhi. While Washington argued that these sanctions were on the specific "entities themselves and not to countries or governments", the displeasure from New Delhi was indeed evident (The Times of India, 2004). Siding with its scientists, an immediate press release from

New Delhi not only stated how the "Government of India does not share the US assessment [and] [n]o transfer of sensitive nuclear technology has taken place" but also that the US Government should "review the issue" and "withdraw the sanctions imposed" (PIB, 2004a).[156] Another major instance that seemed to interfere in India's social cohesion with the audience of normals in nuclear governance was its normative baggage that continued detesting how global non-proliferation and disarmament measures were implemented. India's Minister of State for External Affairs Rao Inderjit Singh argued at the UN General Assembly in late 2004 that the IAEA "should not be utilized for political ends" and "effective measures should be evolved to check nuclear proliferation without constraining in any way the peaceful uses of nuclear energy" (PIB, 2004b).[157] Very importantly, these instances should not simply be seen as minor disagreements between the US and India. Rather, they posed challenges to the global non-proliferation regime in terms of undermining the norm of sharing sensitive WMD technology as well as questioning the IAEA that oversees these important scientific exchanges.

Albeit showing instances of non-compliance, it must be noted that characterising this social irreversibility of India's nuclear identity is distinctly different from a persistent deviant identity occupying the subaltern stigma position in nuclear governance. While displaying behaviours of stigma rejection and counter-stigmatisation, a deviant nuclear identity showcasing continued non-compliance would consider itself outside shared norm constructions and may vehemently oppose entering into normative discussions with the normals. Furthermore, these deviant identities may deem it unnecessary to: i) provide a justification while showcasing non-compliant behaviour, ii) construct this displayed non-compliance as an exception, iii) explore viable excuses to the violation, and/or iv) pose continuous challenges to the normative order (rather than stressing on how their identities show some congruence with the normal in international politics). Rather different to deviant identities employing continued non-compliance, Chapters 2 and 3 have theorised and empirically contextualised how India used stigma redacting and reasoning of instance to routinise a semi-compliant form of behaviour. In more specific terms, while the notion of irreversibility underlines a permanent difference in the social construction of the audience of normals versus the performers of the deviant, it also allows room to negotiate the degree of difference in this perception of identities. Hence, although India's non-compliant forms of behaviour cemented the label of irreversibility, the shift to an apparent transparent foreign policy making and the projection of a non-violent nuclear power signalled India's urgency of paying attention to its social perception in the international system.

A classic example of using stigma redaction and reasoning of instance as a non-violent nuclear power

[156] While sanctions on Dr. C. Surendar were withdrawn in December 2005, sanctions on Dr. Y.S.R. Prasad continued (PIB, 2006a).

[157] In the same speech, he simultaneously (and quite contrarily) stressed on India's commitment to "the objective of non-proliferation" and how "India's nuclear energy programme is operated under the highest standards of safety and environment" (PIB, 2004b). This statement also supports the point in the previous section as to how India opposes a hierarchy in nuclear governance, and yet decides to construct its nuclear behaviour in terms of what is deemed compliant by the audience of normals in international politics.

trying to uphold its social status was India's usage of confidence-building measures (CBMs) with Pakistan to regulate their degree of nuclear hostility in Asia.[158] Following intergovernmental level talks between India and Pakistan in June 2004, several bi-lateral understandings were documented. These included consciousness "of the need to promote a stable environment of peace and security between … [t]he two countries", recognition that "the nuclear capabilities of each other, … constitute [to be] a factor for stability", and commitment to "national measures to reduce the risks of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons … and to adopt bilateral notification measures and mechanisms to prevent misunderstandings and misinterpretations" (PIB, 2004c).

While there were other bi-lateral meetings between these sides around the same timeline, the aforementioned document is of particular interest.[159] Using the influential work of Acharya (2004), Chapter 1 shows how the process of grafting – or giving rise to a new norm by connecting with an already existing norm – has often been associated with the *norm-maker*. However, the documented bi-lateral understanding between India and Pakistan serves as a caveat as both states were subjects of stigmatisation, after their respective 1998 nuclear tests and simultaneously staying outside the NPT. As *norm-takers*, both states had to deal with the effects of stigmatisation from specifically the US and risk a permanent irreversibility in social identity from the normals. Yet, their employment of a bi-lateral CBM relating to nuclear issues can be associated with norm grafting due to three specific reasons.

Firstly, it can be argued that two rival powers that remain outside the NPT and then decide to showcase nuclear restraint through non-violence creates a new and irreversible norm. This is because after the NPT came into force in 1970, India and Pakistan were the first states to test their respective nuclear arsenals and give rise to several and never seen before CBMs between two states that openly violated NPT norms. Secondly, this violation and giving rise to a new norm of continued CBMs between two NPT non-compliant states also meant that both states would not *reverse* developing nuclear weapons, and attempt to *undo* the historical events that led to the bi-lateral understandings reached through these CBMs. Thirdly, the norm of reaching consensus through a CBM relating to nuclear issues between India and Pakistan is not entirely new. The works of Vick (1988) and Holst (1983) provide a comprehensive overview on the development of CBMs, and how the United States and the Soviet Union used bi-lateral CBMs to increase and communicate transparency in foreign policy making during the peak of the Cold War. In the nuclear domain, this included implementing safeguards against accidental launch and unauthorised use of nuclear weapons, immediate notification systems in the case of a possible nuclear detonation, and early communication in the case of launching

[158] Pakistan declared itself a nuclear power within days of India's 1998 nuclear tests in May (Burns, 1998).
[159] For other noteworthy bi-lateral meetings and CBMs between India and Pakistan in 2004 and 2005, see for example, Archive of the Prime Minister's Office, Government of India (2004); Indian Ministry of External Affairs (2004b, 2005a); PIB (2004d).

a missile outside the launching party's sovereign territory.

The irreversible nature of India's identity not only constituted a careful attention to its social status but also seemed to be simulating norms that were familiar to the hegemonic states in the international arena.[160] In responding to the undertaken CBMs between New Delhi and Islamabad, US Deputy State Department Spokesman J. Adam Ereli was "pleased" to observe the bi-lateral progress between India and Pakistan as two hostile nuclear powers in Asia (CNN, 2004). In re-instating the official position of the US, Ereli noted that "[w]e warmly welcome these meetings and we hope that they will lead to further engagement and dialogue between India and Pakistan" (CNN, 2004). This recognisable norm simulating Indian behaviour even seemed to provide some room for Washington to think about how India could be accommodated into the existing global nuclear order – albeit the continued, irreversible, and existing ambivalence between both states. Furthermore, it also paved the way for New Delhi to gradually emerge as a successful norm innovator in the process.

6.4. India as a Successful Norm Innovator

Chapter 1 has highlighted how works (Lightfoot, 2006; Wunderlich, 2013; Souter, 2016; Wheeler and Dunne, 2002) on normative change have often focussed on good norm entrepreneurs. This idea of *good* is built on wanting to stabilise and reform the international order and staying committed to the common rules and values governing the international society of which they are members. In wanting to move beyond the binary distinction of *good* versus *bad* norm entrepreneurship, Fey et al. (2013: 195) have characterised India's role in nuclear governance as an "impeded [or hindered] norm entrepreneur" rather than a *successful* one due to India's commitment to global nuclear norms while at the same time remaining outside the scope of the NPT. In the specific context to nuclear politics and India, Kumar (2014: 99) notes that "[t]he existence of other actors, who are not intentional entrepreneurs and yet influence norm construction and innovation in the international system, is palpably under-emphasised or overlooked." As aforementioned, while the simulation of familiar CBM norms of existing hegemons allowed India to erode the deviant and non-compliance link, the notion of instilled trust in the India-US relationship was evidently lacking. Instances of Washington's sanctioning continued against Dr. Y.S.R. Prasad as well as on two Indian firms, Sabero Organics Gujarat Ltd and Sandhya Organics Ltd (PIB, 2006a). Within the next year, Washington sanctioned

[160] I purposely use the term *norm simulation* rather than *norm localisation* or *norm cascade*. Acharya (2004) defines norm localisation as the re-construction of foreign ideas in "congruence with local beliefs and practices" (245) that leads to "strengthen, not replace, existing institutions" (246). In the case of norm cascade, Finnemore and Sikkink (1998: 895) attribute this process to "a combination of pressure for conformity" as well as the "desire to enhance international legitimation." The usage of CBMs by India and Pakistan was a result of violating (rather than strengthening or enhancing) the existing normative consensus on NPT norms and their illegitimate possession of nuclear weapons. Also, the notion of legitimisation does not aptly capture the differences in: i) the perpetual and irreversible presence of some room of social difference between the audience of normals versus the performers of the deviant, ii) a de-facto/implicit recognition of a nuclear identity outside the norms of the NPT, and iii) an unconditional and declared social acceptance (as result of stigma recognition and correction) of the performers of the deviant into the audience of normals.

two further Indian firms, Balaji Amines and Prachi Poly Products, on suspicion of transferring chemicals to aid Iran's missile programme (The Economic Times, 2006).[161] Yet, these instances of ambivalence were far from serving as an impediment to India's quest in gradually altering global nuclear norms through its norm innovation.

A series of triggers gradually led to India's ability of creating normative change against the scope and definitions of NWSs and NNWSs as laid down in the NPT.[162] The first step that New Delhi took in wanting to construct itself as a successful norm innovation was not only to change its own perception through transparent foreign policy making but also wanting "to assume the same responsibilities and practices and acquire the same benefits and advantages as other leading countries with advanced nuclear technology" (Indian Ministry of External Affairs, 2005b). This assertion in the Joint Statement between India and the US in July 2005, was followed up with New Delhi using instances of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance to demonstrate the keenness in undertaking compliant forms of behaviour. These included separating military and civilian nuclear facilities, putting the identified and separated civilian nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards, and continuing to observe moratorium on further nuclear testing (Indian Ministry of External Affairs, 2005b). The second aspect that followed New Delhi's status in moving from a *responsible* nuclear power to a *great power like* responsible nuclear power was to establish itself as a *natural* norm innovator rather than a *hindered* norm entrepreneur.

Alongside identifying mutual themes of cooperation that underlined New Delhi and Washington's notion of agency, both states undertook several steps that seemed to be a quick fix to the perpetual hinderances of the India-US nuclear relationship.[163] This meant that India displayed stigma redaction and reasoning of instance in constant succession within a noticeably short span of time. In doing so, it was also successful in extracting weak trust from Washington on the basis that New Delhi would *henceforth* abide by international nuclear norms. For the US, the idea of naturality seemed to lie in undertaking several pro-active steps that highlighted why India's inclusion in the global nuclear order was essential and did not correspond to revising the existing structure of nuclear governance. Hence, cooperation from both sides culminated into India's aforementioned problems with IAEA suddenly disappearing, the US complementing India on the latter's successful separation plan, India and the US

[161] Sanctions continued on i) Dr. Y.S.R Prasad from 2004 to 2006, ii) Sabero Organics Gujarat Ltd and Sandhya Organics Ltd from 2005 to 2007, and iii) Balaji Amines and Prachi Poly Products from 2006 to 2008 (US Department of State Archives, 2019).

