



RUPRECHT-KARLS-UNIVERSITÄT HEIDELBERG
FAKULTÄT FÜR WIRTSCHAFTS- UND SOZIALWISSENSCHAFTEN

**Delineating India's Strategic Pluralism:
The Subculture-Cleavage Model of
Grand Strategic Thought**

Inauguraldissertation
zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades Dr. rer. pol.
Im Fach Politikwissenschaft
vorgelegt von:

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Eingereicht an der
Fakultät für Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften
der Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg
im Sommer Semester 2018

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Zweitgutachter: Professor Yale H. Ferguson

To my family

Acknowledgments

This thesis is the result of a longstanding engagement with India's grand strategy, which started during an internship in the Austrian ministry of defense (Direktion für Sicherheitspolitik) in Vienna in 2005 and 2006 and received a boost at the IISS-Global Strategic Review in 2010 in Geneva, which led to the decision to pursue a PhD in Heidelberg. Such an endeavor would not have been possible without the active support and encouragement of many individuals.

First among them I have therefore to thank my "Doktorvater" Professor Subrata K. Mitra, for his guidance and unwavering confidence in my dissertation project. I have to express my heartiest gratitude to Professor Mitra as I would have not proceeded so far without his readily available and warm-hearted supervision and the opportunities of learning his department provided in the field of South Asian politics and in particular India's foreign and security policy. I would also like to express my great thanks and gratitude to Professor Yale H. Ferguson, as my second supervisor, who has accompanied me since my Magister with unfailing support for my forays into the field of global politics. In addition, a special thank you goes to Professor Rahul Mukherji, who has since his arrival in Heidelberg in May 2016 solidly supported my research. He enhanced my professionalism in academic life by further integrating me into the department and made me feel at home in Heidelberg even more.

Besides these three 'professorial' father figures I have to extend my gratitude and appreciation to my dear friends and colleagues at the South Asia Institute (SAI), Heidelberg University, who have become a second family to me. I'm especially indebted to Dr. Seyed Hossein Zarhani, Dr. Jivanta Schöttli, Dr. Markus Pauli, and Dr. Michael Liebig, who have influenced my project through the fruitful intellectual exchange and critical feedback they shared with me on many occasions. Through the far-reaching academic network of the South Asia Institute I had the pleasure to engage in inspiring conversations on India's strategic culture with scholars like Professor Sumit Ganguly, Professor Partha S. Ghosh, Professor Dietmar Rothermund, Dr. Swapan Dasgupta, Professor Frank Pfetsch, Dr. Suba Chandran, Dr. Mischa Hansel, Dr. Deep Datta-Ray and Sqn. leader Rana Chhina. Finally, thank you also to my dear colleague Patrycja Jastrzębska, who helped me in formatting the bibliography.

As usual (as by now it has almost become a tradition) I'm very grateful to Dr. Susanne Nitsch from the ophthalmic clinic in Salzburg, who has taken care of my eyes in order to allow me to indulge in the joy of academic reading and writing.

Finally, this expression of gratitude would not be complete without the inclusion of my parents and grandparents, who accompanied me for a part of the journey. They have supported my academic pursuit (especially my grandfather always believed in me), and I could always count on them. I do not imagine a life without their love and blessings. This thesis is dedicated to them.

Heidelberg, January 2018

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List of Abbreviations

AWACS	Airborne Warning and Control System
BCIM	Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar Forum for Regional Cooperation
BIMSTEC	Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BRICS	Brazil Russia India China and South Africa
CIC	Cultural Identity Cleavage
CPI (M)	Communist Party India (Marxist)
CPI	Communist Party India
CTBT	Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
DRDO	Defence Research and Development Organization
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IAI	Israel Aerospace Industries
ICWA	Indian Council for World Affairs
IDSA	Institute for Defence and Strategic Analysis
IFS	Indian Foreign Service
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INC	Indian National Congress
IORA	Indian Ocean Rim Association
IPCS	Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies
IR	International Relations
ISA	International Studies Association

ISA	Israel Space Agency
ISRO	Indian Space Research Organization
IT	Information Technology
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs
MoD	Ministry of Defense
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NCR	Neoclassical Realism
NDA	National Democratic Alliance
NFU	Non-First-Use
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NGSC	Normative Grand Strategy Cleavage
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
NSA	National Security Adviser
NSAB	National security Advisory Board
OIC	Organization of the Islamic Conference
ORF	Observer Research Foundation
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
PSLV	Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle
PTBT	Partial Test Ban Treaty
RAW	Research and Analysis Wing
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SAM	Surface to Air Missile
SFC	Strategic Forces Command

SSC	Strategic Subculture
SSOD III	Special Session on Disarmament III
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UPA	United Progressive Alliance
VHP	Vishva Hindu Parishad
VIF	Vivekananda International Foundation

1. Introduction: How to Delineate India's Strategic Pluralism?

“... Indian foreign policy and strategic thinking are made up of two strands: an idealist and a realist one. Those who would like to give these two modes a greater historical pedigree within the Indian tradition will trot out the iconic figures of Kautilya and Ashoka.” (Pratap Bhanu Mehta, 2009a)

“The traditional values of India's foreign policy can be traced to ancient scriptures like the Vedas, the Arthashastra, the Manu Smriti or the Mahabharata. India possesses the heritage of an ancient civilization and culture, yet this culture is full of inner contradictions and opposing ideas which necessitated that conflicting strands of normative standards, ideals and ethics had to be reconciled, with one or the other prevailing at times.” (Michael Arndt 2008)

1.1. A Short Introduction to the Delimitation of India's Grand Strategic Thought

Motivated by the question of “How do Indians think about grand strategy?”, the thesis aims, to devise a typology of India's grand strategic subcultures (Johnston 1995, Bloomfield 2012). By doing so, an increasing research gap is addressed as attempts to define the different strategic traditions in India have so far been superficial or even contradictory (Bajpai 2003, Paranjpe 2013). But, despite such a tenuous record, what are the core assumptions and associated labels that can be derived from the meta-debate on Indian grand strategy since 1991¹ and especially from the discourse on India's strategic culture in terms of contending strategic worldviews? So, right from the outset, it has to be stated that, in spite of the several discursive loci of Indian grand strategy² only in the context of the nation's strategic culture debate post-1991³ (Tanham 1992, Subrahmanyam 2005, Bajpai 2002) has a comprehensive, nevertheless mostly implicit, literature on strategic paradigms evolved. Thus, the ‘pluralist’ strand⁴ of the debate on India's strategic culture, as the richest manifestation of labelling the ideational landscape, became the

¹ See chapter 2 section 4.3 for a more thorough discussion of what the author calls the ‘meta-debate on grand strategy’ and on a definition of grand strategy see section 1.3.1.

² This debate has been shaped by a normative controversy between advocates of India's recent emergence and sceptics, who point to India's suboptimal strategic record since 1947.

³ Hence the thesis temporal focus is between 1991 and 2014.

⁴ A pluralistic understanding of strategic culture emerged as a rejection of monolithic and essentialist conceptions of India's strategic thinking (Tanham 1992, Jones 2006, Paranjpe 2013, Pardesi 2005). For a general definition of the strategic culture approach in International Relations see chapter 2 section 1-3.

object of analysis of this thesis – essentially turning the independent variable of the strategic culture approach (Johnston 1995, Gray 1999b) into the “dependent variable” of ‘ideational strategic pluralism’⁵. This concept, then, refers to the sets of deeply-rooted strategic ideas, in terms of strategic subcultures, held by competing segments of the nation’s interpretation elite⁶ (epistemic community) to formulate, assess and legitimize grand strategy in distinct idioms. In contrast to monolithic and essentialist interpretations of strategic culture, which regard strategic culture as an independent variable determining behaviour, ‘ideational strategic pluralism’ is a more nuanced approach. Ideational strategic pluralism, then, grants a more limited status to its constituting elements, the strategic subcultures (SSC), conceptualizing them in terms of intervening ideational variables. By theorizing India’s grand strategic traditions in such a way, building a typology of strategic subcultures contributes to the broader research agenda of neoclassical realism⁷ (Lobell, Ripsman and Taliaferro 2016) an International Relations (IR) theory the author adheres to. For neoclassical realism intervening unit-level variables like strategic culture modify the impact the theory’s independent variable, that is the structure of the international state-system, has on grand strategic choices. Consequently, by delineating the range of strategic paradigms, that are vying for dominance, the author seeks to refine neoclassical realism’s study of grand strategy in a non-positivist way⁸. In addition to the categorization of the various strategic subcultures, a model of change is required to eventually make the delineated subcultures applicable intervening variables in the neoclassical realist sense, even though this is NOT the concern of the dissertation. Thus, both, the typology of grand strategic thought and the model of change from one hegemonic subculture to another, are equal prerequisites for proper employment of neoclassical realism’s “subcultures as intervening ideational variables”.

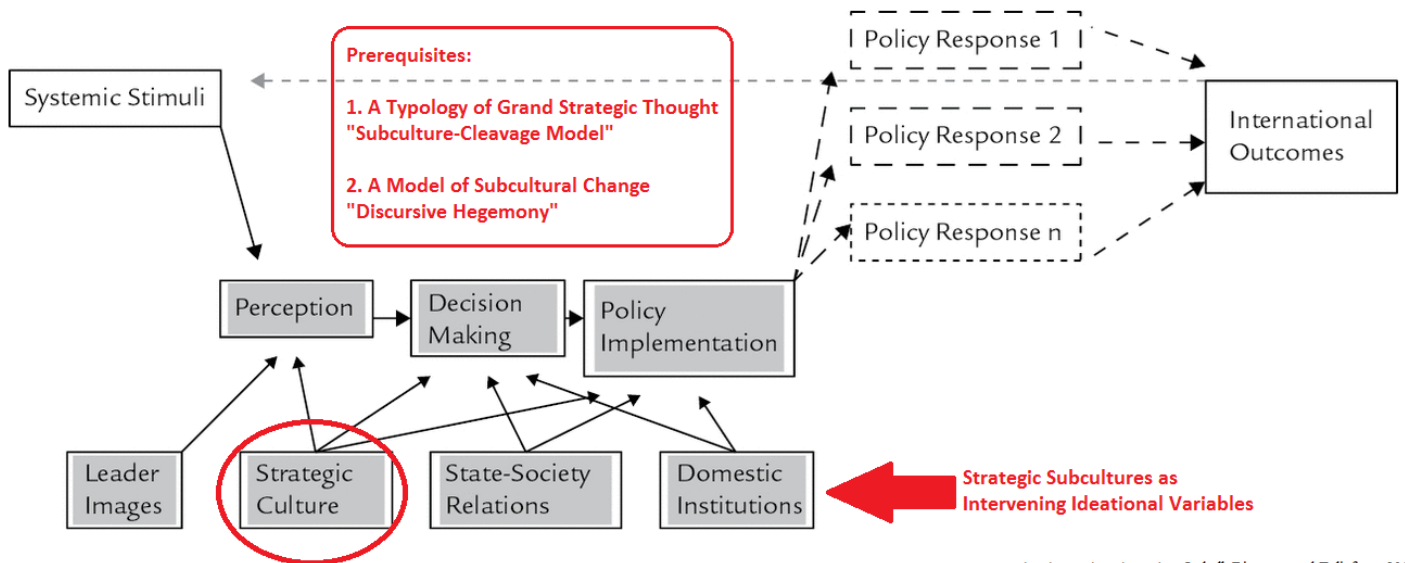
⁵ ‘Ideational strategic pluralism’ will be defined in chapter 1 section 4.2.

