

Abstract

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This study seeks to explain India's decision to repudiate the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996. To reach this empirical aim entails difficulty through the prevailing weak theoretical competition among perspectives of international relations (i.e. IR-theory) in the matter of explaining state defection from multilateral cooperation. Structural realism eloquently maintains that state defection expresses the necessity of taking relative gains into account in international anarchy. Neither neoliberal institutionalism nor constructivism can challenge this proposition without also offering implicit support to the "grm" worldview of structural realism; in the absence of robust international institutions and/or norms, self-help in anarchy prevails. Thus the empirical aim fortifies the theoretical purpose of this project: to present an explanation to state defection which challenges the realist alternative.

The theoretical argument is unfolded in two steps: the first step presents a version of the structural impact on state agents, and the second step elaborates a logic of action. In contrast to structural realism, this project argues that state agents are occupied not so much with the physical survival of their state, as with the social conditions of their state's existence. That is since anarchy as a structural condition triggers uncertainty of an agent's own role in relation to others, rather than uncertainty of others' intentions. The presence of such systemic influences implies that state agents might seek security through seeking recognition of a preferred international role (as prescribed by the predominant national narrative), rather than through relative capabilities. If this social dynamic permeates a negotiation, state agents deploy "argumentative rationality" in the sense that they seek to impose their own preferred view of reality on others, and they use their (social) identity rather than their (materially defined) national interest as yardstick to decide whether to accept or to dismiss a negotiated agreement. It is when the process and/or the outcome of the negotiation are experienced as threatening to the preferred international role that cooperation becomes a less attractive option.

The empirical investigation evaluates the the two mechanisms generated from this "recognition perspective" compared to the explanation provided by structural realism. The investigation entails process-tracing, and includes a study of the history of India's foreign policy, reconstructing of the test ban multilateral negotiation, and analysing the interpretations of the CTBT made by Indian security experts during the negotiation process.

The empirical investigation suggests that the evidence concurs better with the operational mechanisms as outlined in the the recognition perspective (i.e. uncertainty of role, strive for recognition of certain role) than it does the operational mechanisms proposed by structural realism (i.e. uncertainty about type, strive for relative gains). The findings of the empirical study leads to the conclusion that the explanation generated by the recognition perspective is more robust than the one offered by structural realism for India's decision to repudiate the CTBT.

The concluding sections include a discussion of the findings in relation to the study of international relations and foreign policy as well as the implications of the study for the future of nuclear weapons control.

Key words: IR-theory, Constructivism, Social Recognition, International Role, National Narrative, Nuclear Weapons Control, Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, India's Foreign Policy.