[162] The next section highlights how I understand the distinction between norm change versus normative change while examining the India-US nuclear case.

[163] The previous chapters highlighted the common themes on agency between both states. In the Joint Statement released by India and the US in 2006, these themes seemed to reappear again as it highlighted how both countries were "linked by a deep commitment to freedom and democracy; a celebration of national diversity, human creativity and innovation; a quest to expand prosperity and economic opportunity worldwide; and a desire to increase mutual security against the common threats posed by intolerance, terrorism, and the spread of weapons of mass destruction" (Indian Ministry of External Affairs, 2006).

working together with members of the audience of normals in widening India's scope of international nuclear cooperation, and amending existing US legislation to facilitate nuclear cooperation with India (as an NNWS that conducted the 1998 nuclear test in violation of the NPT) (PIB, 2006b; PIB, 2006c; PIB, 2006d).[164]

What remains important to note is that Washington explicitly facilitated New Delhi in becoming a successful norm innovator, along with deeming it necessary to push for further nuclear cooperation with the latter. Washington amended Section 123 of the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 through the Henry Hyde United States-India Peaceful Atomic Energy Cooperation Act to further nuclear trade (Indian Ministry of External Affairs, 2008) and aid "normative innovation" with New Delhi (Kumar, 2014: 106). Arguments by US President George W. Bush in making this exception included "[helping] meet the energy needs of our growing economies", "[enabling] India to reduce emissions - and improve its environment", and "keep[ing] America safe by paving the way for India to join the global effort to stop the spread of nuclear weapons" (The White House Archives, 2006). Interestingly, in the same speech one sees the appearance of the word *friend* for the first time after the Bush administration initially removed all nuclear related sanctions on India in 2001.

More specifically, *friend* appears thrice in the concluding sections of the speech were Bush states that "we will [indeed] help our friend, India", how "the American people have come to see India as a friend", and viewing "the Prime Minister as a trustworthy man and a friend" (The White House Archives, 2006). This analysis of then Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh as trustworthy and a friend stands out in contrast to that of his predecessor, Vajpayee, who was earlier described by Talbott (2004) as being unable to face the consequences of the 1998 nuclear test. This shift of perspective can also be attributed to India's display of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance in quick succession after the India-US Joint Statement in July 2005. Historically though, several things remain unchanged that could be argued as being against the *friend* label on New Delhi. These include India still being a non-signatory to the NPT and the CTBT, the continued possession of nuclear weapons against global nuclear norms, India's military nuclear facilities still outside the ambit of the IAEA after the separation plan, and the constant push towards modernising nuclear strike force capabilities while simultaneously violating NPT norms.

With India eventually emerging as a successful norm innovator, it also remains important to understand the specific norms that it affected through its innovation. Fey et al. (2013) stirs clear of not strongly fixating the role of norm innovation to India is because other states lack India's agentic motivation of challenging the global nuclear order based on justice and hierarchy concerns. This analysis, while not entirely removed from its merit, overlooks one key aspect of the functions of norm

[164] For a more historical description of India-US nuclear cooperation, see Pant, 2011; Ravi, 2018; Wetering, 2016.

innovation. The notion of norm innovation is not the band wagoning of states in wanting to follow the normative ideas and identify with the challenges raised by the norm innovator. A norm innovator may seek to "'create' issues by using language that names, interprets, and dramatizes them" and consequently usher in norm change (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998: 895). Both these analyses remain applicable in the empirical case of India's behaviour in the nuclear domain. In wanting to gain recognition of its nuclear programme, New Delhi was not only able to frame the global nuclear regime in terms of the latter being hierarchical and unequal, but also construct a language and act of compliance to naturalise New Delhi's role in nuclear governance. Rakhesh Sood, special Indian envoy for disarmament and non-proliferation in 2013, writes that the diplomacy associated with India's nuclear tests, the operationalisation of the 123 Agreement with the US in 2008, and India's bid for an NSG membership, all hinged on India's "impeccable non-proliferation record" (Sood, 2018: 13). As a norm innovator, India was successful in convincing the US through the stigma redaction and reasoning of instance that both states share similar agentic baggage and could be valuable partners in the fight against global proliferation. This successful selling of New Delhi's diplomatic ambitions as being hinged on broader and common foreign policy norms – albeit still remaining in specific violation of NPT norms − also resulted in the Bush administration ultimately signing the Hyde Act into law.

Secondly, India's innovation also gave rise to a norm of nuclear cooperation. Chapters 2 and 3 make the point that stigma redaction and reasoning of instance only tend to regulate the anxious relationship between the deviant and the normal. In the same context, India's new de-facto nuclear recognition would mean that India could now continuously stress on the process of the operationalisation of the 123 Agreement in instances where the ambivalence in the India-US nuclear relationship risked reappearing. This would translate to India referencing how New Delhi and Washington now share a *tradition* and *history* of nuclear cooperation that includes sanction removal, India's compliance in separating its nuclear facilities, identification of common foreign policy goals, and the implementation of the Hyde Act. By converting its employment of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance into a norm of nuclear cooperation, India could now use this new-found tradition as a bargaining chip (as well as highlighting its impeccable non-proliferation record) in continuing to remain outside treaties of nuclear governance. As I discuss later, New Delhi's framing of being an innovator of nuclear cooperation, also provided impetus for Washington to lobby for India's NSG membership as well as find (albeit limited) support for India's inclusion from various states (US Department of State Archives, 2007; Yeon-jung, 2017).

Thirdly, the characteristic of India's challenge as a norm innovator to the global nuclear order could also be applied to any state deemed as an NNWS by the NPT, irrespective of whether the latter has signed the NPT. In fact, there has been an emergent norm of states developing similar strategies to accommodate themselves in nuclear governance as a deviant identity. An example is that in 2022 Iran,

which is a signatory to the NPT (unlike India), argued – very similar to India's accusations against the global nuclear order as being unequal and hierarchical − how the statements of G7 countries on Tehran's nuclear position was "baseless, one-sided and unjust" (Middle East Monitor, 2022). Also similar to India's colonial history, North Korea's (that eventually withdrew from the NPT in 2003) normative baggage of its struggle against the Japanese colonial period eventually shaped its nuclear perspective in several ways. This included Pyongyang wanting to occupy a "'rightful' place … [to] contest a nuclear order dominated by the existing powers", condemning how Washington's position was protected "through an 'unfair' nuclear protocol", resenting "anti-U.S. imperialist narrative", showcasing its "ambition to acquire 'righteous' nuclear weapons", and pursuing "'justice' … to rationalize 'inevitable' nuclear-arming as an interim response to 'injustice'" (Shin, 2022).

In this entire process of India using stigma redaction and reasoning of instance in being the only non-NPT signatory that the US has signed a 123 Agreement with, the flexibility shown by Washington in accommodating New Delhi in the global nuclear order through the 123 Agreement has initiated a rather problematic normative debate in nuclear governance. This debate can be understood in terms of a "perception of diminished integrity and determination" (Perkovich, 2010: 28) that has consequently set up a dangerous precedent for accommodating other non-compliant and NPT non-signatory states in *normal* nuclear governance. Furthermore, with the NPT entering into force in 1970, it would have required the US administration along with the audience of normals to drastically alter their views of NWSs and/or NNWSs, as codified in the NPT. This would mean that other states[165] that had the intent of going nuclear would also have to be accommodated as de-facto NWSs, the existing NWSs would have to accept the violation of the NPT willingly, and forego their position of nuclear exclusivity.

6.5. Social Dissonance and Norm(ative) Change

India's acts of compliance cannot be separated from the social context in which they were taking place in — to routinise sporadic corrective behaviour in order to reduce the impact of nuclear deviance on the audience of normals. This builds onto the direct conceptualisation of India's relationship with the US in terms of stigma redaction hinging on ontological security routines.[166] Post the 1998 Indian nuclear tests, Das (2014: 18) states that "9/11 and its resultant 'search for terror' has facilitated a neo-liberal form of interdependence in India-US relations that has enabled two hierarchically located states to interact in a historically unprecedented manner on issues of nuclear technology cooperation." Ontological security for the India-US nuclear relationship during the chosen timeline of this thesis was not necessarily a "stable [and] shared understandings of expectations and behaviors" (Mattern 2005: 22).

[165] In 1963, then US President John F. Kennedy put this estimate from "15 or 20 or 25 nations" (John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum Archives, 1963b), also refer to Epstein (1977).
[166] In the larger context of Indian foreign policy, refer to the recent works of Januševska (2012); Kinnvall (2019); Purayil and Purayil (2021); Yang (2016).

Instead, it was a "notoriously insecure relationship" (Chacko, 2014: 334) fraught with perpetual anxiety that only got regulated with India's sporadic displays of nuclear compliance. Also, Chacko (2014) has argued that the exceptionalist qualities of India and the US are based on the mutual belief in universality and moral values have allowed both states to share a "special relationship" (343) of ontological (in)security against the threats of a rising China. This remains a rather an incomplete way of understanding why states decide to construct ontological routines. Through the notions of exceptionalism in international politics, such understandings tend to "run the risk of essentialising the concept of identity and re-producing nationalistic, ethnocentric accounts of world politics" (Wojczewski, 2019: 181). In case of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance, performers of the deviant choose to construct ontological routines as they are constantly eying strategic opportunities to escape their subaltern stigma position by engaging in compliant acts. Therefore, this escape and not the normalisation was reflected in the India-US Joint Statement in 2005 and later the 123 Agreement with the US recognising India's nuclear weapons programme (Carter, 2006).

In particularly highlighting the historical and important role that the US had played in conceiving the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the IAEA with then US President, Dwight D. Eisenhower's "Atoms for Peace" speech in 1953 (IAEA, 1953), India's stigma redaction and reasoning of instance in emerging as a successful norm innovator has often been targeted at the US. As it has been underlined previously, the rhetoric has regularly focussed on common normative baggage, similar ideas of democratic governance, and ultimately gaining a de-facto nuclear status from the US. However, India's emergence as a successful norm innovator did not automatically correspond to an explicit and automatic de-facto acceptance of its nuclear programme by the US. Albeit Washington expanded nuclear cooperation with New Delhi, Chapter 2 has theoretically argued how bridging the perception gap in the nuclear realm would require either or both sides to heavily disrupt their own version(s) of truth and reality through material and/or ideational compromises. This also meant that the existing and historically re-affirmed norms that either side abided by to aid in the construction of agency had to be altered, replaced, and/or re-interpretated.