⁶ The concept of India’s ‘interpretation elite’ will be outlined in chapter 2 section 4.4.

⁷ The author’s take on neoclassical realism will be discussed in more breath in section 1.9 on page 19. In a similar fashion, such a typology of grand strategic thought can also contribute to a refinement of Mitra’s ‘two-level game’ toolbox on the domestic and international constraints on foreign policy (Mitra 2011).

⁸ The author’s methodological position of humanistic interpretivism will be discussed in more detail in section 8 of this introductory chapter. Typology building as it is practiced here involves no causality based theorizing. The proposed model of delineation systematically inquires, to use an analogy from zoology, what the differences between an “ideal-type” bear, bull or hawk are and how such a matrix of categorizations can be structured.

Figure1: Strategic Culture's Role within Neoclassical Realism (1)



Source: Drawn by the author, based on Lobell, Ripsman and Taliaferro 2016

Now, in order to engage the main question of this project, namely: “How can India’s ideational strategic pluralism be delineated?” the thesis sets out to develop a ‘subculture-cleavage model of grand strategic thought’. Besides the above mentioned strategic subculture approach, a modified version of cleavage theory⁹ is employed – as the other building block of the model – to accomplish the task. Cleavage theory, based on Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan’s work on party-system cleavages (Lipset and Rokkan 1967) and inspired by Ole Holsti’s and James Rosenau’s forays into the study of foreign policy cleavages in the United States (Holsti and Rosenau 1988, 1990, Holsti 1996), has, as a heuristic tool, been adopted to the realm of grand strategy. Basically, in the field of IR, cleavage theory can be *inter alia* conceptualized in terms of semi-permanent ideational elite-cleavages¹⁰. An approach that is especially valid for India, due to the near irrelevance of grand strategy for electoral politics, as it is of concern to only a small enclave in India’s polity (Staniland and Narang 2012).

Empirically the model rests upon three pillars: firstly, the MAXQDA-based qualitative analysis of the strategic culture debate, secondly, the author-conducted survey among researchers in the field on India’s strategic subcultures and thirdly, (for the case study of the thesis) a media and secondary literature analysis of Indo-Israeli relations between 1992 and 2014. Based on these aggregated findings from the vast array of labels defined by scholars, a pattern in terms of two ideational cleavages has inductively been deduced. These two cleavages, firstly, the ‘normative

⁹ Chapter 3 ‘India’s Grand Strategic Cleavages’ is dedicated to this approach.

¹⁰ ‘Semi-permanent ideational elite-cleavages’ will be discussed in chapter 3 section 1.4.

grand strategy' cleavage and secondly, the cross-cutting 'cultural identity' cleavage, work as the two categories, that determine the number of strategic subcultures by structuring India's strategic pluralism along the lines of permanent ideological conflict. These two cleavages represent the spectrum of conflict positions, which ultimately make up the central strategic paradigm, to use Johnston's terminology (Johnston 1995), of each strategic subculture. However, one has to keep in mind that these subcultures constitute the 'symbolic set' (Johnston 1995) or rhetoric dimension of India's grand strategy and not its actual implementation. These central strategic paradigms are patterns of basic assumptions on questions of war and conflict as well as on the 'self' and the 'other' thereby providing the core of a specific grand strategic outlook; hence the 'normative grand strategy' cleavage deals with the nature of conflicts and threats and essentially asks "against whom and in which way should India act?", while the 'cultural identity' cleavage reflects the contention of identity politics by addressing questions concerning the 'self' in terms of 'what kind of India should strive for a greater role in the world?'¹¹ – as the interpretation of the country' past and its physical, as well as mental borders, heavily determine which kind of grand strategies India's strategic subcultures seek to pursue.

Accordingly, the 'subculture-cleavage model' proposes the delineation of a pattern of nine strategic subcultures. If the two ideational cleavages, as 'structuring devices' are employed than the following nine subcultures are determined: each subculture is distinguished by a twofold label; the first part of the label refers to the 'normative grand strategy' cleavage, while the second part to the 'cultural identity' cleavage; empirically the existence of the proposed set of subcultures is illustrated by India's Israel policy post-1992 in the second part of the thesis. Generally, the 'subculture-cleavage' model identifies: firstly, a realist-revitalist strategic subculture, secondly, a realist-pragmatist SSC, thirdly a realist-secularist SSC, fourthly an institutionalist-revitalist SSC, fifthly an institutionalist-pragmatist SSC, sixthly an institutionalist-secularist SSC, seventhly, an idealist-revitalist SSC, eighthly an idealist-pragmatist SSC, ninthly, an idealist-secularist SSC. Due to easier comprehensibility labels are following modern mainstream IR-terminology. In the end, these strategic subcultures, as potential intervening ideational variables in a neoclassical realist sense, should be employable in any reconstruction of India's foreign and security policy choices.

¹¹ In section 4 of this introduction and in Chapter 3 the role of history in defining the 'self' and the concepts of re-use and hybridity (Mitra and Liebig 2016) in the context of Indian identity politics will be outlined in more detail.

1.2. The Structure of the Thesis

In order to devise such a typology, the thesis is structured as follows: In chapter 1, which figures as a proper introduction, the normative research traditions (the advocates of India's rise versus the advocates of India's strategic exceptionalism¹²) as the drivers for labelling India's ideational foundations of grand strategy are contoured. Secondly, core concepts like 'ideational strategic pluralism' are outlined against the backdrop of India's strategic culture debate. Finally, the objectives of the project within the framework of neoclassical realism are stated and the 'sub-culture-cleavage model' is sketched.

Chapter 2 of the thesis is concerned with the scholarly debate on India's strategic culture as the primary empirical reference of grand strategic traditions. In the first section, strategic culture as an analytical concept is defined. After an introduction into its complex origins, its evolution into a multifaceted contemporary approach of IR-theory, also in terms of its adaptation to the Indian context, is discussed and a modified definition of Johnston's conceptualization of strategic culture provided. The second part of this chapter is, then, dedicated to the qualitative analysis (MAXQDA) of the wealth of scientific literature on India's strategic subcultures. Finally, the statements of scholars regarding Indian strategic paradigms in terms of aggregated labels are being compiled to form the foundation for the deduction of the underlying patterns of strategic pluralism.

Chapter 3, then, is engaged in devising the 'structuring instrument' based on a combination of IR-adopted cleavage theory with a pluralistic understanding of strategic culture (Bloomfield 2012) to engender a minimal but comprehensive typology of grand strategic reasoning. Following Goertz (Goertz 2006) and Rathbun (Rathbun 2008b), this typology is based on the two cleavages that have been inductively conceptualized from the aggregated patterns found in the literature and gained from scholars' perceptions of India's ideational IR cleavages. Then the constitutive dimensions and 'indicators' of the 'normative grand strategy' cleavage, that is reflecting the spectrum of assumptions on conflict and threat as well as those of the 'cultural identity' cleavage on India's past and geo-body, are developed. In addition, an excursus on identity politics and the related issues of re-use, hybridity and indigenous modernity is inserted. Finally, with the help of the 'subculture-cleavage model,' the central strategic paradigm of each strategic subculture is discerned – as a result, a typology of nine strategic subcultures is inferred.

¹² India's 'strategic exceptionalism' will be outlined in chapter 1 section 3.3.

Chapter 4, then, tries to employ the established categorization by looking at the highly polarized niche case of Indo-Israeli relations. These ideological contestations among India's interpretation elite surrounding India's Israel policy are taken up to trace the nine subcultures as proposed by the 'subculture-cleavage' model. This inquiry is grounded in a qualitative media analysis of major available Indian English-language newspaper editorials and news statements from the Hindu, the Times of India, Indian Express as well as other international news sources like the New York Times, the Guardian or Haaretz between 1992 and 2014.

The final chapter draws a conclusion on the number of strategic subcultures identified by the 'subculture-cleavage model' and its utility for further research. As the project has been located within neoclassical realism's agenda, the potential purpose of these nine intervening ideational variables for a better understanding of questions regarding India's strategic choices is discussed. The thesis concludes with an outlook on future research in terms of applying the findings on the struggle for hegemony between the various strategic subcultures as well as their impact on actual Indian grand strategy and foreign policy.

The remainder of this introduction is divided into seven sections, which are dedicated to the definition of core concepts of this research project like: 1. grand strategy, 2. strategic culture, 3. India's strategic exceptionalism and 4. ideational strategic pluralism. After these key concepts have been discussed; firstly, the research gap, this typology tries to address, is outlined and secondly, the principal research question is posed; thirdly, the objectives of the study are presented and the thesis is put into the broader framework of neoclassical realism, before, in the last step, the methodology is discussed and the 'subculture-cleavage model' is tentatively sketched.

1.3. Casting the Context: The Two Normative Research Traditions on India's Grand Strategy

1.3.1 Strategic Culture or the Ideational Foundations of Indian Grand Strategy

The end of the Cold War in 1991 and the subsequent uplift in globalization, with its acceleration of economic growth in India and other parts of the developing world, saw as a consequence the gradual transition from a *Pax Americana* to a virtually multipolar post-Western world order (Huntington 1996). With the growing awareness of such a shift taking place in the global balance of power, the idea of 'India's rise' became a well-established buzzword among International Relations (IR) scholars. But not only that of India – "the rise of the rest", as Fareed

Zakaria (Zakaria 2008) has coined the re-emergence of non-western civilizations had a significant impact on strategic analysis in general and on the study of grand strategy¹³ in particular. More than during the days of bipolarity strategic studies are now expected to be attentive *not* only towards quantitative factors, like missile systems and economic indicators but also towards the significance of the actors' perceptions embedded in their respective historical and cultural backgrounds (Jepperson, Wendt and Katzenstein 1996, Lobell, Ripsman and Taliaferro 2009) – thereby acknowledging the existence of different strands of grand strategic traditions. The notion of such a 'culturalist turn', in terms of 'strategic culture'¹⁴, that rooted "strategic choice in deeply historical, formative ideational legacies" (Johnston, 1995, ix) was on the one hand mounted as an ideational challenge, in line with other constructivist approaches, to structural-realist assumptions about the sources and characteristics of state behaviour and on the other hand aimed to surpass the alleged ethnocentrism in strategic studies (Booth 1999).

