

PhD Thesis Assessment

Reconstructing Nuclear Deviance, Stigma Politics and the Rules of Non-proliferation Game

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2nd Report written by Dr Virginie Grzelczyk, Aston University (Birmingham), United Kingdom in preparation for viva (September 21, 2017).

This report assesses the piece after it has undergone a number of changes following the initial viva in June 2017. The initial viva highlighted the fact that the dissertation was very solid and well-written, engaged deeply with a vast amount of literature, and presented some interesting and clear findings.

Following the viva, a number of issues were raised, especially when it came to the work's presentation and chapter divisions, as well as the more substantive issue of case selection (and especially the absence of a case study on the DPRK). The current reviewer particularly hoped that the case-study question would be further developed to indeed address the question of norm violation by the DPRK. The current reviewer also hoped that some thoughts would be given toward presenting a more cohesive dissertation, and especially one that did not have two obvious halves (the first half engaging with the concept of norms and rules and the building of the stigma framework with the second part engaging more specifically with the NPT).

Overall, most of the points outlined in this reviewer's previous report have been addressed. The most obvious changes are the one pertaining to the structure. The two-halves model is now gone, and some of the chapters have been spliced and merged. This creates a lighter, and more accessible read, as there is less of a theoretical overload. The engagement with the heart of the thesis matter is more immediate (and not almost half way in as it was in the initial draft). The work becomes more streamlined with the removal of Chapter 3 and its integration into Chapter 2. The DPRK has also been introduced as a case, thus providing a needed engagement with important topics, while at the same time expanding upon the original cases to provide stronger conclusions.

While the work is pleasing, three areas require more thought. They do not detract from the current importance of this work and its quality, but they are points that will need to be considered when it comes to publications:

- The author has chosen to remove its previous 'predator' category to calling these states 'rogue'. This is problematic, because of the rogue label is highly normative.

Because it often rests on a notion of irrationality and aggressiveness, it adds a further layer to cases and somewhat blurs the work. While 'predator' was not a particularly engaging term, 'rogue' is not helpful either. Perhaps it would be better to call these states what they are: violator, or more pragmatically wannabe-proliferators.

- The author has included a needed case on the DPRK. This is important and balances the dissertation. Some work has also been done when it comes to case determination, but there seem to be little thought as to why Iran and DPRK come first (with their 2002 crisis) while India tested in 1974. If considering the level of deviance there is in the usual suspects, then the DPRK is much further afield when it comes to its own development. Thus India could come first, followed by the DPRK and finally Iran, the only non-nuclear power out of the lot.
- The previous point brings the last criticism point of the work: the three cases are treated separately. Yet, how each state has been handled in the international system has had an effect on the others, and this is not traced in the dissertation, or at least not enough. While the work constructs deviance for each case, this deviance might also be affected by previous or concurrent events as well. It would be good to see more of an integrated approach in pieces that will be derived from this work.

In summary, the revisions have been extensive, in-depth and thoughtful, leading to a very strong piece.

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September 18, 2017