Empirical instances that support the dissonance between India and the US in altering their respective normative views played out in the latter's passing of the Hyde Act and its aftermath. While Section 106 of the Act clearly spelt out that "if the President determines that India has detonated a nuclear explosive device after the date of the enactment of this Act, any waiver made under this Act shall cease to be effective", India seemed to have a contrary interpretation (US Congress, 2006). A press release from the Indian Government in response to Section 106 of the Act read that "India has the sovereign right to test and would do so if it is necessary in national interest … [and] [t]here is nothing in the bilateral agreement that would tie the hands of a future government or legally constrain its options" (PIB, 2007). India's role of a successful norm innovator had to be followed up with several instances of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance and a muted acceptance of the nuclear

hierarchy that it had been historically opposed to. As a result, members in the Indian Parliament argued that the India-US deal was in fact an “agreement between two individuals rather than between two countries” and as to whether making India place its civilian nuclear facilities under international safeguards made the latter “subservient” and a “junior partner” (The Times of India, 2008).

Even after the operationalisation of the 123 Agreement in 2008 (US Department of State Archives, 2008), India’s semi-accommodation into the global nuclear order, and the removal of sanctions based on nuclear non-compliance, both sides have not been able to completely resolve the dissonance amongst them. Arguments still exist whether the US has yielded too much and/or if India’s nuclear programme has ultimately been mainstreamed by the hegemonic policies that the latter itself previously challenged (Chari, 2006; Kamara and Jones, 2007; Ravi, 2018). The continued existence of ontological anxieties not only hindered India’s deeper social integration with the United States, but also with other members of the audience of normals. Nowhere in the final release of the 123 Agreement document it appears that Washington is explicitly recognising New Delhi’s status as an NWS (US Department of State Archives, 2007). Although the document highlights India’s responsible and compliant track-record in nuclear governance, any major reference to legitimise India’s military nuclear programme has been very constrained. Another issue to note is that even though India emerged as a successful norm innovator with help from the US, the 123 Agreement forbade India to use any form of US assistance in “the research on, or development of any nuclear explosive device or any other military purpose” and directed both parties of having a “responsibility for ensuring that levels of physical protection for nuclear material in their territory or under their jurisdiction or control are adequately met” (US Department of State Archives, 2007).

In terms of the other members of the audience of normals, while Washington wanted to “work with friends and allies to adjust the practices of the Nuclear Suppliers Group to create the necessary conditions for India to obtain full access to the international fuel market”, India’s identity of a norm innovator received constant opposition at the NSG (US Department of State Archives, 2007). Sullivan de Estrada (2014) points out how more than 150 nations and several transnational organisations remained in opposition to India being granted the status of a NWS, the prevailing pushback against India joining the NSG from several other member of the audience of normals, and an appalling *irresponsible* Indian record of maintaining inappropriate standards of nuclear safety and security.

As recent as mid-2016, normal members of the NSG that included Austria, Brazil, Ireland, New Zealand, and Turkey remained in immediate opposition to India’s joining of the NSG and/or required further consultation and deliberation before agreeing on the latter’s entry to the club (Chaudhury, 2016; Scroll, 2016). Hence, India’s great power like responsible nuclear status, its projection of being a natural member in the fight against global nuclear proliferation and yet the problem of social accommodation with the normal leads one to ask as to the kind of change India was able to affect in

the global nuclear order.

Having already pointed out that successful norm innovation had to be followed up with stigma redaction and reasoning of instance, and an implicit acceptance of the nuclear hierarchy, a restrained acceptance of India's military nuclear programme had several implications. Although New Delhi was given a waiver through the Hyde Act – albeit not singing the NPT and the CTBT − in commencing peaceful nuclear diplomacy with Washington and creating normative change, there needs to be some distinctions made. Wiener (2020) has very insightfully separated norm change from normative change in arguing that while interdependent, the former is associated with the "conditions of participation in the conflict for all affected stakeholders" (14) and "political rules of engagement" (6) while the latter is used to refer to "the global normative structure of meaning-in-use"(9).[167] In the case of norm displacement, Sandholtz (2019) has pointed out that a norm is "not abandoned until an alternative rule gains sufficient support in behavior and in belief to replace it" (145) and "norms will not be replaced as long as states and other actors continue to accept the validity of the regimes in which they are embedded" (146).

Applying these definitions to the India-US nuclear case study would mean that even though there was an implicit and restrained acceptance of New Delhi's nuclear capabilities, NPT norms in historical practice since 1970 were not replaced. These norms still governed the constructions of compliant nuclear behaviour in international governance, categorised NWSs versus NNWSs, and spelt out a distinct as well as interdependent set of responsibilities for each of these state categories. Employing Wiener's (2020) notion of norm change versus normative change would translate into Washington identifying India's agentic concerns and facilitating India in becoming the *only* NPT non-signatory with whom the former brokered the 123 Agreement with.

Although the previous section identifies New Delhi as a successful norm innovation and adds to the empirical reasoning of Kumar (2014) as to why New Delhi can be seen as a "norm challenger" (104) and "norm catalyst" (105), these categories say very little about the two-way process of socialisation in discounting the effect that the audience of normals have on India's nuclear identity. In further analysis to empirically contextualise Wiener's (2020) notions of norm change and normative change, what one observes is that along with the co-existence of historically reinforced norms of the NPT, there also emerges a *norm* of semi-acceptance of a state identity. This norm of semi-acceptance is linked to India's broader role in routinising partial compliance through stigma redaction and reasoning of instance. *Normative change* occurred with New Delhi's emergence as an exceptional partner (Ahmed, 2017; Chacko and Davis, 2018; Malik, 2010) and is irreversible as one cannot undo the bi-lateral signing of 123 Agreement. Hence, it is normative change undertaken through stigma redaction and reasoning of instance (and not norm change) that allowed New Delhi to be a successful norm

[167] See also Wiener (2018).

innovator by becoming the *only* NPT non-signatory with whom the US signed the 123 Agreement with.

The constituent norm of semi-acceptance is embedded within the broader notion of normative change. The *norm* of semi-acceptance is reversible, hinged on conditions, and loosely embedded in the normative structure of nuclear governance. Empirical evidence that supports the norm of semi-acceptance include "India [is] to secure full civil nuclear cooperation with the international community while protecting our strategic programme" (PIB, 2006d), how "technology denial regimes that have targeted India for so many decades must be dismantled so that our national development is unimpeded" (PIB, 2006d) and the "decision to undertake a future nuclear test would be India's sovereign decision, resting solely with the Government of India" (PIB, 2007). Each of these empirical instances reflect conditional clauses on which New Delhi accepted Washington's de-facto recognition of the former's nuclear programme. All these clauses hinged on safeguarding New Delhi's own sovereignty and posed a tense relationship with the hierarchy of the nuclear regime.[168] Similarly, on Washington's side, New Delhi's de-facto recognition was based on the latter using the former's assistance for only harnessing the peaceful aspects of nuclear energy (US Department of State Archives, 2007).[169] If any of the aforementioned conditions faced hinderance from any one side, the norm of semi-acceptance risked being reversed and the two-way process of socialisation would also be compromised. Hence, unlike *normative change*, the norm of semi-acceptance of socialisation does not allow the performer of the deviant to emerge as a successful norm innovator, does not create a lead of agentic justifications for other states to pursue, and provides a very restrained recognition of a state's social identity.[170]

As a result, and as Chapter 2 theorises, recognition of the deviant performer's identity is only de-facto, the existence of ontological anxieties continues, and the relationship between the audience of normal(s) and performer(s) of the deviant is not cemented in terms of a parsimonious and legalised multi-party agreement.[171] Empirically, even after the signing and the operationalisation of the 123 Agreement in 2008, there still remained ambiguities and counterfactuals on the consequences if New Delhi undertook a third nuclear test, which side compromised the most in amending its world-view of nuclear norms, and if at all New Delhi would be able to overcome the existing social dissonance to move towards a normal nuclear identity.

[168] Albeit the discourse of these challenges seemed to be less severe as compared to the discussions in the previous chapter.
[169] This also connects to the earlier point made on the difference in interpretations from either side on Section 106 of the Hyde Act.
[170] For the empirical case of this thesis, restraint would translate to Washington's *implicit* recognition of New Delhi's military nuclear facilities.
[171] Along with the US, only few countries that included France, Russia, and the United Kingdom agreed to a direct bi-lateral nuclear cooperation with India within the time-period of this thesis' empirical study (PIB, 2006e).

6.6. India Overcoming Its Subaltern Stigma Position

The theoretical framework of this thesis in Chapter 2 has highlighted how the subaltern is often treated as voiceless and involved in a "war of positions" with dominant social structures and ideas (Sarker, 2016: 829; Spivak, 2005; Green 2011). In applying an anthropomorphic approach to study India's nuclear case, it remains important to ask if India's norm innovation through stigma redaction and reasoning of instance eventually allowed itself to overcome its subaltern stigma position since its first nuclear test in 1974. To answer this question, it first remains important to point to the instances of critical discourse that could be employed to analyse the change in India's social perception and nuclear identity in global governance.

Firstly, the notion of being a subaltern identity is rooted in emancipation, distrust in existing hegemonic structures, and resistance towards hegemony (Chakrabarty, 2018; Chatterjee, 2004). Contrarily, the India-US Joint Declaration in 2005 and 2006 highlighted several mutual areas of cooperation which included strategic aspects of nuclear energy and combating international terrorism, along with shared ideational commitments to freedom, democracy, and diversity (Indian Ministry of External Affairs, 2005b; Indian Ministry of External Affairs, 2006). Furthermore, Washington implicitly recognised India's responsible nuclear status and lobbied for India's NSG membership (US Department of State Archives, 2007). These shared normative perspectives make a strong case of India being able to overcome its subaltern position and minimising its social distinctiveness from the US as part of the audience of normals. Also, continued efforts of India to resist the unequal structure of the NPT as "[t]he remnants of colonialism and racialism, where they still exist, must go" (NAI, 1977a) transformed into a position of "India abid[ing] by the principles and objectives of the NPT, including its nuclear disarmament aspirations … [and being] … committed to making its contribution to strengthening non-proliferation" (Indian Ministry of External Affairs, 2017). This transformation of tone and content is a marked difference of India's distrust and resistance to the existing global nuclear order to a shift towards an open reconciliation with the objectives of the hegemonic non-proliferation regime, post India's second nuclear test in 1998. Another important aspect to notice after the 1998 nuclear tests was the loss of New Delhi's emancipation in trying to reform the dominant and unequal nuclear hierarchy through measures such as the Standstill Agreement in 1954 (United Nations Audiovisual Library of International Law, 2009) and the Action Plan towards disarmament in 1988 (Saha, 2020).