1.3.2 India's Rise or the 'Enthusiastic' Approach to Indian Grand Strategic Thought

These insights had an even more profound impact on the study of India's strategic behaviour as the years after the 1998 nuclear tests and the decade-long growth rates of about 7%¹⁵ that followed brought about a definite change in perception of the country's role in the world – that of 'emerging India' (Cohen 2002). This *de facto* rise to major power status significantly furthered genuine scholarly interest in understanding the ideational forces shaping both its current foreign and security policy¹⁶ as well as its future strategic trajectory like '*Nehruvianism*'

¹³ "A grand strategy, in essence, is the organizing principle or conceptual blueprint that animates all of a state's relations with the outside world, for the purpose of securing itself and maximizing its interests. It shapes the parameters of the specific foreign, military, and economic strategies states pursue toward specific regions, and toward other actors on the world stage. It is a future-oriented enterprise involving considerations of external threats and opportunities, as well as the specific material, political, and ideological objectives of the state." Steven E. Lobell, Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, and Norrin M. Ripsman, "Introduction: Grand Strategy between the World Wars," in *The Challenge of Grand Strategy: The Great Powers and the Broken Balance between the World Wars*, ed. Jeffrey W. Taliaferro, Norrin M. Ripsman, and Steven E. Lobell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp.1-36, at p. 15. John Lewis Gaddis defines grand strategy as "the process by which a state relates long-term strategic ends to means under the rubric of an overarching and enduring vision to advance the national interest." John Lewis Gaddis, "What is Grand Strategy?" in *Conference on American Grand Strategy after War* (Durham, NC: Triangle Institute for Security Studies and Duke University Program in American Grand Strategy, Duke University, 2009), pp. 1-17.

¹⁴ Strategic culture as an analytical category and the backbone of this project will be defined in more detail in chapter 2. Some of the most influential scholars having worked on strategic culture include A.I. Johnston, Colin Gray, Jack Snyder, Stuart Poore, or Beatrice Heuser to name but a few of the leading theorists.

¹⁵ See: World Bank: "India Country Overview 2014" and India's GDP growth rate (annually): <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG> (retrieved 09/08/2016).

¹⁶ The term 'foreign and security policy' will be used interchangeably for grand strategy or strategic policy throughout the thesis.

(Bajpai 2002, Das 2010a and 2010b), ‘*Neoliberal Globalism*’ (Bajpai 2014), ‘*Hindutva*’ (Bajpai, Basit and Krishnappa 2014) or so-called ‘*Leftist thought*’ (Ollapally and Rajagopalan 2012) to name but a few of the more popular designations of Indian grand strategic paradigms.

1.3.3 India’s ‘Strategic Exceptionalism’ or the ‘Sceptical’ Approach to Indian Grand Strategic Thought

However, this positive re-assessment of indigenous non-European modes of strategic thinking and their potential impact on the grand strategic preferences of a state like India by scholars and analysts, working on the ideational foundations of its grand strategy is still an unfamiliar recognition for the country. Even more so, as India in the first four decades of its independence, was mostly considered to be a marginal strategic actor in the international system with a tedious and even contradictory record of emergence – a record that used to be perceived as India’s ‘strategic deficit’¹⁷ by the more critical and till the 1990s predominant strand of research on India’s strategic behaviour. While it would seem to be quite obvious that any country implicitly or explicitly has a set of policies that amount to a grand strategy, in the case of India there is a well-established ‘tradition of scepticism’ (Bajpai, Basit and Krishnappa 2014). Just 20 years ago it would have aroused perplexity to mention India and the study of grand strategy in one breath. But not only the existence of a grand strategic posture was doubted than, even the ability of Indians to think strategically was put into question (Tanham 1992, Subrahmanyam 2005). These assessments of Indian and non-Indian scholars, representing the high-point of what can be called the research tradition of India’s ‘strategic exceptionalism’ (Kapur 2015), worked as a trigger for most of the culturalist-leaning debate under the shibboleth of strategic culture on Indian grand strategic thought that followed – a discussion that reflected the inevitable backlash by academics who rejected this essentialist interpretation of Indian state behaviour and history. Furthermore, due to the aforementioned changes in the global structure and rapid economic growth, were these intellectuals able to tell the story of ‘India rising’ despite the former allega-

¹⁷ The term ‘strategic deficit’, as well as the concept of India’s ‘strategic exceptionalism’ denotes a deviation from the precepts of realism that any state should heed in order to cope with the constraints presented by the structure of the international state system. There are several examples in the case of India that seem to give evidence of a pattern of non-realist foreign and security policy decisions. Prominent examples include among many others Nehru’s policy choices leading to the India-China War in 1962, or Indira Gandhi’s conduct of negotiations in the aftermath of the 1972 creation of Bangladesh in Shimla. There is, as stated above, a still growing body of literature addressing this weak realpolitik orientation in Indian national security (Burgess 2009) and increasingly in a neoclassical realist fashion like Basrur (2012).

tions of India lacking a suitable strategic mindset. This talk on “emerging India”, then, reflecting a change both of mind and of atmosphere, can in itself be considered as evidence of that very rise (Chatterjee-Miller 2016).

Yet, due to India’s supposed ‘exceptionalism’ any discussion of contemporary Indian grand strategy is still confronted with the outlined problem, to put it trenchantly in Stephen Cohen’s words, that “India is always destined to be ‘emerging’ but never actually arriving” (Cohen 2001, 2), forcing the scholar to take a normative stance on the controversial issue of both the country’s rise and its underlying strategy. In this regard, the endeavour of giving credit to the discursive complexity of India’s strategic paradigms with their diverging pathways to great power status, is no exception – it is also seen as implicitly standing in either one of the two normative traditions; firstly, the until recently more influential camp, comprising the permanent sceptics, that, due to the country’s alleged structural incapacity, are out-rightly depriving India even of its potential to be a great power. In the context of strategic ideas that means to either solely concentrate on the perceived hegemony of ‘flawed’ strategic paradigms or to even argue for the absence of any contemporary Indian strategic thinking (Tanham 1992, Karnad 2013). While the second strand, consisting of the bluntly enthusiastic advocates of India’s superpower capability, has been assiduously rebutting the other side by pointing to the extraordinary achievements of the last two decades in bringing about effective great power status for India (Mohan 2003). Here, the focus has been on emphasizing the dominance of either neo-liberal precepts or that of so-called ‘Great Power Realists’ (Bajpai 2002) in overcoming the Nehruvian legacy (Mehta 2009a).

1.3.4 The Thesis’s Normative Stance

But exactly not the talk about India’s recent emergence into the ranks of a major power but its constant and unjust marginalization as a structurally weak and exotic country somewhat ambiguous and therefore unable to pursue its national interest on the world stage awakened the author’s curiosity in the first place. Therefore, this work going beyond this normative dichotomy is, on the one hand, apologetic in character by emphasizing the relevance of studying the plurality of non-western traditions of statecraft and strategic thought in their own right, on the other hand, this defensive stance comes without being euphoric about India’s potential to become a full-fledged great power with a global reach in the near future. It rather acknowledges the nation’s strengths as well as deficiencies as givens without precluding the possibility for achieving strategic pre-eminence in the emerging global order at a later stage. A chance that might largely depend on the suitability of the future hegemonic set of ideas to eventually bring

about India's emergence and provide a vision for the country big enough to transform India into a global great power.

1.4. India's Strategic Culture Debate and The Concept of Ideational Strategic Pluralism

This longstanding dispute between the 'enthusiasts' and 'sceptics' of India's emergence has been characterized by one basic question that has informed the work of both research traditions alike, albeit for different reasons, and has become the underlying question of this thesis as well, namely '*how do Indians think about grand strategy or more precisely the country's strategic community and informed public?*' Such a question, then, at least implicitly acknowledges both the existence of a multitude of strategic perspectives and by its reference to "Indians", also potentially culture-induced deviations from the allegedly universal norms of strategic reasoning. As for scholars working on ideational forces shaping grand strategy such a question is of importance because knowing the different strategic worldviews that are constantly vying for discursive hegemony in order to set the foreign and security policy agenda of a major state like India is essential in assessing the conceivable range of options (Bloomfield 2012) that might legitimate or even determine grand strategy formulation and ultimately the country's strategic choices¹⁸.

Especially the *timeframe under scrutiny for this project, that is the period between 1991* (the end of the Cold War and the start of economic liberalization in India) *and 2014* (the election victory of Narendra Modi's BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) and its National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and the signing of the US-Indo Strategic Partnership the same year) saw a rapid increase in the literary production on strategic thinking providing the backbone of this ongoing intellectual contention. Both the 'skeptics' in their attempt to pinpoint the flawed ideas (or canons of deep-seated ideas in terms of strategic subcultures¹⁹) that created India's 'strategic deficit' (Gordon 2014), as well as the 'enthusiasts', that set out to define the various strategic paradigms that challenged the so-called 'Nehruvian consensus' (Corbridge and Harriss 2000, 48) on India's national security, have produced an ever-growing number of labels of respective strategic worldviews.

¹⁸ For the conceptualization of strategic subcultures as intervening ideational variables in neoclassical realism see section 1.6.2.1.

¹⁹ For the concept of strategic subcultures see: Bloomfield (2012, 253) and for the role strategic subcultures play in the context of this project see chapter 2 (strategic subcultures as the building blocks of India's ideational strategic pluralism) section 1.4.2.