Secondly, the transformation of India's social perception as a responsible nuclear state − albeit being a non-signatory to the NPT and the CTBT – and gaining an implicit recognition of its nuclear weapons programme builds on Sarker's (2016: 829) argument of "war of positions." After this recognition, the relational dynamics of New Delhi and Washington were characterised by arguments on strategic gains and losses through the 123 Agreement (The Times of India, 2008) rather than New

Delhi's voice being made silent as the subaltern.[172] In other words, albeit questions remained on the normalcy of India's de-facto nuclear identity, arguments on who gained the most out of the 123 Agreement marked a shift from India's successive proposals on nuclear disarmament falling on deaf ears in international politics. Even if one were to take a middle ground on the negotiations of the 123 Agreement, the notion that either state party made *some* gains out of a peaceful nuclear deal defeats the idea of New Delhi being perpetually stigmatised as a (voiceless) subaltern nuclear identity. Hence, the war of positions between New Delhi and Washington moves beyond the binary classification of *hegemony* versus *resistance*. Rather, as Chapters 2 and 3 argue, the war on positions constituted an important aspect of India employing stigma redaction and reasoning of instance to routinise an ontologically insecure relationship with the US. Nonetheless, what remained an addition to this insecure relationship after New Delhi's nuclear test in 1998 was making the underlying ontological anxiety perpetual. This was because New Delhi was not willing to retrace its undertaken historical steps of never claiming to be a nuclear power in this now cemented war of positions.

Thirdly, conceptualising ideational and material capacity of action in terms of owning a nuclear weapon runs contrary to the construction of a state actor occupying a subaltern stigma in the nuclear hierarchy. Sagan has argued in his influential piece that nuclear weapons are "international normative symbols of modernity and identity" and enable states to fulfil their own strategic and bureaucratic interests (1996/1997: 55). Similarly, in his own influential work on Washington's employment of strategic inhibition, Gavin (2015: 22) argues how Washington has strategically employed "the power-equalizing effects of nuclear weapons … to safeguard its security and preserve its dominant power." If one were to apply the same definitions to India being a non-western state, it re-instates the scepticism that Chapter 1 associates with Eurocentric perspectives of preventing power centres moving away from the Global North to the Global South.[173] Hence, after the 1998 nuclear test, Indian Prime Minster Vajpayee famously remarked that India's status of a nuclear weapon state "[i]s a reality that cannot be denied. It is not a conferment that we seek; nor is it a status for others to grant ... [and] [i]t is India's due, the right of one-sixth of humankind" (Parliament of India: Lok Sabha Digital Library, 1998: 279). Furthermore, India's development of nuclear weapons provided Washington an incentive to negotiate the 123 Agreement and look upon India not as a subaltern nuclear identity but useful in balancing Chinese ambitions in Asia (Pant and Biswas, 2018).

The point on India's social perception connects directly to the fourth aspect of conceptualising status as linked to the notion of subalternism in nuclear governance. Richtie's (2022) article understands India's nuclear identity as "subaltern nuclearism" that is rooted in "a discourse of nuclear equality, justice and resistance to domination and a racialised nuclear hierarchy through the acquisition of

[172] Some of these arguments are highlighted in the previous sections and in Chapter 2.
[173] On this note, Chapter 1 makes references to the works of Sullivan de Estrada (2015: 15); Ikenberry (2011); Smith (2012: 385).

nuclear weapons." On a similar note, Sullivan de Estrada (2020: 30) argues how immediately after the 1998 nuclear test India moved from "low status" to "an increase in status" by continuously highlighting its track-record of being a responsible nuclear state. Conceptually, de Estarada (2020: 31) attributes the increase in status as "innovation" whereby "status-seeking states may wish to retain and emphasise certain attributes or behaviours that distinguish them from other major or rising powers."[174] Having discussed how New Delhi's strong resistance and challenge to the global nuclear order faded away with the recognition of its nuclear programme by Washington, this recognition paved the way for more than just the binaries of high status versus low status. New Delhi's usage of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance in signalling to the audience of normals that it cares for its social standing can also be interpreted as its own rejection of the subaltern stigma position. In recognising states as social agents having the capacity for change, New Delhi's behaviour signals how it never wanted to perpetually cement its position as being perceived as a stigmatised subaltern identity by the audience of normals. Post the 1998 nuclear tests, India was not only willing to uplift its social status as a responsible nuclear state, but also wanted its social standing to be constructed as *high* − by the same hegemonic order that it once argued to be hierarchical, racial, and unfair.

The analyses of all the four key factors that contribute to the construction of a subaltern nuclear identity played out very contrarily for the Indian nuclear case. New Delhi's shared normative views on governance with Washington, its war of positions escaping the binaries of hegemony and resistance, the ideational and material prowess of possessing nuclear weapons, and its persistence of seeking a high social status is far removed from being voiceless and invisible in the nuclear hierarchy. While arguments remain as to which state party made the most strategic gains after the 123 Agreement, India's identity (post the 1974 and the 1998 nuclear tests) undoubtedly underwent a change. Indeed, it remains difficult to talk about the NPT in contemporary times without explicit/implicit mentions on hierarchies between NWSs and NNWSs (Craig and Ruzicka, 2013; Gusterson, 1999; Krause and Latham, 1998). Nonetheless, it cannot be ignored that discourses have certainly changed from India's reluctance to weaponise in the 1970s and the constant push towards global disarmament within the nuclear hierarchy, to its more contemporary emergence as a regional and non-NPT nuclear hegemon in South Asia.[175]

6.7. Conclusion

This chapter has i) demonstrated New Delhi's shift to the construction of a more transparent foreign policy after a loss of its social status as non-violent, post violating NPT norms and conducting the

[174] Sullivan de Estrada (2020) also refers to the work of Basrur and Sullivan de Estrada (2017) and Larson and Shevchenko (2010).

[175] This thesis has endeavoured to understand this change in India's nuclear identity by conceptualising and operationalising India's usage of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance with the United States in nuclear governance.

1998 nuclear tests, ii) highlighted why Washington's removal of sanctions on New Delhi in 2001 was unsuccessful in eroding away the social irreversibility associated with the latter's nuclear identity, iii) identified the social characteristics that defined New Delhi as a successful norm innovator in nuclear governance, iv) examined why Washington did not confer a more explicit recognition of New Delhi's nuclear programme, albeit the latter emerging as a successful norm innovator, and v) explained the reasons for New Delhi's escape of its subaltern stigma position through stigma redaction and reasoning of instance.

To specifically shed light on each of these aspects, this chapter has been divided into five sections. The first section identified India's cautionary shift to a more transparent construction of its foreign policy through stigma redaction and reasoning of instance, post its 1998 nuclear tests. In doing so, this section identified India taking cognisance of its loss of social status after undertaking the 1998 nuclear tests, ending its historical ambiguity as a nuclear nation, and implicitly wanting to be recognised as a responsible nuclear power within the same hierarchy whose norms it had previously contested. Furthermore, this section also pointed to a void in Washington's policy making in thinking about how India's new nuclear identity could be accommodated in nuclear governance. The second section argued that the steps that were taken to fill this policy void of recognising New Delhi's nuclear identity was Washington not only removing all nuclear related sanctions on the latter by 2001, but also trying to identify mutual areas of cooperation. However, hinderances that still prevented India from being unable to reverse its ambivalence with the audience of normals included a lack of focus on discourse to strengthen India-US bi-lateral ties and India's continued scepticism on the implementation of IAEA safeguards. Nonetheless, this section highlighted that one of the ways through which India sought familiarity with the hegemonic nuclear regime was through employing CBMs with Pakistan. These measures that were adapted by India and Pakistan were characterised as norm grafting, as similar steps also formed a salient aspect of reducing Cold War tensions between the Soviet Union and the US.

Further discussing identity and norm construction, the third section identified New Delhi as a successful norm innovator, contrary to existing literature. To unpack the process of norm innovation in the empirical study, this section argues that New Delhi not only wanted to assume a great power-like role in nuclear governance but also project why this was a natural role to assume for itself. However, this section also remains cognisant that norm innovation follows a two-way process and acknowledges Washington's role in identifying New Delhi as a successful norm innovator. Finally, it underlined the specific norms that New Delhi gave rise to, by emerging as a norm innovator in nuclear governance. The fourth section took a more critical approach in understanding why India's role as a successful norm innovation could not extract a more explicit de-facto acceptance of its nuclear programme from the United States. It also highlighted the ambivalence that continued existing within the India-US nuclear relationship. Very importantly, this section draws out the difference

between normative change and norm change. In doing so, it argues that while India's emergence of a successful norm innovator was an example of normative change, Washington's implicit acceptance of India's nuclear programme rooted in this normative change can be characterised as a norm of semi-acceptance that was reversible and conditional. The last section discussed India's usage of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance in a broader context and examined to what extent India was able to escape its subaltern stigma position. This section concluded that unlike India's identity immediately after the 1974 nuclear test, there was a change in terms of India being ultimately able to overcome its subaltern stigma position. Identifying this change as an escape of its subaltern stigma position included New Delhi's shared normative commitments with Washington and New Delhi's *high* ideational and material status linked to its new possession of nuclear weapons in global governance.

After concluding with an analysis in the previous chapter on why India's nuclear identity cannot be characterised as non-violent, this chapter examined how India was eventually able to overcome this subaltern stigma position through stigma redaction and reasoning of instance. In moving the empirical discussions from the previous chapter forward, this chapter focused on the notion of norm(ative) change in nuclear governance embedded within the second half (1999 to 2008) of the overall timeline of this thesis. In concluding the endeavours of this doctoral project, Chapter 7 takes a critical overview of the epistemological, ontological, and methodological choices and discussions that this thesis has made in the preceding chapters. Chapter 7 makes a case as to why the thesis remains an important and interdisciplinary scholarly contribution in International Security Studies. It also points to the possible avenues of further research that could emerge from the undertakings of this doctoral project.

Conclusion

"Research is formalised curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose" (Hurston, 1942: 91).

The motivating question that guided this thesis in its journey of formalised curiosity is: *How do stigmatised states justify and normalise nuclear non-compliance with hegemonic powers in nuclear politics?* Answering this question has led me to i) revisit discussions on normal practises in IR, ii) identify and theorise deviant behaviour that remains in contrast to these standard normative practices, and iii) capture how stigmatised identities in nuclear politics tend to escape the permanency of the deviant label by routinising compliant and non-compliant patterns of behaviour. To observe the change of meaning and identity in the study of the normal versus the deviant, I synthesised Fairclough's (2013) CDA approach with insights from social interactionism under a broad ambit of interpretive methodology. Finally, in employing these methodological and theoretical underpinnings on archival sources, the project examined the change in India's nuclear identity vis-à-vis its interactions with the United States from 1974 to 2008.

Having briefly summed up the overarching choices this project makes in observing India's identity in nuclear governance, this conclusion chapter foregrounds some of the key discussions from this project. To do so, this chapter revisits the key arguments, situates this project within the existing scholarly landscape, highlights the empirical and methodological contributions of this thesis, and finally discusses future research agendas that could follow from the scholarly endeavours of its undertaking.

1. Revisiting the Key Theoretical Arguments and Epistemic Aims of the Project

This doctoral thesis has made two key arguments in answering its main research question. The first argued that stigmatised states engage in social interactions with the hegemon, through which the former justifies partially following norms of nuclear deterrence, non-proliferation, and non-use with the hegemon. Using the India-US case study, the thesis empirically argued as well as demonstrated how India's transformational nuclear relationship with the US points to the discursive power of social interactions in nuclear governance. Making these arguments have combined in-depth perspectives from IR theory, IPS, and global nuclear governance in examining sociological deviance in International Security Studies.

In developing this thesis' literature review and epistemological reasoning for its key arguments, Chapter 1 has made a critical intervention into existing works on nuclear politics, constructivist norms and stigma, and Indian foreign policy. In doing so, it has highlighted dominant biases in scholarship and policy making that address deviant states as rogues, underlined the existing gaps in using norms and stigma to study India's nuclear identity, and made the case of re-thinking deviant states as agents

of change that contest dominant norms through political argumentation and rhetoric.

Chapter 2 has used the epistemological discussions from Chapter 1 in starting to build the conceptual framework of this doctoral thesis. This chapter understood how norm contestations by deviants are constructed in nuclear governance and the ways in which deviants interact with the audience of normals through these contestations to justify non-compliance. In doing so, Chapter 2 has employed stigma research in examining meaning making and identity constructions of the deviant. Deviants that are stigmatised by the normals in nuclear politics are dramaturgically defined as *performers of the deviant.* Furthermore, Chapter 2 identified that the display of non-compliant behaviour from the performers of the deviant in the nuclear arena becomes an expression of their cognitive agency and occurs within a normative space governed by the audience of normals. The chapter argued that performers of the deviant occupy a stigmatised subaltern *position* from where their norm challenge and norm breaking behaviour can only be deemed legitimate when the audience of normals share the same social understanding. To examine how performers of the deviant can *partially* overcome the subaltern stigma position, Chapter 2 proposed a novel understanding of stigma management as *stigma redaction* or performers of the deviant undertaking semi-compliant forms of behaviour. By ontologically routinising this form of behaviour, deviant states are gradually able to escape the subaltern stigma position. Also, this chapter recognised the perpetually insecure relationship between performers of the deviant and the audience of normals as the former may again resort to deviant forms of behaviour. Using the discussions from the previous sections, the final section of this chapter spelt out the scope and conditions of stigma redaction in greater detail. These included democratic forms of governance fast-tracking the deviant's process of seeking legitimacy from the normals and deviants using stigma redaction in gauging social acceptability from the normal in a variety of cases in world politics.

Chapter 3 further built on Chapter 2 in conceptualising a salient way of how performers of the deviant employ stigma redaction with the audience of normals and the effect it has on the latter. To do so, it looked into the literature on justification and rhetoric in international politics, and proposes *reasoning of instance* as a dynamic course of communication and justification. In the nuclear context, when performers of the deviant adhere to NPT norms or follow IAEA safeguards on nuclear facilities (partially or temporarily), reasoning of instance is used to continuously highlight these commitments in diplomatic forums. This is intended to rather create a weak linkage in associating deviance with the undertaken compliant behaviour. In the case of presenting non-compliance through stigma redaction and reasoning of instance, an immediate act of non-compliance is often connected with a previous act of compliance. Doing so provides the performers of the deviant a reference point to enter normative discussions with the audience of normals. Nonetheless, as nuclear deviance may invoke strict sanctions and condemnations from the audience of normals, reasoning of instance is used as a defensive and cautionary mechanism to reduce social distinctiveness by deviant states from that of the

audience of normals. Finally, Chapter 3 argued that reasoning of instance allows performers of the deviant to identify common normative baggage with the in-group in ultimately enabling the former to emerge as a successful norm innovator.

Advancing these theoretical arguments in this PhD project reflects a wider aim in building epistemic understandings of states as anthropomorphic agents that are capable of inducing social change in nuclear governance, *albeit* being constructed as deviant against existing normative understandings. In specifically looking at *change* in the nuclear arena, this thesis has borrowed from the recent work of Wiener (2020) in distinguishing norm change from normative change. In doing so, this thesis has demonstrated how an implicit acceptance of a deviant's identity from the normals is hinged on *thin* conditional norms that can be reversed through continued display of non-compliance. Norm change is embedded within normative change, which Wiener (2020: 9) identifies as "the global normative structure of meaning-in-use." For a change to be normative or *thick,* historical, social, cultural, and economic discourse and practises that are deeply institutionalised need to altered – often in exceptionalist ways and circumstances. Furthermore, establishing normative structures may require a higher degree of sustained socialisation through considerable periods of time, rather than engaging in immediate diplomatic manoeuvring in establishing norms based on conditions.

In his influential work, Wendt (1987: 359) defines agents as having sophisticated understandings of their behaviour, being able to "reflexively monitor" and adapt their behaviour, and demonstrating decision making capacities. This constructivist analysis of agents remains consistent to the theorisations of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance developed in this thesis. Very specifically, stigma redaction and reasoning of instance not only allows a deviant state to negotiate its social identity in nuclear governance, but also reflexively assess the degree of social difference that it possesses from that of the audience of normals. In identifying stigmatised states as performers of the deviant in nuclear politics that exercise stigma redaction and reasoning of instance is a heuristic attempt in moving away from existing scholarship that i) describes deviant states as "dissenters", "pariahs", and "rogues" (Krause and Latham, 1998: 40; Sagan, 1996/1997: 82; Puri, 2017: 309), ii) employs a dominant understanding that norms in nuclear governance are primarily shaped by preponderant powers (Gavin, 2015; Pilat, 1990; Walker, 2000, 2007), and iii) obfuscates the mechanisms through which deviant states re-instate/re-define normal behaviour through their social relationships with the audience of normals (Graham, 2008; Lightfoot, 2006; Wunderlich, 2013).

Using anthropomorphism in constructing performers of the deviant as being social also makes a broader point on the perception of agency in the international system and its implications on IR scholarship. Knafo (2010: 494) has argued that scholars often "misleadingly oppose power to agency as if those with power have no agency and those with agency have no power." Having already discussed how performers of the deviant often occupy a subaltern stigma position, it remains

important to recognise how these identities are able to (partially) overcome this position through their social interactions with the audience of normals. Furthermore, non-compliant behaviour of the performers of the deviant not only prevents them from being identified as "powerless agents of change" but also denies them the label of being "powerful agents of reproduction" (Knafo, 2010: 494). As powerless agents that are incapable of reproducing dominant norms due to displays of non-compliant behaviour would problematically reduce performers of the deviant to being disobedient black boxes at the mercy of dominant powers in the international system. Such a view would hinder innovation in building interdisciplinary research agendas on state behaviour in International Security Studies, contribute to a unidirectional understanding of state behaviour in terms of realpolitik, and remain insufficient in establishing comprehensive diplomatic strategies that includes conversations on deviant states in nuclear governance. Vadrot (2016: 9) succinctly sums up all these problems through the employment of "epistemic selectivities" whereby "knowledge is used to justify particular problem solutions, to delegitimize alternative pathways, and to enforce arguments for future directions of scientific research, research funding, and science advice."

Contrary to limiting the directions of the field and in re-visiting the aims of the project from its Introduction, the theoretical aspects of this doctoral thesis aim to contribute to Acharya's (2014: 650) notion of Global IR – "disciplinary IR … with its theoretical interests and innovations" combined with the empirical richness of area studies. This is done not just by theorising India's stigma position and how India overcame this position through stigma redaction and reasoning of instance in nuclear governance. Rather, these theoretical concepts are broadly interlaced with a rich discussion on Subaltern Studies, attributing anthropomorphic sociological behaviour to states, and borrowing from the literature on rhetoric and justification in IR. Following the structure of this doctoral thesis, what follows its literature review and theoretical framework are the undertaken methodological choices. The next section in this chapter foregrounds these methodological discussions, reflexively examines how these choices have impacted the analytical lens of this thesis, and the contributions made through the project's adapted methodology.

2. Methodological Reflections

Chapter 4 of this PhD project justified the usage of an *interpretive* methodology to study the empirical case of India's social interactions with the United States in the nuclear domain. Under the broader ambit of an interpretive methodology, this project used archival sources embedded in elite interaction to reconstruct how India employed stigma redaction and reasoning of instance to partially escape its subaltern stigma position. The primary sources of empirical analyses pertain to announcements from Indian and US decision makers, press releases from the Indian Government, diplomatic exchanges between Indian and US political elites, and general addresses from key governmental representatives from India and the US on several international and local institutions which include the IAEA, UN

General Assembly, UNSC, gatherings between Non-Aligned countries, parliamentary proceedings, and speeches of political elites in various educational institutes. Also, due to the limitations of funding and time to travel to the US along with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, documents were browsed online from the Library of Congress, The White House Archives, US Department of State, and the US Presidential Archives. Studying language in all these forms of communication is a more direct method in observing the meanings embedded in social interactions between both sides. Secondary sources are intended to fill the research gaps that arise in the process. These include more indirect forms of communication such as media reports from CNN, The Economic Times, The New York Times and The Times of India, policy papers from The Stockholm Peace Research Institute and the Federation of American Scientists, and academic works in terms of monographs, journals and edited books. In using archival sources to examine how New Delhi's nuclear deviant identity underwent change in gradually gaining a de-facto recognition of its nuclear programme from Washington, this project synthesised social interactionism along with borrowing from Fairclough's (2013) CDA approach. Furthermore, Chapter 4 highlighted abductive reasoning, reflexivity, and epistemic plurality as being inviting to other modes of enquiry, questioning the researcher's own research biases, and remaining sensitive to the ethics of archival research. Also, in terms of methods, all primary and secondary sources of analyses were coded into NVivo by identifying nodes and sub-nodes from the main research question. Finally, the emerging empirical results (through the lens of the adapted methodology and methods) were represented as key historical instances through a linear historical narrative in the subsequent chapters.