1.4.1 India's Strategic Culture Debate – the Object of Analysis

This kind of ideas-based scholarly work performed by the two normative approaches, in terms of identifying the different grand strategic schools, the author argues, has been unsystematically articulated in the so-called ‘meta-debate on India’s grand strategy’²⁰, as the author has termed the several discursive loci in which some authors have tried to implicitly demarcate the various grand strategic traditions. Hence examples for the introduction of strategic worldviews, as an analytical category, can be found in the debates on India’s ambition to achieve great power standing, or in the dispute surrounding India’s nuclear posture till 1998 and beyond²¹. By far its richest empirical expression, however, found this dispute in the literature on India’s strategic culture²² after George Tanham’s influential “Indian Strategic Thought: An Interpretive Essay” in 1992 indirectly introduced the concept to Indian security studies. His proposition of India lacking a tradition of strategic thinking due to Hindu civilization was met with resistance – Tanham’s initial critics argued that exactly because of Hindu culture India possesses a distinct deeply-rooted strategic culture. However, for many scholars, these monolithic interpretations of Indian strategic thought were not satisfying. In order to mend this perceived shortcoming, the idea of discursive plurality in the realm of grand strategy emerged as a rejection of both essentialist conceptualizations of strategic culture. As a consequence, strategic culture’s ‘third’ or ‘pluralist strand’ (the object of analysis) became the broadest and richest scientific contribution on India’s grand strategic traditions and united scholars who took ideas and culture serious, who, as a result, produced a substantial yet unsystematic literature, which nonetheless only implicitly grasped India’s ideational landscape of strategic worldviews. Another reason that made strategic culture, as an analytical concept, so well suited for tackling India’s strategic plurality, has been the widespread equation of strategic culture’s scope with grand strategy²³

²⁰ Within the ‘meta-debate on grand strategy’, which consists of four interrelated discourses (on rising India, its nuclear weapons program, Indian ‘strategic exceptionalism’ and on India’s strategic culture) different strategic worldviews have been articulated to various degrees. Nonetheless though has the strategic culture debate been by far the most comprehensive of them all in terms of defining India’s ideational strategic traditions.

²¹ In connection with the development of India’s nuclear weapons posture the notion of the country’s ‘nuclear ambiguity’ was discussed; that is the indecisiveness regarding the aim and scope of its nuclear weapons capability and if that indetermination is deliberate or a reckless lack of concern from policy-makers and part of the strategic establishment alike. On the issue of nuclear ambiguity see for example: Perkovich (1999), Tellis (2001) or Mitra (2009).

²² As will be outlined in more detail in Chapter 2 in the section on “2.1 Strategic Culture: Taking Stock of a Controversial Approach” and see also: Johnston (1995).

²³ On the scope of strategic culture: Equating strategic culture with grand strategy is not an uncontested practice. See: 2.3 Definitions of Strategic Culture: The Strategic Subculture Approach.

among the majority of scholars. Subsequently, this variety of the scholarly discourse on strategic culture, that is the concept of ‘ideational strategic pluralism’, assumes the existence of more than one strand of thinking ($n \geq 1$)²⁴ in contrast to the two other positions that either argue for only one tradition ($n=1$) or the non-existence of any stream of thought in India ($n=0$).

Figure2: The Different Positions on the Set-up of India's Strategic Culture

	number of strategic subcultures	coherence	continuity
1. strand: India has no strategic culture $n = 0$		monolithic	deep history and culture
2. strand: India has one strategic culture $n = 1$		monolithic	deep history and culture
3. strand: India has several strategic subcultures $n \geq 1$		pluralistic	deep history and discursively constructed <i>both</i>

Source: Drawn by the author

1.4.2 Definition of Ideational Strategic Pluralism

Now what is meant by ‘ideational strategic pluralism’ and how can it be conceptualized? The concept refers to the sets of deeply-rooted strategic ideas held by factions of the nation’s interpretation elite²⁵ to formulate, assess and legitimize grand strategy in distinct idioms²⁶ - here referred to as strategic subcultures.

²⁴ Regarding the question of continuity of Indian strategic thinking strategic pluralists are divided into three groups; one camp of scholars conceives of the different worldviews to be discursively constructed in the wake of post-independence India’s nation-building (Bajpai 2003), while another strand advocates the uninterrupted continuity of strategic subcultures since Vedic times (Jones 2006). Finally, yet another group of authors argues for the co-constitution of strategic plurality in terms of a deliberate re-use and instrumentalization of the rich heritage both within the limits of preexisting lines of tradition as well as according to the necessities of the current discourse on Indian identity and grand strategy (Das 2010, Chatterjee-Miller and Sullivan de Estrada 2017).

²⁵ For a definition of the concept of ‘interpretation elite’, the term strategic establishment is used interchangeably, see chapter 2 section 3.

²⁶ On idioms see: “the saintly, the traditional and the modern”, according to the concept of the Rudolphs (Rudolph and Rudolph 1967) as well as thought figures, metaphors, canon of thinkers and foundational texts that form the terminology of a subculture, while a certain idiom of strategic affairs, shared by all discourse participants has no normative connotation except for those who altogether challenge the pursuit of a grand strategy (the notion of a “strategic core”) (Dasguta and Cohen 2011).

Firstly, these strategic ideas or subcultures, Chatterjee-Miller calls them “domestic ideational frameworks” (Chatterjee-Miller 2014, 2), with which strategic pluralism is concerned are intersubjective, aggregated traditions or canons of deep beliefs²⁷ on strategy and national security²⁸ (Johnston 1995). These subcultures as ideological paradigms, following Bloomfield’s definition here (Bloomfield 2012), are thought of vying for discursive dominance to have an impact on interpreting grand strategy and ultimately guiding policy. Despite its rejection of essentialist and monolithic interpretations of strategic thought, ‘ideational strategic pluralism’s’ subcultures also denote the semi-permanent (Snyder 1977) or slow-to-change character²⁹ of their deeply-engrained strategic ideas (Johnston 1995), which indicate their partly uninterrupted historical and cultural continuity.

Secondly, ‘ideational strategic pluralism’ in terms of strategic culture, besides its acknowledgement of India’s cultural complexity, is furthermore referring to the universal phenomenon that basically a “similar range of competing strategic tendencies exists in other states” (Johnston 1995, 38) as well and provides the ideational foundation of grand strategy formation. This multitude of ideological perspectives, then, can be understood as an ‘anthropological constant’, a constant due to its unvarying discursive set-up (“the symbolic strategic discourse” (Johnston 1995, 57)) across time and space that addresses questions ranging from conflict and cooperation, to the definition of the ‘self’ and the ‘other’. It is, however, also an inherent trait of Hindu civilization, the cultural bedrock of contemporary India. In that perspective, India’s strategic pluralism can be seen as consisting of various ‘*darshans*’³⁰ as similarly, “Hindu philosophy is not just one school of thought, it is a compendium of many systems of thought, recognizing and advocating many divergent images of society and many different schemes of value” (Dube 1965, 423). Hence any reference to this vast and varied cultural space of Indian civilization will lead to terminological and sometimes even conceptual consequences for the usually IR-theory derived strategic worldviews, producing culture-induced modifications to the allegedly universal conceptions of modern strategic reasoning.

²⁷ Deep beliefs in terms of the advocacy coalition approach following Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith, (1995).

²⁸ Based on foundational texts and thinkers of Indian and non-Indian origin.

²⁹ Albeit they are receptive to external shocks or strategic cultural dissonance. See: Baylis (2007) and 2.3.1 Key Features of Strategic Culture Theory.

³⁰ *Darshana* (Sanskrit, lit. view, sight) Besides its spiritual meaning in terms of seeing a deity or a saintly person. The term additionally refers to the six orthodox schools of classical Hindu philosophy.

This lead, thirdly, to the attempt by the author to treat India's range of grand strategic worldviews, in terms of 'strategic relativism'³¹ (Booth 1979), as that of any other actor in the global order without an undue accentuation of its alleged 'otherness'³², as a similar array of competing grand strategic paradigms eventually exists everywhere, albeit with a slightly different ranking³³. Because, despite the universal nature of strategic plurality, as common to all states, one still has to take the rich grammar of India's varied and vibrant philosophical elaborations on statecraft into account, as all subcultures draw on India's diverse and multi-layered cultural space borrowing from the same pool of language, myth and metaphor³⁴. In this process, indigenous and modern concepts and terminology are sometimes merged leading to distinct forms of 'hybridity'³⁵ or indigenous modernity³⁶. That can manifest itself in form of a reference to Lord Krishna's deeds (in the *Mahabharata*) to more vividly illustrate current modes of IR theory to a conversant audience (Rajagopalan 2014) or in the explicit application of Vedic or Kautilyan thought in devising a stratagem (Menon 2012) or that a modern concept like multi-lateral diplomacy is being clad in fitting allegories taken from the vast canon of the *smritis*³⁷

³¹ Defining 'strategic relativism': due to the pressures of the structure of the state system developing a grand strategy is basically the same for all actors, however how such a strategy is formulated depends on the respective 'prisms' and historical experiences of the strategic establishment involved – as it is not the 'blue team' against the 'red team' paraphrasing Poore's statement on US-Soviet rivalry that will uniformly produce a rational grand strategy but the respective discursive struggle embedded in a specific strategic cultural lore (Booth 1979, Poore 2003, 2004).

³² 'Otherness' in terms of an 'orientalist' perception that involves a qualitative deprecation, due to a lack of or dysfunctional deviation from certain Western or modern achievements (Said 2003).

³³ On the ranking of strategic preferences see: Johnston (1995).

³⁴ This pool of language, myth and metaphor amounts for the notion of 'collective memory', which according to Maurice Halbwachs entails 'conscious', 'subconscious' and 'semiconscious' dimensions. In line with such a conceptualization Nehru has described India's collective memory as a "mixture of popular philosophy, tradition, history, myth, and legend" (Nehru 1981, 59). For further details, see: Mitra in Liebig and Mishra (2017, 41). Finally, besides the global recognition of their indigenous body of strategic literature, strategists from emerging powers like India contribute to the growing dissemination of hybrid 'global' strategic theory. This means that there is no single, monolithic and purely Indian strategic theory but several layers of partly foreign influences, be it in terms of colonial or contemporary Western (IR as an American social science), and ancient conflicting normative traditions like Ashokan versus Kautilyan thought or even older distinctions from the *Vedas* or the *Mahabharata*.

³⁵ Hybridity as it is understood here, it principally signifies the merging of Western and pre-modern thought, be it unconsciously ('naturally') or in a deliberate fashion in terms of a re-use of the past by the competing narratives of ideological coalitions, sic strategic subcultures (Hegewald and Mitra 2008). Mitra defines 'hybridity' as the opposite of purity as it represents in terms of biological sciences an "attempt to overcome binary opposites through the creation of a third species that combines some characteristics of the two." Mitra in Liebig and Mishra (2017, 44).

³⁶ Definition of indigenous modernity or the concept of indigenization see: Huntington (1996, 91-95).