From this brief overview in terms of the methodological toolkits that the project incorporated in studying empirical instances of the India-US relationship within the chosen timeframe, there are five aspects that require further deliberation in the concluding stages. Firstly, as the field research in physically visiting the identified archives (The Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, National Archives of India, and the Press Information Bureau) had to be cancelled due to COVID-19, there remain several implicit and unanswered counterfactuals. Saha (2022d) has argued that "[r]emote collection of data strikes at the core assumptions of interpretive forms of research." In conducting interpretive research for this project, missing out on being an immersive epistemic participant inside the archival sites of knowledge production translates to creating a rather *uncomfortable* and *irreconcilable* distance between the researcher and the subject of research. In more practical terms, this would mean lacking engagement beyond the specific texts, sources, and files that could be viewed online and for which pertinent access requests were placed. By being physically present in the archives and in conducting interpretive research through the notions of reflexivity, one cannot fully discount the chances of stumbling upon refreshing and revelatory sources of empirical archival evidence. These evidences may have pushed the researcher to have a more informed approach to his project, further strengthened the connections between the theoretical and empirical sections of this

thesis, and provided interesting snippets in thinking about future research agendas.

Also, not being physically present inside the identified archival sites meant interpretive alienation from observations on i) why collections are stored to make some more visible than others and the possible reasons for doing so (Tirabassi, 2010), ii) the existence of bias in making archival sources more accessible to native Indian researchers, and iii) underlying government agendas inside the archival sites that push researchers to produce exceptionalist forms of discourse in justifying Indian foreign policy choices. Finally, absence from the archives also meant missing out on important conversations with researchers having familiar interests that would not only have provided important feedback on this thesis, but also opened up possibilities in working together on future collaborative projects.

The second aspect that requires more discussion from Chapter 4 is the combination of interactionism and CDA to study deviance in nuclear governance. Apart from contributing to a methodological innovation in examining how deviance is dramaturgically performed though social interactions, the combination of interactionism with CDA provides a *double* interdisciplinary approach to International Security Studies.[176] While CDA already "entails …. 'dialogues' between disciplines, theories and frameworks" (Fairclough, 2013: 4), the introduction of interactionism as an entry point to CDA for examining the fluid nature of state identities adds the second layer to the interdisciplinary nature of this project's adapted methodology. Hence, this combined approach simultaneously narrows down the *relevant* context for this thesis, as well as invites wider conversations in the discipline that capture "the relational, unfixed and open-ended aspects of a process of constitution that is global" (Fierke and Jabri, 2019: 509).

The double interdisciplinary nature that this thesis has developed through its methodological discussions underline some key aspects of doing interpretive research. These include more succinctly capturing the "complex[ity] of meaning, setting, and action" (Adcock, 2006: 61), focusing on identities as simultaneous constitution of discourse and as well as normative perspectives, and explicitly highlighting that social change of identities can be better understood by following the kind of discourses and patterns of behaviour that they choose to pursue. Finally, practising the double interdisciplinary approach for interpretive research cannot be done without being reflexive and exercising epistemic plurality that cuts across disciplinary boundaries. These key interpretive aspects would thus allow one to think about how and what other scholarships can be combined in designing a more efficient scientific methodological agenda in examining the research problem at hand.

Thirdly, the nature of exercising epistemic plurality in doing interpretive and interdisciplinary research also builds into how the empirical findings of this thesis are represented in Chapters 5 and 6.

[176] The term *double* interdisciplinary approach borrows from double hermeneutics as espoused by Giddens (1984).

Chapter 4 has already highlighted the specific reasons for the choice of a linear historical narrative to link the theoretical discussions of this thesis to the empirical analyses of archival sources. Adding to these reasons, there are some broader aspects to consider as to why a historical and chronological narrative has been purposefully chosen as an ordering mechanism of the undertaken empirical analyses. Skinner (1969) and Runciman (2001) have argued how historical representation should move beyond the notion of (re-) producing timeless wisdom into a more critical approach. They further state that this criticality can be achieved through closer examination of the underlying context, discourse, and the ideational and material forces that allow the continued prevalence of certain narratives and obfuscating others.[177] Hence, combining CDA and interactionism with a historical form of analytical representation builds into these arguments by disrupting the historicity of story-telling that operates in an "unbiased marketplace of ideas" (Egeland et al., 2022: 389) and is removed from an interpretation of underlying truths and axioms.

Fourthly, and in the specific case of CDA, using a historical timeline of representation of undertaken empirical analyses may not be a conventional one. Nonetheless, it remains a serious attempt by this thesis in generating knowledge on the social deviance of identities in international politics.[178] Hence, understandably Jackson (2011) departs from "a set of rules of inference on which … the validity [of scientific claims] depends" (King et al., 1994) to a "commonality of "science" in IR … [that] … cannot be sought in rules or procedures for handling evidence or evaluating claims" (Jackson, 2011: 18). Beyond moving away from an aimless attempt to capture the infinite (and often) layers of meaning of identities, discourse, interactions, and context, using a historical narrative as an ordering mechanism aids in strengthening the robustness of this research design. More specifically, this translates to how a norm of doing interpretive research with CDA may not always be a useful one, especially when the researcher is faced with archival documents spanning over hundreds of pages. Also very importantly, a *good* scientific research method need not always be a *conventional* scientific method, but rather should be grounded in the literature review, theoretical framework, and a systematic collection and interpretation of evidences – all of which this doctoral project has strived to achieve.

Finally, epistemic and methodological divisions in IR are already well-known. Scholars often try to categorise other's works as "mindless number-crunching", "philosophical mumbo-jumbo" and "as 'unscientific' and hence not worthy of intellectual engagement" (Jackson, 2011: 18). Therefore, instead of playing into the already existing divisions in the field, CDA and interactionism combined with a historical timeline of representation disrupts traditional notions of methodological

[177] Egeland et al. (2022: 389) make the same point while arguing how Freedman and Michaels (2019) should have "take[n] pains to identify the power structures and material forces shaping the national security debate" in the United States.
[178] For existing attempts of critical discourse analysis, see Janks (1997); Mirhosseini (2017); Rasoulikolamaki and Kaur (2021).

inconsistences in the wider pursuit of scientific knowledge. Not only does this mean that all these methodological aspects can harmoniously co-exist but can also holistically inform our understanding of the social dimensions of international state behaviour.

2. Policy Implications and International Order Through the India-US Nuclear Case

Following the underlying methodological choices of this thesis that inform its empirical analysis, this section takes up a more detailed discussion on how the India-US nuclear case study enables thinking about some of the foundational policy issues of norms, order, and discourse in International Security Studies.

Chapters 5 and 6 developed a novel understanding of India's nuclear identity and its management of stigma in key instances between the timeframes of 1974 to 1998 and 1999 to 2008 respectively. The first timeframe in Chapter 5 demonstrated how India's nuclear discourse served as one of the hinderances in preventing India from being perceived as a conforming nuclear identity by the United States. The empirical instances used to ascertain the nature of New Delhi's discourses on contestation and problems in instilling trust in Washington of the former's compliant nuclear identity, could serve as useful indicators of classifying state behaviour in nuclear governance. In doing so, the empirically contextualised case of India provides a holistic approach of segregating intent from discourse in global politics.

India has always argued that its nuclear programme was contrarily and yet deeply embedded in the ideals of a non-violent Indian nuclear policy. Hence and as Chapter 5 evidenced, the attempt of New Delhi to develop a nuclear discourse was also a way of defending its post-colonial values of sovereignty, decision-making, and constructing an independent foreign policy. Nonetheless, the approach of the jackal through discourse also possesses a threat to the governing norms of interaction in policy practice. The audience of normals may refuse to understand discourse as peaceful and as a result "the security of its [the deviant's] identity will be called into question" (Murray, 2010: 662). This could possibly make the pathway of revisionism for the performers of the deviant more attractive and pose challenges by delegitimising existing and recognised mechanisms of compliant interactions in nuclear governance. As a result, important policy discussions could emerge among the audience of normals of not outrightly rejecting deviant discourse, but rather using more strategic channels of communication in influencing performers of the deviant to undertake and display more congruent forms of social compliance.

Instances in the second timeframe from 1999 to 2008 in Chapter 6 particularly examined the transformation of India's nuclear identity as its nuclear programme was implicitly recognised by the US through the India-US bi-lateral 123 Agreement. This chapter concluded with the argument as to why the trajectory of the India-US nuclear relationship ensured New Delhi overcoming its subaltern

stigma position. In this context, Carranza (2007: 467) argues that the Clinton administration moved from a strategy of wanting to de-nuclearise India to a "a quiet acceptance of the nuclear status quo in the subcontinent." Carranza (2007: 465) terms this transition as the shift from *non-proliferation* to *post-proliferation* that ultimately reached fruition with the Bush administration focussing on "deepening the 'strategic dialogue' with India, reviving a military alliance with [India and] Pakistan to fight the 'war on terror', and completely abandoning the early 1990s' policy of rolling back India's and Pakistan's nuclear weapons programmes." However, what remains uncaptured is that the policy of post-proliferation based on cooperation cannot be unidirectional, i.e., from the audience of normals to performers of the deviant. Rather, post-proliferation is accompanied by *social proliferation* in terms of ideas, values, and belief systems that are normative, shared, and mutually shared and recognised.

Evidencing stigma redaction and reasoning of instance that brought about a transformation in the India-US nuclear relationship in 2008 also serve as important signalling mechanisms of state behaviour and identity in policy practice. Pu (2017: 149) argues that "[s]tatus signalling is a special type of information transmission that aims to change or maintain a special type of 'status belief' among relevant political actors [and] [a] rising power could send various types of signals to demonstrate its preferred status." In other words, the aspects that ultimately constituted India's challenge to the global nuclear order and particularly hindered a normal relationship with the United States can be viewed through the lens of status seeking in international politics. Instances include India posing continuous challenges to the nuclear hierarchy, reverting back to compliant forms of nuclear behaviour, and then using a defensive approach to justify non-compliance.

All these forms of behaviour signal that India's nuclear weapons status does not necessarily translate to a complete disregard of existing nuclear norms in an anarchic self-help international system. Rather, it is more of a sustained rollover[179] of nuclear norms that specifically remain in dissonance with New Delhi's normative baggage of values and belief systems in a post-colonial world order. Hence, in the immediate timeframe after the 1998 Indian nuclear tests, official declarations from New Delhi re-instated "India's commitment to the pursuit of global nuclear disarmament … [and its] … voluntary moratorium on further underground nuclear test explosions" (PIB, 1998b) and that its "basic policy [was still] based on the premise of peaceful coexistence and security concerns" (PIB, 1998c).

Nonetheless, India's challenge to global nuclear governance by undertaking nuclear weaponisation without being a signatory to the NPT, raises important questions about the international normative order. While several definitions of global order exist (Bull, 1977; Ikenberry, 2001; Phillips, 2010), Baldus et al. (2021: 199) characterises order as a "panoply of actions pulling and pushing in many different directions" and very importantly "global order is subjected to the imperative of preventing

[179] From India's first nuclear test in 1974 and ultimately declaring itself as a nuclear power in 1998.

nuclear war." In the same context, India has carried forward a policy of expanding its nuclear military capabilities in terms of achieving nuclear triad in 2018 or its ability of launching a nuclear attack from land, air, and sea (The Economic Times, 2018).

What is also interesting to note here are the effects that stigma redaction and reasoning of instance as semi-compliant forms of behaviour and discourse have on the international order. India's undertaking of stigma redaction along with its simultaneous increase of nuclear arsenals point to how the current international system is far from perfect in preventing nuclear war. The push and pull factors can be attributed to India's continued stress on nuclear disarmament for a more benevolent international order while at the same time refusing to commit to what it sees as a western-led liberal order (Sullivan de Estrada, 2023a). Rather, India seeks an alternative order that is based on its rich civilization past and "pivots on a claim to social and moral superiority and action through a pedagogical mission" of being a transformative world teacher or that of a "vishwaguru" (Sullivan de Estrada, 2023b:454). Hence, the role of this alternate international order does not guarantee a sense of equality among states nor does it promise giving any other state an aspirational status of a vishwaguru. Consequently, this raises an important scholarly intervention that if India were to be recognised as an unreserved (rather than a de-facto) nuclear power, whether such a recognition could actually bring about a change in dissolving unequal power relations in nuclear governance. This is especially the case as New Delhi seems to want to reproduce a similar world order based on hierarchies as compared to contrarily advocating for an equal social status to that of NWSs, after its first nuclear test in 1974.

While undertaking scholarship to engage with these issues would undoubtedly open up further enriching discussions in International Security Studies, it also remains important in identifying how this dissertation can be positioned within the existing scholarly landscape in international politics. More specifically, one might ask as to where and how does this PhD project fit into the burgeoning scholarship on India's nuclear identity and its interactions with the United States.

3. Fitting into Contemporary Analyses

Since the beginning of this doctoral project in October 2019, the contemporary debate on international norms, international hierarchies, stigmatisation approaches to international security, and perspectives of India's challenge to the global nuclear order have undergone changes. In addressing the expanding scholarship in each of these aspects, this doctoral work makes a timely theoretical and empirical contribution in the field of International Security Studies.

Theoretical works in addressing international norms have long moved on from defining norms as static and non-evolving which prescribes as well as proscribes "appropriate behaviour for actors with a given identity" (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998: 891). Chapter 1 captures this changing dynamic in discussing how evolving scholarship have been characterising norms to be more fluid, serving as

important social mechanisms to project changes in state identity, and highlighting how state interactions often bring about a change in norm robustness and norm validity (Deitelhoff and Zimmerman, 2020; Niemann and Schillinger, 2017; Wiener, 2018, 2020; Widmaier and Park; 2012). Nonetheless, there have been an emerging interest among scholars in international politics to look at norms not as stand-alone directions of behaviour affecting specific state identities but rather as "clusters" or "aligned, but distinct, norms or principles that relate to a common, overarching issue area; they address different aspects and contain specific normative obligations" (Lantis and Wunderlich, 2018: 571). Expanding on the notion of norm clusters, Winston (2018: 654) has argued how clusters give space for "a multiple combinations of problems, ideations, and behaviors" and a "family group" of actors whose intersubjective understandings to problems and solutions are "close enough."

Discussions on norm survival seem to take a similar turn as Percy and Sandholtz (2022: 935) have very recently argued that "research on norm death has so far built on a misconception of norms as individual, atomized entities that have a life cycle outside of the larger normative and social structures of which they are a part." Building on this latest strand of scholarship, it remains important to contextualise the India-US nuclear case. Chapter 6 has discussed as to how norms of the 123 Agreement that provided an implicit recognition to India's nuclear programme was hinged on conditions and indeed reversible. These included the necessity of India to separate its civilian and military nuclear facilities and only using US assistance for peaceful purposes. Hence, it may be necessary to think as to whether all these norms that brought about an implicit recognition of the Indian nuclear programme from the United States can indeed be grouped together as clusters that affected India's nuclear identity, behaviour, and position in nuclear governance. Furthermore, it remains important to examine as to whether India, Iran, and North Korea having similar/*close enough* discourse to contest the norms of the global non-proliferation regime can be understood as a *family group* of deviant actors.[180] If so, what are the dynamics that bind this affiliation or can differentiate within the contestation elements of these deviant nuclear states? Also, what are the range of normal behaviour and identity dynamics that the family group of deviant actors affect by virtue of their norm violations? Answering these questions could lead to promising future research projects.

In examining international hierarchies, Egel and Ward (2022) have advanced the work of Zarakol and Mattern (2016) by designing conceptualisations of revisionism in the existing international order. Egel and Ward's (2022) conceptualisations include renegotiation (voicing dissatisfaction over existing material and ideational arrangements in the hierarchy), positional revisionism (conversion of existing capital into necessary resources to move up the hierarchy), and subversive revisionism (discourses challenging the underlying foundations, principles, and values of the existing hierarchy). The case

[180] The thesis has empirically evidenced these discourses in Chapter 6 while examining India's emergence as a successful norm innovator.

study of nuclear India and its gradually gained de-facto recognition of its nuclear programme from the United States poses a challenge to the proposed distinctions by Egel and Ward (2022). Chapter 6 has evidenced that India's emergence as a successful norm innovator was indeed an example of normative change. Very notably, it has argued that Washington's implicit acceptance of India's nuclear programme based on conditions was an example of the norm of semi-acceptance embedded in this normative change. As a result, questions on revisionism need further examination as to the effects norm change and normative change have on the international order, respectively. As norm change is reversible and conditional, can renegotiations alter the dynamics of norm change and have a substantial effect on the normative order? If so, are these discourses of negotiation any different from subversive revisionism?

Furthermore, bi-lateral aligning of India-US goals in terms of nuclear non-proliferation and global terrorism points to the aspect of "social creativity" or "refram[ing] a negative attribute as positive or stress[ing] achievement in a different domain" (Larson and Shevchenko, 2010). This precisely seems to be the case as the United States was unable to curb Indian nuclear ambitions since the latter's first nuclear test in 1974, and ultimately had to agree on alternate sources of cooperation. This relationship built on ambiguity raises questions as to whether policy changes from the audience of normals for accommodating deviant states in diplomatic negotiations point to a certain degree of revisionism in the international order. Also, it calls to attention as to whether separate typologies/distinctions can be made to classify the levels of change in policy to serve as useful indicators of international revisionism.

It also remains important to consider as to how the developed framework of deviant states undertaking contestation through stigma redaction, may fit into contemporary works of stigma theory in international politics. Following Adler-Nissen's (2014) scholarship on stigma management, there have been a burgeoning scholarship on the theoretical and empirical dynamics of stigma in international politics. A few months after the publication of Adler-Nissen's (2014) work, Zarakol (2014) made the case as to how the concept of stigma is steeped in colonial history and often drives non-compliance for non-Western actors. More recently, Rogstad (2022: 2) has differentiated stigma in terms of "diffused stigma" (promoted through a range of established norms and institutional networks) versus "direct stigma" (a direct social transaction between the norm-maker and the norm-taker). Furthermore, in looking at the connections of discourse and stigma, Kurowska and Reshetnikov (2021: 232) argue that stigmatisation may give rise to a "trickster" actor who "is both conformist and deviant, hero and anti-hero – a 'plural figure' both reflecting the rich cultural texture of international society and contesting its hierarchies." It is indeed interesting to note how the Indian nuclear identity can be an integral aspect for these recent strands of scholarship. Hence, when Chapter 2 speaks about stigma as a subaltern stigma position, contemplating whether this position is a result of diffused or direct stigma can shape theoretically novel discussions on hierarchies in international

politics. Reasoning of instance as a stigma redaction discourse in the case of India shares some similarities to the characterisation of the trickster actor developed by Kurowska and Reshetnikov (2021). This is because India showcased compliant as well as non-compliant forms of behaviour in challenging the norms of the NPT, and giving rise to a range of interactions with the United States, as evidenced in Chapters 5 and 6.

Sullivan de Estrada (2023a) has recently and very comprehensively argued that India poses challenges to the underlying Western-led liberal order in rejecting traditional forms of cooperation and being increasingly sceptical of wanting to maintain its sovereign decision-making capabilities. While Sullivan de Estrada (2023a) uses the Quad alliance of the United States, Japan, Australia, and India to highlight her point against growing Chinese influence in the Indian Ocean, several parallels can be drawn with the studied India-US nuclear case. Chapter 5 and 6 are filled with empirical instances as to how New Delhi justified its nuclear explosions as a sovereign right to nuclear technology, argued its weaponisation programme being an unavoidable reaction to the tensions posed in its immediate security environment, and stressed its capacity to defend its own security interests. India’s hinderance in strengthening its cooperation initiatives with the United States is also not new. Several empirical instances have showcased how the Delhi-Washington relationship never culminated into New Delhi gaining an explicit recognition of the latter’s nuclear programme. These included Washington curbing New Delhi’s nuclear ambitions since 1974, bringing back sanctions on New Delhi after the latter’s 1998 nuclear test, and implementing travel bans on Indian scientists on the suspicion of aiding Iran’s missile development programme.

5. Further Research Avenues

Having discussed how this project makes several interlinkages to position itself within the state-of-the-art literature, this section intends to highlight further epistemological and empirical discussions that can build from the undertakings of this doctoral project. Very broadly speaking, the discussion on norms and stigma is deeply interlinked with how the international system is organised and managed. These concepts affect several aspects of international politics which include questions of global inequalities, cooperation and conflict, dynamics of status seeking, and North-South relations.

Also, debates on how norms can influence strategy and decision making is an imperative need as the contemporary world is seeing rapid technological development in the sphere of artificial intelligence. Gill (2019: 169) states that artificial intelligence will have a significant impact on how future wars will be fought, they “will challenge traditional arms control thinking and … [n]ew tools and competences will be required, and inventive ways to build trust and confidence.” Referring to the norms of the NPT, Payne (2018: 19) has stated that “norms will likely follow technology, with law materialising still later … because there will be persistent problems in defining technologies and monitoring compliance.” Using the India-US nuclear case, Chapter 6 of this doctoral project already

shows how norms are conditional, can be stretched to accommodate norm innovation, facilitate a wide range of social interactions, and have a significant influence on state identities. Hence focusing on using norms as a future research agenda to reimagine a future global order would not only mean bringing more stakeholders to the table to influence policy making, but also contributing to timely arresting of threats that relate to emerging technology as and when they occur.