³⁷ *Smriti* refers to a body of texts. Its literal Sanskrit meaning is "that which is remembered," and as a concept it describes a canon of Hindu texts commonly attributed to an author, traditionally in a written form that has been persistently revised like the six Vedāngas (the auxiliary sciences in the Vedas), the epics (like the Mahābhārata and Rāmāyana), the Dharmasūtras and Dharmasāstras (or Smritisāstras), the Arthasāstras, the Purānas, the Kāvya or poetical literature, extensive Bhasyas (reviews and commentaries on shrutis and non-shruti literature), and many Nibandhas (digests) covering political science,

(Datta-Ray 2014). Accordingly, the respective use of the vernacular, and there are different kinds of the ‘re-use the past’³⁸, can oscillate between the tapping of sub- to semi-conscious repertoires of strategic thinking in terms of Pierre Bourdieu’s ‘habitus’-concept (Bourdieu 1967) to the deliberate application of cultural artefacts and vocabulary in an attempt to further certain ideological preferences (Liebig 2013). That is, in terms of ‘re-use’, on the one hand, the actual application of indigenous modes of thinking (leaders are socialized in a specific tradition, for example, Nehruvian thought), on the other hand, it is also the instrumental re-use of the past by the same leaders (to conjure the notion of glorious ‘*Hindu rashtra*’) to shape the different idioms of identity politics for example.

1.5. The Research Gap: The Arbitrariness in the Labelling of India’s Strategic Pluralism

1.5.1 The State of Labelling: India’s Strategic Traditions

Now in order to grasp this perceived plurality, some authors have suggested to introduce a minimal binary constellation of Indian strategic thought explicitly mirroring the ‘idealism-realism’ divide of mainstream International Relations (IR) theory. Besides the obvious labels of ‘Idealists’ versus ‘Realists’ other appellations used a more indigenous terminology to identify, for example, an ‘Ashokan’ and a ‘Kautilyan’ or ‘Machiavellian’ strand of thought (Singh 1999, Kim 2007, Ogden 2013) vying for influence among New Delhi’s foreign policy elite. While Raja Mohan, who, echoing the British Raj’s jargon speaks of a ‘Neo-Curzonian’ or ‘Forward School’ opposing a so-called ‘Closed Border School’ (Mohan 2008) has formulated this dichotomy by exclusively drawing on a distinction between two varieties of realism, namely ‘offensive’ and ‘defensive realism’ respectively (Waltz 1979, Mearsheimer 2001).

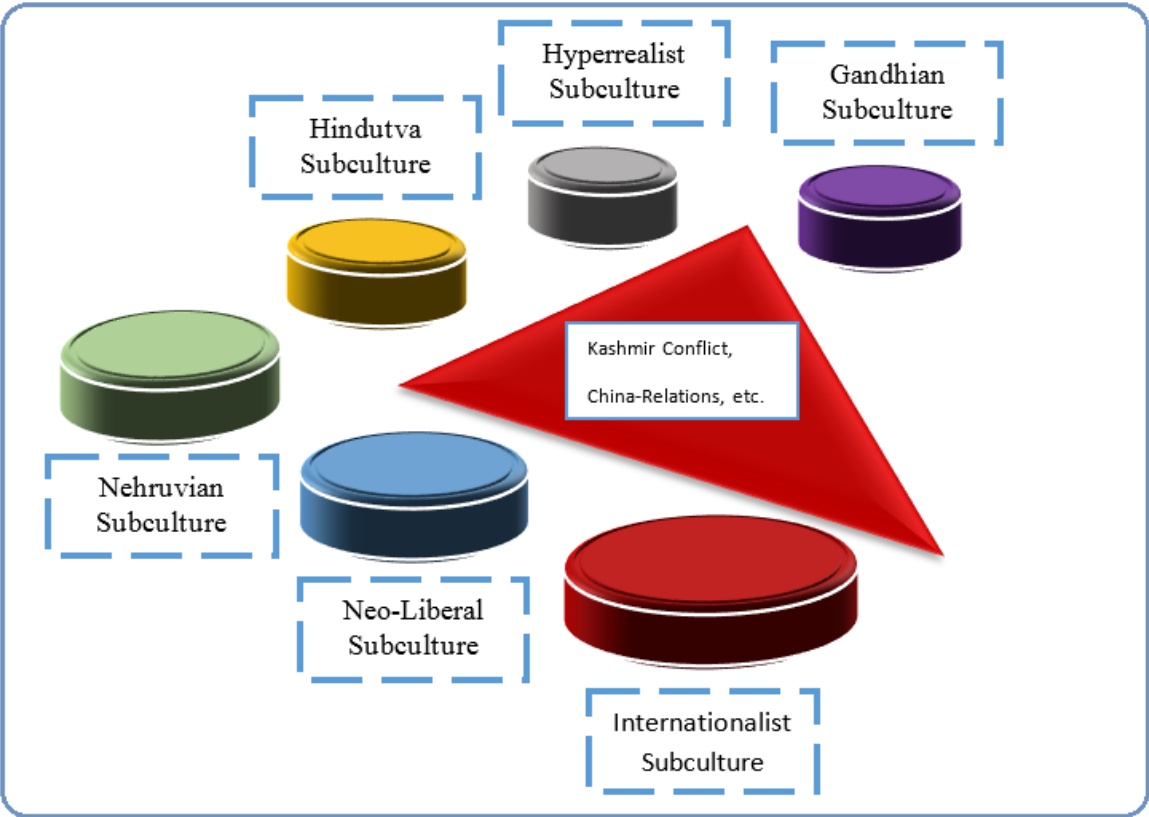
Beyond this basic dyadic approach, some scholars are arguing for the existence of at least three strands of thinking (Singh 1999, Pardesi 2005, Das 2010a). Stephen Cohen, for example, distinguishes between ‘Nehruvians’, ‘Realists’ and ‘Revitalists’ (Cohen 2001), while Kanti Bajpai posits that India’s strategic elite is divided along the lines of ‘Nehruvianism’, ‘Neoliberalism’ and ‘Hyperrealism’ (Bajpai 2003). This triangular dynamic, however, is surpassed both by the

ethics (Nitisastras), art and other societal issues. The concept of *smriti* is contrasted with *shruti*, which is a Sanskrit term for "that which is heard" and denotes the corpus of authoritative and ancient religious texts, like the Vedas, the early Upanishads, the Samhitas, the Brahmanas and the Aranyakas, which are all regarded as being authorless.

³⁸ The ‘re-use of the past’ as a concept refers to the deliberate but also sub- and semi-conscious application of predominantly pre-modern politico-cultural resources to a modern context by political and societal actors. See, for example: Hegewald and Mitra (2008) and Mitra and Liebig (2016).

proposition of four schools (Mohan 2003, Sagar 2009) and of up to six schools of thought leading to a polyadic structure of ideational pluralism. According to Ollapally and Rajagopalan India's grand strategic discourse is marked by 'Standard Nationalist', 'Neo-Nationalist', 'Hyper-Nationalist', 'Leftist', 'Liberal Globalist' and 'Great Power Realist', strategic worldviews. (Ollapally and Rajagopalan 2012) Bajpai is arguing in a similar vein, when he contends that in addition to the three earlier mentioned paradigms three other, 'minor' ones, namely 'Marxist', 'Hindutva' and 'Gandhian' subcultures (Bajpai, Basit and Krishnappa 2014) are shaping India's debate on grand strategy.

Figure3: A Schematic Depiction of India's Strategic Subcultures



Source: Drawn by the author

1.5.2 Research Gap and Central Research Question

Around 60 authors (Indian and non-Indian)³⁹, predominantly participants of the strategic culture debate, have so far contributed to the labelling of India's strategic thought. However, such is the current state of the scholarly debate on India's 'ideational strategic pluralism', that one is confronted with and even puzzled by both the various numbers of strands or subcultures (two,

³⁹ For details see: the methodology section in this introduction as well as chapter 2 on the empirical basis – the scholarly debate on strategic culture, as well as the bibliography section.

three, four or six) and by the plethora of seemingly arbitrary labels ranging from ‘Internationalists’, ‘Neo-Nehruvians’, ‘Ashokans’, ‘Hyperrealists’, ‘Hindu-Nationalists’ to ‘Kautilyan-Realists’⁴⁰ as many authors base their elaborations on mostly common-sensical terminology with no further explanations for their distinctions given. However, if these strategic traditions, reflect the normative approaches to international politics as developed by modern IR-theory or if, in turn, these worldviews are stemming from identity politics and are underpinned by deep-seated conflicts among the elite on what the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ should mean for Indian grand strategy remains an unanswered question. Or are these labels deduced from Indian party-system cleavages representing broader societal fault lines? In other words, what kind of role does culture and history but also modernity play for the set-up of India’s competing strategic paradigms? There are basically only superficial and even contradictory answers to these questions in the literature, subsequently ‘concept-building’ is still in an embryonic state as up to now no one has systematically conducted an analysis or devised an appropriate typology of India’s grand strategic traditions! Hence delimiting and exploring India’s thriving ‘strategic pluralism’ in a coherent fashion by defining the very fault lines that are dividing these ideological traditions shaped the thesis’s core question, namely: *‘how can India’s ideational strategic pluralism be delineated?’* in order to address this growing research gap.

1.6.Objectives for the Study of India’s Strategic Pluralism

1.6.1 What This Project is Not

Before outlining the thesis’s objectives in more detail, it should be clarified what this research project is not. Firstly, this study is not about the ‘reality on the ground’ in terms of actual behaviour (decision-making) or social structures (institutions) – it is primarily about ideas. It is also not about determining the impact of ideas on behavior or as Kanti Bajpai has put it “in an ideal world, there would be a clear, singular relationship between grand strategic thought and grand strategic policy in which policy would reflect a body of ideas about the threats that a country faces and the array of responses to those threats” (Bajpai, Basit and Krishnappa 204, 115). Therefore, also no casual relationships are established. This work, however, is also not about the reconstruction of an already implemented grand strategic preference or about the

⁴⁰ A pattern is discernable: one group of labels is only using IR terminology (‘great power realists’, Ollapally and Rajagopalan (2012)), a second group is combining IR terminology with Indian culturalist labels (‘Kautilyan Realists’, Menon (2012)), while a third group is using only Indian labels from different historical contexts (like ‘Nehruvianism’ or ‘Ashokan’ strategic tradition Cohen (2001)).

painstaking process of compromise between these antagonistic outlooks. Furthermore, it is not about establishing, which strategic subculture exerts dominance or has achieved a hegemonic position in the discourse.

1.6.2 Implications of a Typology of Grand Strategic Thought

But, then, why does it matter to unravel this Indian strategic pluralism? Because by reducing this research gap future enquiry in the study of Indian strategic worldviews and foreign and security policy, in general, should be facilitated. So ultimately the aim is to provide a more systematic understanding of the spectrum of Indian traditions of grand strategy based on the ideological distortions marking the interpretation of foreign and security policy. Consequently, the thesis seeks to devise, what the author calls, a ‘subculture-cleavage model of grand strategic thought’, as an analytical tool (in the realm of deeply-rooted strategic worldviews), that can explain the lines of conflict along which the domestic schools of thought are assorted – essentially turning the independent variable of the strategic culture approach into the “dependent variable” of ideational plurality. Eventually, this should result in a taxonomical order of India’s strategic subcultures; an order that rests upon minimal but comprehensive criteria derived both from previous scholarly contributions as well as an expert survey that delineate the consistent, partly even canonical, positions of India’s strategic discourse⁴¹.

1.6.2.1 Strategic Subcultures as Intervening Ideational Variables:

Hence disentangling the detected plurality should, in the end, provide the ideational basis for a deeper comprehension of India’s foreign and security policy, with each feature of this ‘topography’ of subcultures being employable as an intervening variable in a neoclassical realist sense. In consequence, this ideational map of strategic thought should then be applicable to any Indian foreign and security policy context with strategic subcultures working as analytical frames or building blocks in reconstructing policy outcomes. With subcultures being used as intervening ideational variables analysts should then better be able to determine when which ideological coalition (advocacy) had a policy-guiding impact. Again, delineating the extensive array of ideas on grand strategy in such a way might on the one hand help to explain India’s almost proverbial ‘strategic deficit’ and on the other help to determine the strategic schools of thought, which seek a policy-guiding influence either in terms of a hegemonic position gained in coalition with other sets of ideas or on their own as the dominant paradigm (Johnston 1995, 45, Chatterjee-Miller and Sullivan de Estrada 2017). Moreover, according to neoclassical realism,

⁴¹ More on this in the methodology section of this introduction.

such intervening ideational variables might be useful both in a condition in which the structure of the international system (anarchy) is undetermined and domestic strategic ideas might, therefore, have more leeway to affect policy choices and they might as stated above help to explain the ideational tenets that have fashioned India's 'anomaly' in the realm of strategy. Beyond that, this grand strategic typology seeks to offer a structured orientation ('road map') that should be working as a *prolegomenon* for policymakers or scholars interested in the ideational foundations of India's strategic choice. In doing so, this research also participates in the larger endeavour of '*concept building*' in the IR subfields of strategic studies and foreign policy analysis. Finally, in addition of being an interesting case in its own right, this ideational cleavage based model should generally be applicable to other cases as well.

1.6.2.2 The Impact of Identity Politics on India's Strategic Subcultures:

Additionally, due to the distinct cultural and historical context of a country like India and the conflicting interpretations thereof, an emphasis is given on the cultural dimension of strategic ideas, that should provide a more nuanced understanding of the different strategic perspectives. All the more so as India's ongoing cultural identity politics have modified and hybridized the abstract concepts of contemporary IR making it therefore necessary to develop a more fitting conceptual and terminological framework. Therefore, this study seeks to reduce this increasing lacuna in the literature on strategic worldviews, by taking concepts like hybridity and re-use of the past (Mitra in Liebig and Mishra 2017), that create indigenous modernity or the 'modernity of tradition' into account. Thus, reducing the Indian conundrum of strategic thought might yield some insights for cross-cultural and cross-country comparisons on the effects of identity politics on strategic pluralism; particularly to non-western, postcolonial states⁴² but basically to all states which are in the process of nation-building or whose cultural identity is being contested⁴³.

1.7. Locating the Research: Neoclassical Realism

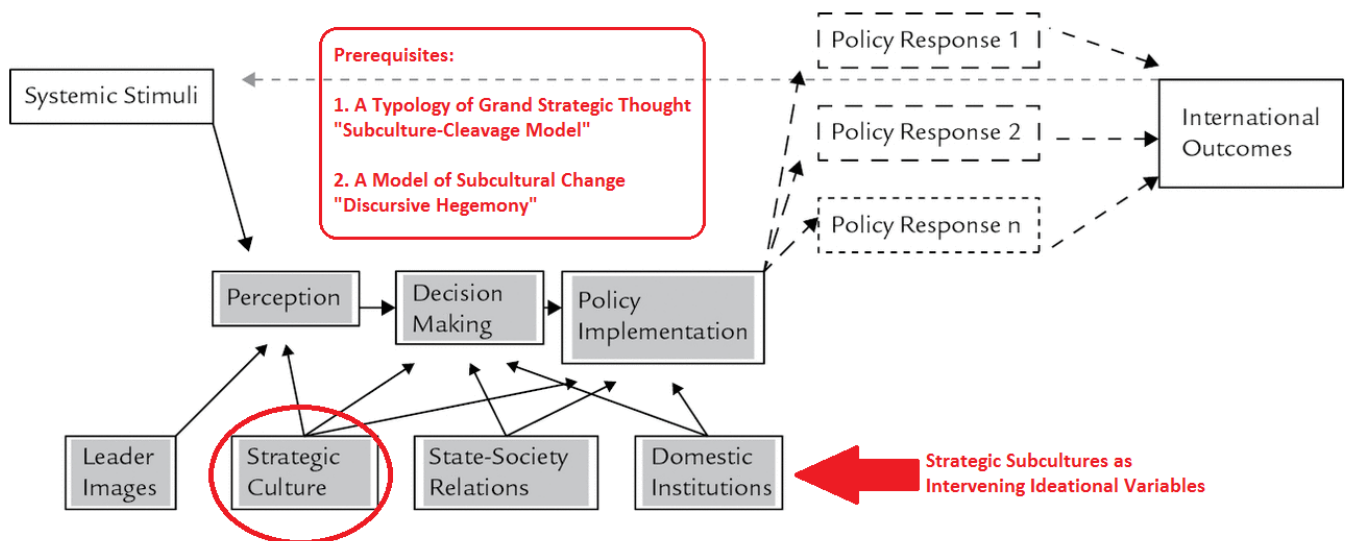
1.7.1 Strategic Studies

⁴² On postcolonial studies in International Relations see, for example: Chowdhry (2002).

⁴³ States and societies in transition were cultural and identity issues either reemerge due to migration or in the context of 'torn countries' (civilizational shifting), see: Huntington (1996), page 139-155.

Before outlining the proposed ‘subculture-cleavage’ model in more detail, the thesis should be put into a broader theoretical perspective. The quest for generating a typology of Indian strategic thought and its envisaged applicability as an intervening ideational variable is, first of all, being placed within strategic studies as a sub-field of IR. Strategic studies due to its practical or pragmatist (‘how to do it’) stance, some scholars argue, is “a somewhat competitive sibling rather than a subset of international relations”⁴⁴ (Ayson in Reus-Smit and Snidal 2008, 558). Nonetheless, both ‘disciplines’ have their place within the extended family of political science. For the author, however, strategic studies are an essential part of IR⁴⁵ As the analysis of conflict and the blunt struggle for power in international politics are its most prominent characteristics realism is seen as the ‘natural partner’ (Ayson 2008, 567) of strategic studies but not inevitably of its most widespread variant: neo- or structural realism (with its unitary or black-box understanding of the state (Waltz 1979)). Instead, the theoretical IR approach this project sets out to contribute to is neoclassical realism, a more fitting partner of strategic studies due to its diverse range of variables, be it leader images or strategic culture (Ripsman, Taliaferro and Lobell 2016) that are employed in the study of grand strategy.

Figure4: Strategic Culture’s Role within Neoclassical Realism (2)



Source: Drawn by the author, based on Lobell, Ripsman and Taliaferro 2016

1.7.2 Neoclassical Realism

⁴⁴ Another common position is to put strategic studies, as ‘the inconvenient specialist of war’ within the broader frame of security studies, thereby keeping it among the mainstream sub-fields of IR. As there is a definitional distinction between International Relations and International Politics, the latter being in no trouble to accommodate strategic studies due to shared assumptions about the centrality of power and conflict.

⁴⁵ See for the definitional and terminological variations (‘Unübersichtlichkeit’) of the content and scope of International Relations, International Politics, Global Politics, Global Affairs: Reus-Smit (1998), Menzel (2001), Ferguson and Mansbach (2003).

The plurality of strategic traditions (ideational strategic pluralism) is exactly such a variable that can be theorized within the neoclassical realist theory of international politics (Ripsman, Taliaferro and Lobell 2016), more specifically within neoclassical realism's model of grand strategy formation (Kitchen 2010), which conceives strategic pluralism as intervening ideational variables in terms of strategic sub-cultures. Against the widespread criticism that neoclassical realism's limited capabilities cannot do more than explain in an *ad hoc* fashion behaviour at odds with systemic imperatives. So, called Type III neoclassical realism (Ripsman, Taliaferro and Lobell 2016) can account for a broader range of foreign policy choices as well as grand strategic adjustments and as a consequence, neoclassical realism can even explain systemic outcomes and structural change making it a full-fledged theory of IR. For neoclassical realism, like for structural realists (Waltz 1979, Mearsheimer 2001), the international system is still *the* independent variable. However, according to neoclassical realists, states are rarely faced with an international environment that presents a clear and imminent threat that dictates an optimal policy choice in the structural realist sense. More often, as in a setting like that faced by India after the end of the Cold War, states have a range of policy options to choose from. And according to neoclassical realism and highly relevant for the study of strategic pluralism the actual decisions states make may have far more to do with the worldviews of the elite, the strategic cultures and the nature of the domestic coalitions, which neoclassical realists have conceptualized as intervening variables at the unit- and sub-unit-level⁴⁶. When, for example, As Steven Lobell argues British hegemony in the late nineteenth century was challenged by French, Russian, German, Japanese and American contenders, it was not clear a priori how British grand strategy should respond. Various "domestic coalitions competed to determine what degree of threat each challenger posed and whether that threat should be met with cooperative or competitive policy responses" (Ripsman, Taliaferro and Lobell 2016, 29) – in the same vein India's strategic subcultures are engaged in determining a grand strategy that suits both the country's changed capabilities and structural outlook. Similarly, Gideon Rose writes, "[S]ystemic pressures and incentives may shape the broad contours and general direction of foreign policy without being strong or precise enough to determine the specific details of state behaviour. Often in this view, structure compels states to act as unitary, rational actors in situations of a high level of threat, but when these conditions are not present, other factors enter into the analysis" (Rose 1998,147). According to, Rose neoclassical realists "argue that the scope and ambition of a country's foreign policy is driven first and foremost by its place in the

⁴⁶ For the levels of analysis see: Waltz (1959), (1979).

international system and specifically by its relative material power capabilities. This is why they are realist. They argue further, however, that the impact of such power capabilities on foreign policy is indirect and complex, because systemic pressures must be translated through intervening variables at the unit level. This is why they are neoclassical.” Hence neoclassical realism is not rejecting structural realism with its core organizing principle. It considers anarchy to be an ‘anthropological constant’ which structures but does not determine behaviour. However, neoclassical realism as both an explanatory as well as a normative theory, problematizes any deviations from the logic of structural or neo-realism as ‘self-defeating’ conduct (neoclassical realists propose, following Schweller, a “theory of mistakes.” (Schweller 2000)), which is explained by the influence exerted by domestic institutions and strategic ideas (not in line with realism’s prescriptions). Structural realism argues that the system limits but does not determine state action (Waltz applies the analogy of a company being “pressed by market forces” but eventually having the ability to choose) and where foreign policy leaves the path of ideal behavior according to a state’s structural position, domestic politics and ideas are usually the cause. “You can evade reality, but you cannot evade the consequences of avoiding reality” (Hewitt 2001, 157 attributed to Ayn Rand). Neoclassical realism expounds when states are not able to adjust to systemic constraints and highlights the severe consequences that result from such deviation (Rathbun 2008a). That is why neoclassical realists have taken up internal politics and ideology into their analyses.