In nuclear politics, Bentley (2022) has drawn from the influential work of Tannenwald (1999: 434) in deconstructing the long-standing notion of nuclear "taboo." Bentley (2022: 19) argues that the notion of taboo consists of "a prohibitory norm, which disgusts, is stigmatized, is fetishized." Contextualising this idea of taboo to India's nuclear doctrine perfectly fits into the thesis' analysis of the transformation of India's nuclear identity. This work has highlighted how stigma and a fetishised notion of non-violence having roots in India's colonial struggle had undergone change after India acquired nuclear weapons that are underlined with unimaginable destructive potential. Very recently, Egeland (2022: 109) has argued that despite several factors such as political pressure and the security environment, "social stigmatization constitutes a necessary condition for change" in influencing a state's pathway towards disarmament. Nonetheless, it still raises questions as to *why* stigmatisation from the audience of normals (including United States, Japan, and Canada) was unable to push India towards disarmament after the 1998 Indian nuclear tests.[181] Research agendas can therefore focus on conceptualising and empirically tracing material and ideational factors that were inadequate in pursuing India to give up its programme of nuclear weaponisation.

The characterisation of India's nuclear identity vis-à-vis its interactions with the United States also sits well with the evolving literature on the perception of India's status in nuclear governance. Tow (2019: 240) has understood India as "an emerging US security partner" as compared to "two US treaty allies (Australia and Japan)" in the Indo-Pacific region. Tow (2019: 241) also argues that all these states are "exercising regional order-building and a concern that in its absence, China could eventually implement its own rules for regional security governance." Having already characterised the subaltern stigma position and how the relationship between the audience of normals and the performer(s) of the deviant remain ontologically insecure, it may be interesting to examine as to whether India can change from an *emerging* to an *emergent* US security partner. Furthermore, questions remain as to whether the recent erosion of India's democratic values (Biswas, 2021) would also undercut India's perception and potential of norm innovation in the international context. In the same context, Markey (2022) has stated that further erosion can potentially "make India a less powerful and predictable international actor, and would reduce its capacity for reassurance and building partnerships with other states, including the U.S." Markey's (2022) argument directly builds into how Chapter 6 identified India emerging as a successful innovator after it identified common

[181] This thesis has looked at *how* India managed to extract a de-facto recognition of its nuclear programme from the United States through reasoning of instance and stigma redaction.

(albeit limited) areas of cooperation with the United States.

The arena of nuclear politics that this project has examined seems to have major upheavals in the recent past. Since the starting of this doctoral project in 2019, two key arms control treaties have expired between Russia and the United States, namely the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty and the Treaty on Open Skies (The Washington Post, 2023). Both these treaties remained pivotal in ensuring that Russia and the United States (two of the most heavily armed nuclear states) curb the deployment of land-based missile systems and mutually engage in the transparency of sharing the location of their strategic facilities. With the New Start Treaty remaining as the last embers of major arms control measures between the US and Russia from the Cold War, the world may be more prone to nuclear mishaps due to uncontrolled vertical proliferation (Pamuk, 2023). The added risk of the catastrophic damage to lives and the environment as a result of nuclear accidents is a prime source of future concern. Furthermore, after Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, news of human rights violations committed by the former have flooded the international community (Ellyatt, 2022; United Nations: 'Humanitarian and human rights catastrophe' continues, Security Council hears, 2023). Hence, strategic discussions have focussed on whether the Russian invasion would have occurred if Ukraine had nuclear weapons to act as a source of deterrence (Gottemoeller, 2022; Myre, 2014). Bollfrass and Herzog (2022) also raise questions as to whether the NPT legitimised the Russian invasion of Ukraine as it allowed the former to keep its nuclear weapons while rendering Ukraine as an NNWS.

All these recent developments open up various empirical and theoretical directions of enquiry that can borrow from the scholarly pursuits of this doctoral project. This thesis has stressed the process of stigmatisation operating between an NWS and an NNWS. In using this constructivist dynamic between two nuclear NWSs (in the case of Russia and the US), there remain several possibilities of designing theoretical conceptualisations on the role that stigmatisation played for the death of two major arms control treaties within the past four years. Furthermore, it would also be interesting to observe whether there is a norm cluster dynamic within the audience of normals that render an NWS as semi-compliant; not just based on the norms of the NPT, but the larger role that the state plays in other aspects of international politics.

Russia's war on Ukraine has seen Western countries coming to the aid of the latter in supplying various tactical ammunitions to strengthen Ukraine's defensive capabilities against Russian opposition. These include the United Kingdom supplying Challenger 2 tanks, Germany providing IRIS-T air defence systems, and the US contributing with armoured vehicles such as The Stryker and M1 Abrams (Brown et al., 2023). Yet, as of January 2023, the US Biden administration said "no" to providing F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine (currently a non-member of the European Union) to boost the latter's defensive against the Russian offensive (Sabbagh, 2023). As a result, several questions can be

raised relating to the dynamics of socialisation between the Ukraine and the West. These include: What are the social factors that hinder deeper cooperation between Kiev and the West? What are its effects on their relationship apart from curbing a more thorough defence cooperation? To what extent is socialisation possible when the US and EU members decide to negotiate with a non-EU member? What are the theoretical toolkits that can help us better understand this kind of socialisation?

The underlying theoretical and empirical aspects of this thesis also points to developing future research agendas in specific areas of nuclear politics. While India has been able to acquire a de-facto recognition of its nuclear status by signing the 123 Agreement with the US, the same cannot be said for Pakistan.[182] Therefore leading questions on future research projects can focus on how Pakistan's management of stigma was different from stigma redaction, the imposed stigmatisation from the audience of normals that limited Pakistan's normalisation strategies in nuclear governance, and thinking about policy avenues as to how Pakistan can engage in more socially congruent patterns of nuclear behaviour. The case of Iraq's intention to proliferate in 1990s turns the strategy of stigmatisation and then seeking normalisation on its head. Iraq's dictator, Saddam Hussein had planned to stall its WMD programme to improve relations with the West and then again re-start his WMD programme (The White House Archives, 2004). The motivations of Iraq to showcase compliance was very different to that of the Indian case. While New Delhi had employed a sustained form of restraint for more than 20 years before weaponising its nuclear programme from its first conducted PNE in 1974, the case of Baghdad was more of a brief pause in wanting to shortly return to developing WMDs. Hence, this raises socialisation questions in terms of whether the case of Iraq can also be termed as stigma redaction in showcasing non-compliant and compliant forms of behaviour or if it is more of a case relating to the rapid shift from stigma correction to stigma rejection.

The empirical examples of African states like Libya and South Sudan also offer interesting case studies for the scholarship of norms and stigma. Libya's former dictator, Muammar Gaddafi, dismantled Tripoli's nuclear programme in 2003 after negotiations with the US and the UK and yet the West intervened in Libya on humanitarian grounds (Braut-Hegghammer, 2017; Hamid 2016). The Libyan case challenges the causal mechanisms between nuclear compliance being the most robust way of gaining any form of social recognition from the audience of normals. Therefore, it remains an important motivator for future research projects in studying what practices and discourses account for the *strong*est form of deviance or compliance in international politics. One of the reasons why Gaddafi dismantled Libya's nuclear programme was the shock of the US-led intervention in Iraq. Gaddafi did not want the same incidents for himself (Braut-Hegghammer, 2017). Hence, the idea of intervention shocks forming an important dynamic of norm diffusion and ultimately socialisation can be an interesting aspect of study for a variety of fields including research on human rights,

[182] Albeit these neighbouring countries remaining non-signatories of the NPT and the CTBT and having declared weaponising their nuclear programmes within the same time-period.

international order, and normative IR.

The empirical case of South Sudan not having nuclear weapons and yet currently not part of the NPT gives rise to a very different notion of exceptionalist nuclear behaviour compared to that of India.[183] The World Bank (n.d.) reports that South Sudan (currently the youngest country in the world that was formed in 2011) "remains in a serious humanitarian crisis. Some two-thirds of its total population of 11.4 million (2021) are estimated to be in need of humanitarian assistance in 2022." India too remained a non-signatory of the NPT even before its first 1974 nuclear test as well as required humanitarian assistance in the 1960s and 1970s (NAI, 1974b). Hence, several questions can relate to how and if at all an NPT non-signatory South Soudan can successfully register contestation to normative nuclear norms. These include: What are the material and ideational indicators of status that a state needs to accomplish to be rendered as a non-compliant nuclear power? How does the question of hierarchy relate to South Sudan being the most recently formed state in contemporary times? Can a young state pose noticeable challenge to nuclear norms when compared to deviant states that have had more time to establish their normative challenges in the international order? Do poor economic indicators of a nation provide a distraction for the audience of normals to ignore the former's norm challenge? With separatist movements across the world, has South Sudan emerged as an important norm entrepreneur for any newly formed state to skip past the norms of the NPT in the future?

Another broad area in international politics that can build from Chapter 5 of this thesis is in context to the repeated invoking of the imageries of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings by India and Japan, as a reaction to the 1998 Indian nuclear tests. Not only can these continued references to the taboo incident in nuclear governance be understood in terms of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance, but also be contextualised to the emerging works of violent imagery and memory in international politics. Using the works of Ritchin (2013) and Möller (2019), Fairey (2019: 381) has asked as to whether "images and image-making [can] be complicit in supporting communities to recover from conflict and facilitate dialogue" and if "photography [may] help to frame the conditions of possibility for peace." The iconic image of the mushroom cloud above Hiroshima as the aftermath of its atomic bombing has indeed been at the heart of nuclear debates. As a result, there remains the possibility of developing research avenues that explore as to how much the image of Hiroshima has directly affecting policy making and discourses relating to nuclear norms in global governance and arms control. Hom (2020) has recently examined how time stretches and de-links political memory to justice, power, sovereignty, etc. Hence, it would be interesting to observe as to what extent and if at all the Hiroshima (and Nagasaki) bombings affected the thinking of Indian political elites towards making India a nuclear power. Furthermore, research efforts on discourse can also highlight the complete spectrum of political arguments and rhetoric that Indian bureaucrats employed in wanting to

[183] Referring to India's agentic commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament but contrarily remaining in possession (and in consequent violation of the NPT) of nuclear weapons.

de-link the atomic bombings in Japan from India's nuclear weaponisation programme.

Finally, while this work has critically unpacked the theoretical as well as the empirical dynamics of the ambivalence governing India-US nuclear relations, its undertakings should be viewed as a wider disciplinary effort. This pursuit is rooted in developing an inclusive epistemology that draws strength from and is in conversation with approaches in IPS, IR, nuclear governance, and India's foreign policy. Albeit the explanation of India undertaking of stigma redaction and reasoning of instance in overcoming its subaltern stigma position is by no means exhaustive, this thesis' undertakings are foregrounded by an attempt of re-thinking important questions on norms, power, hierarchy, discourse, and identity in international politics. Nonetheless, in its sincere pursuit of developing a novel and scientific research agenda, this work also leaves enough room in recognising how the researcher has remained reflexive and the subjectivities that he has engaged with, in developing (yet another) account of inter-state relations.

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