1.7.3 Strategic Culture as an Ideational Unit-Level Variable

Such a move of neoclassical realism has met with disapproval from neoliberals and constructivists; the most trenchant critique has been voiced by Jeffrey Legro and Andrew Moravcsik, whose objections target the integration of domestic and ideational variables, which they contend are a legitimate part of the “liberal” and “constructivist” paradigms, correspondingly. They argue that bringing ideas and domestic actors into realist research would lead to paradigmatic incoherence and indistinctiveness. Nonetheless, if the international state system is lenient enough to permit substantial deviations from the formalized structural realist representation of unitary actors and objective perception, then it would be hard to differentiate neoclassical realism from liberal and constructivist approaches, two perspectives that put more weight than post-Waltzian realism on agency. The more a state’s foreign and security policy institutions are taken over by narrow-minded and ideological actors, and the more leaders tend to follow alternative social constructions of reality at odds with ‘objective’ reality defined by neorealism, the harsher

the consequence. The situation is worsened if due to social and elite cleavages a dominant sub-culture that might believe in worldviews that violate the 'objective' precepts detected by neo-realists. These distorted interpretations of reality lead self-delusion. Decision makers might end up having faith in such a socially constructed alternative reality, but the 'objective' conditions of the anarchic system nonetheless persevere. The foreign and security policies that become most imbued with these sets of ideas all confront severe policy disaster. Correspondingly, following Schweller (Schweller 2000) again, different ideological worldviews push leaders toward differing notions of threat and consequently strategies for managing them. The outcome is, eventually, to justify Waltz, not too debilitate his claims. Part of the misunderstanding surrounding the epistemological position of neo-realism and its bond to neoclassical realism revolves around the problem of how determining the former is thought to be and what determination actually means. Opponents of neo-realism tend to overlook that the theory is one of limitations and inducements and thus does not provide fixed prospects for state behavior. Neoclassical realists occasionally incorrectly contend that due to that less determinant character, structural realism lacks any consequence for the analysis of grand strategy and foreign policy (Rathbun 2008a), however as is true for all the other realisms with adjectives, realism displays a cogent logic in all areas of international studies – including grand strategy. Neoclassical realism aids and asserts neorealism. These two theories should, however, not be regarded as adversaries, competitors, or different. In the best case, both approaches epitomize a division of labor. Rathbun maintains that neo-realism has to use domestic political processes and their ideational underpinning to explicate why states are not attentive towards the necessities of the international system, (as a consequence, however, one is forced to provide evidence if and how this system is actually penalizing its units) (Rathbun 2008a).

Especially its sub-systemic focus is relevant for the present project that claims to refine the study of grand strategy (thereby also contributing to IR-subfields like Foreign Policy Analysis and Foreign Policy Decision-Making) and is therefore closely connected to strategic studies. What neoclassical realism does is to take the unit-level (the second image or level of analysis (Waltz 1959)) AND ideational variables (ideas and importantly strategic culture) into account. Strategic culture is seen as a supplement not as a supplant in relation to other variables. Perceptions and worldviews are considered to be just one factor in any attempt to grasp the complexity of strategic choice. Apart from the never-ending quest for legitimacy and public consensus, decision-makers and the strategic community as such do have to take structural and material variables into account, the argument goes. Examples of these additional significant variables in terms of neoclassical realism, to which all Indian subcultures are equally exposed to, are the

aforementioned structure of the international state system and the intricacies of bureaucratic politics. But still, “what they make of ...” those structural settings (Wendt 1999) again depends to a large degree on their respective ‘lenses of interpretation’.

Now, what kind of ideas are studied? The ontological units of this thesis are aggregated ideas understood as ‘conceptual frameworks for thinking about strategy’ (Nau and Ollapally 2012), for which the central strategic paradigm of each strategic subculture is a vessel. Some neoclassical realist scholars share the conviction, as does the author, that the ontological consensus of constructivist approaches, which claims that reality is socially and discursively constructed is applicable also to strategic culture as being used by neoclassical realism. This understanding contrasts with ‘material’ ontologies of rationalist approaches like neorealism, institutionalism and other variations of liberalism (Checkel 1998). Neoclassical realism conceives of ideas as being forceful along with material interests and in this sense, ideas in the context of IR may be subdivided into ideas that tell us firstly, how the world works – scientific ideas (the strategic culture approach), secondly, into ideas that articulate aims or goals – intentional ideas (the central strategic paradigms of a subculture) and finally into those that articulate the appropriateness of means – operational ideas (grand strategic preferences of a subculture). A neoclassical realist approach practically necessitates that ideas should be conceptualized as objects with force, in other words, as elements of power. Nonetheless though, is the connection between ideas and power dissimilar from the link between money and power, or military equipment and power, for example. While in the case of material capabilities’ power is principally inherent and static, ideational power can be conceptualized as dependent and variable. Hence, Kitchen suggests contexts where ideas may exert their influence at the unit-level: via people working as interlocutors and propagators; in the way of institutions that have been taken over by these ideas; as well as by shaping the wider culture of the state’s society. ‘Epistemic communities’ of experts are seen as having the expertise to shape policies by forming the stances espoused by many other participants of the political process. The degree to which these communities can influence policy depends on their capacity to take-over significant posts in bureaucratic apparatus, which would a more solid consolidation of power by institutionalizing the sway over the collective. Nonetheless, does their capacity to capture positions within the bureaucracy rely, partly, on the openness of the current bureaucratic order to their ideas (Kitchen 2008), which will be facilitated by sovereignty of grand strategic discourse. Additionally, cultural variables discreetly set the limitations for any policy discussions for both individuals and institutions, and consequently exert ‘a profound effect on the strategic behaviour of states.’ (Desch 1998, 167) Thus these

variables have the potential to elucidate “why some states act contrary to the structural imperatives of the international system” (Desch 1998, 167). Strategic culture approaches, following neoclassical realism, can thus clarify how likewise structured states may react in dissimilar ways to similar pressures according to divergent ideologies present within the state, whether that results from individuals promoting an ideology, cultural preferences, history or else. Moreover, the central strategic paradigms entail composite thought figures or patterns of narratives connected to identity politics (its foreign and security aspects) and nation-building and as was mentioned earlier these schools of thought draw on history and the collective memory in their selective re-use (‘invention of tradition’ (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) and hybridization of the past in their constant struggle for ideological hegemony.

Thus, neoclassical realism represents the middle ground between structure and agency (Rose 1998) with a not so slight tilt towards constructivist approaches – this kind of ‘soft constructivism’ is also what the author does by devising a typology of grand strategic worldviews in the framework of neoclassical realism.

Constructivism as an ideational approach entered IR theory as a critique of a specific variety of realism, namely structural realism (Wendt 1987, Onuf and Klink 1989). Therefore, constructivists often seem to have worldviews that could be grouped under the label of liberal idealism or liberal institutionalism. Barkin argues that scholars like Wendt (Wendt 1999) and Moravcsik (1997) were successfully “trying to rehabilitate the terms idealism and liberalism (although in very different ways) from the charge that these concepts reflect a normative approach too social science: an ideology.” (Barkin 2003, 332) As a result, most textbooks and overview articles in the field introduce the reader to the trio of realism, liberalism and constructivism; see, for example, Doyle (1997), Jervis (2002), Nau (2007), Rittberger (2004), Smith et al. (2008), Snyder (2004), Walt (1998). In the literature, constructivism is often depicted as a distinct paradigm of IR like Liberalism or Marxism (Hughes 2000, Kegely and Wittkopf 2001). But this claim is misleading as constructivism identified either as epistemology, ontology or methodology is not in opposition to realism but rather to materialism or rationalism (Barkin 2003). Among the ‘not-so great debates’ (Ferguson and Mansbach 2003, 36) or inter-paradigmatic disputes of IR theory this rationalism-constructivism controversy has been termed the ‘Fourth Debate’⁴⁷ which in a cyclical fashion is again predominantly centered on methodology. Due to

⁴⁷ Lapid (Lapid 1989) calls it the ‘Third Major Debate’ leaving the normative disputes of the 1970s and 1980s aside (Regime Theory) some call it the ‘Fourth Debate’ (Adler 1997, Checkel 1997, Menzel 2001). The ‘First Great Debate’ was a normative one between Idealism/Utopianism (Carr 1948) and

the increasing difficulties to uphold a normative (liberal-institutionalist) bias to a methodological approach many observers (Menzel 2001) have predicted that constructivism understood as a set of assumptions about how to study politics will give way to the next, the fifth, ‘weltanschauliche’ contention that is again set to distribute the ‘skins’ evenly among the different paradigms. Hence neoclassical realism in the ongoing ‘5th debate’ tries to marry a realist research design with constructivist ontology (ideas) and methodology.

1.7.4 The Study of Grand Strategy in terms of Ideational Traditions

Due to its unit focus for neoclassical realism the study of grand strategy is written large. The term strategy, derived from Greek *στρατηγία* *stratēgia*⁴⁸ for “the art of troop leader or generalship”, in strategic studies, already points to the main focus of this field of inquiry, namely the role of war and armed force in international politics – ‘si vis pacem para bellum’ can be regarded as grand strategy’s signature aphorism. It does so mainly from a perspective of the individual state’s⁴⁹ utilization of collective violence. However, the study of strategy has always been related to both warfare and foreign policy. In this respect, strategy can very broadly be defined as “a high-level plan to achieve one or more goals under conditions of uncertainty” (Wisner 2007). If one further distinguishes between military strategy and grand strategy and follows the latter’s path, then, in Lawrence Freedman’s words strategy is also “a comprehensive way to try to pursue political ends, including the threat or actual use of force, in a dialectic of wills” (Freedman 2013). Exactly for this contingency, the various strategic subcultures seek to

Realism during the 1930s and 40s, followed by the Second Debate on methodology but (also on ontology) between ‘Traditionalism and Scientism/Behaviouralism in the 1950s and 60s. The Third Debate, then, again raged between the neo-realist mainstream and its neoliberal intuitionist opponent as a repetition of the first ideological contention. The ‘Fourth Debate’ after the demise of the Soviet Union finally parallels the ‘Second Debate’ with the recurrence of hermeneutics and its adaptation of the ‘linguistic turn’ in the social sciences that challenges the very positivism propagated by the ‘scientists’ of the 1950s and 1960s. (Menzel 2001, Ferguson and Mansbach 2003) A potential ‘Fifth Debate’ is now underway delineating the post-positivist or post-structuralist legacy according to the respective normative positions or epistemological paradigms of IR theory.

⁴⁸ The term ‘strategy’ came into use in the 6th century C.E. in Byzantine conflict terminology, and was disseminated across Western vernacular languages only in the 18th century (Carpenter 2005). Until the 19th century it was seen as being part of a trivium of arts or sciences that concerned themselves with the conduct of war. Besides strategy, these were tactics as the implementation of ‘the plan’ on the battleground and logistics as the maintenance of the troops. Even today’s military terminology has kept the basic distinction between the tactical, as the lowest, the operational as the mid and the strategic as the highest level of military operations. No matter if its Western, Soviet or Chinese tradition, this categorization has permeated all contemporary military orders of battle (Truppen dienst 1990).

⁴⁹ Though strategic studies do not necessarily have to be state-centric, other types of political actors are also eligible for analysis. In a globalized world with the diminishing rigidity of territorial borders strategic studies are forced to adapt their traditional state-as-actor approach to an asymmetric environment of multiple layers of various actor constellations (Baylis 2007).

give comprehensive answers. Accordingly, grand strategy ultimately centers on the survival and security of a state and is, to achieve these goals, engaged in the accompanying mid- to long-term planning processes. Importantly within any conceptualization of grand strategy, however, military power is but one element in a state's tool box, providing evidence that it involves a wider ambit than the mere fighting of inter-state wars. As an analytical category, grand strategy encompasses the whole array of military and non-military variables (economic, political and technological but also psychological and cultural) of foreign and security policy affecting strategic choice (Bajpai 2003, Ayson 2008), as Bassani contends "grand strategy is an overarching concept that guides how nations employ all of the instruments of national power to shape world events and achieve specific national security objectives. Grand strategy provides the linkage between national goals and actions by establishing a deliberately ambiguous vision of the world as we would like it to be (ends) and the methods (ways) and resources (means) we will employ in pursuit of that vision" (Bassani 2006, 10).

The recognition among strategic studies scholars that not only material capabilities and simple ends-means schemes are playing a central role in determining strategic behaviour has led to a reevaluation of the importance of strategic thought, especially the influence of perceptions and worldviews with their expressions to be found in grand strategic debates are now widely accepted. The insight, under the label of 'strategic relativism' (Booth 1979, Poore 2004), that only the actor's mindset and perception gives meaning to any material constellation helped to overcome crude action-reaction calculations (Snyder 1977) but also led in the late 1970s to the acknowledgment that the interdependence of strategic behavior required more than the simple mirroring of one's "own assumptions on to the strategic reasoning of the other side of the cold war divide" (Ayson 2008). Here culture, as deeply entrenched modes of thinking, enters modern strategic studies for the first time. By emphasizing the role of ideas and culture in IR, in terms of ideational variables, the dominance of ahistoric and acultural models in many fields of strategic enquiry (deterrence theory, disarmament or conceptions of limited conventional war) were challenged. Most significantly the introduction, in the wake of the broad reception of constructivist approaches in strategic studies and IR, of the concept of strategic culture (as one of the central analytical categories of the study to which the complete 2nd chapter is dedicated) finally saw the merging of linguistic and cultural approaches to overcome the perceived strategic ethnocentrism of Western, especially American strategic analysis (Booth 1979). The strategic culture approach or 'cultural realism' (Johnston 1995) with its re-discovery of "national styles of strategy" (Gray 1999b) had roughly three impacts on the study of strategic thought. Firstly, as a unit level approach, it reduced the pressure for parsimony, as propagated

by structuralists as it allowed complexity and especially historical analysis back in. Rodney Bruce Hall's statement is but one example of this new attitude, he self-consciously proclaims: "I cheerfully and consciously surrender parsimony for richer and more nuanced characterizations of the societies and systems I wish to study. Social reality is complex. It has always been. Thus, we cannot expect to apprehend the evolution of social reality without a serious foray into history" (Hall 1999, xii).

Secondly, applying history as a specific temporal and spatial context also allows for an understanding of culture as a code for the 'renaissance' of non-Western civilizations thereby breaking the mould of universalist and ahistorical conceptions of strategic thought. Particularly, due to the rise of non-western powers, like India, with its consequences on the distribution of power in all walks of life has the reevaluation of indigenous traditions of strategy and statecraft gained in relevance. However, contemporary studies of grand strategy⁵⁰ are still heavily influenced by a narrow canon of thinkers and texts, which most often starts in the age of the Napoleonic wars, in the early 19th century, with Carl von Clausewitz, as the Thomas Hobbes of strategic studies and his lesser-known contemporary, Antoine-Henri Jomini. Usually this set, then, entails Anglo-Saxon and French strategists like B.H. Liddell Hart, Alfred Thayer Mahan, Andre Beaufre or even Charles De Gaulle and prominent theorists from the nuclear age like Bernard Brodie, Thomas C. Schelling and Henry Kissinger as the classical protagonists of military academy and strategic theory (seminar's) syllabi (Baylis 2007). Until recently, with the partial exception of Sun Tzu, no non-Western thinkers were commonly incorporated into the modern body of strategic thought, yet, this is gradually changing. The extension of this canon is yet another area to which this study sets out to contribute by pointing to foundational texts of the various Indian strategic subcultures, like the *Mahabharata*, the *Ramayana* or Nehru's Discovery of India and to thinkers from *Kautilya* to Sarvarkar and Gandhi.

1.8. Methodology: An Interpretivist Text Study

This work, then, is first and foremost about scientific and intentional ideas and worldviews (Kitchen 2010) and their conflictual relationship to each other, which is seen as constitutive in

⁵⁰ Today the list of eminent thinkers of strategic theory might be more limited than the classical European canon, which cherished Greek (Thucydides, Xenophon, or Aeneas the Tactician) and Roman (Vegetius) works as well as icons of strategy like Alexander the Great, Hannibal, Pyrrhus, Marius, or Caesar and a broader range of Occidental thinkers and practitioners like Niccolo Machiavelli or King Gustav Adolf of Sweden or Frederick the II of Prussia or Sokolowski in the Soviet union to name but a few.

shaping any discourse on grand strategy formulation. Now, how should this discursive plurality be studied in order to develop the proposed ‘subculture-cleavage’ model? First of all, due to its conceptualization of strategic culture the thesis leans evidently to the interpretive-understanding side of the ‘erklären’ versus ‘verstehen’ dichotomy⁵¹ (Hollis and Smith 1990) which to this day helps to frame the debates about epistemology as well as methodology in the field of International Relations. This strand of social enquiry stands in line with the so called ‘linguistic turn’ in the social sciences, which postulated the central role of language and the reappraisal of accompanying cognitive processes in interpreting and negotiating human reality⁵². Hence proponents of ‘understanding’ and interpretation consider the study of both the ‘internal’ meanings, motives, and beliefs actors have and how they act accordingly to be central. What is not ‘observable’ in the positivist sense may also be relevant for understanding the subject of IR like meanings, beliefs, perceptions or ideologies emerging from context, culture or historical experiences. According to Robert Keohane interpretivist and constructivist⁵³ scholars “all emphasize the importance of historical and textual interpretation and the limitations of scientific models in studying world politics” (Keohane 1988, 382). Thus, for interpretivism meanings and beliefs are the relevant aspects in any analysis of social phenomena. In order to study these essential factors, hermeneutics (as the theory of interpretation) is employed, that is knowledge is gained through interpretation that is the attempt to understand the different layers of meanings of textual as well as symbolic artefacts humans produce. In general, qualitative, discursive as well as historical methods like Max Weber’s ‘historical sociology’ are the instruments of choice, which all aim at resisting positivism. Reflectivists or post-structuralists specifically advocate the adoption of interpretive methodological approaches, thus challenging rationalist assumptions regarding the superiority of quantitative methods. The same is true for the author as

⁵¹ The methodological debate between *understanding* as a mode of social inquiry (theory should proceed in an ‘individualistic or ‘bottom-up’ fashion from unit to system) versus *explaining* as part of the controversy between positivists (rationalism) and reflectivists (a label made popular by Robert Keohane’s presidential address to the International Studies Association (ISA) in 1988 to get hold of interpretivism).

⁵² The dissertation aims at adding to a ‘constitutive theory’ of ideational cleavages rather than to explanatory, critical or normative theories. Such a theoretical approach does not create or trace casual patterns in time but rather inquires ‘how is this thing constituted’. For example, “how are ideas as social objects constituted?” It is a kind of theory that also attempts to grasp the worldview ‘inside the heads’ of actors and discourse participants.

⁵³ Under the term constructivism a wide range of post-positivist positions can be subsumed. One of the major charges levelled against the rationalist mainstream has been the claim that the so called ‘scientists’ in the ‘behaviouralist tradition’ of the 1950s were confusing positivism with theory (Ferguson and Mansbach 2003, 41). “At root, the ‘scientists’ ignored theory while focusing on method” (Ferguson and Mansbach 2003, 38). “Like empiricism, positivism allows knowledge derived solely from sensory perceptions or the tools that extend those perceptions. ‘A positivist ignores metaphysics and knowledge gained through reasoning and reflection’” (Ferguson and Mansbach 2003, 39).

he prefers a historicist or interpretive form of IR, that is a sympathy for traditionalists in terms of humanistic methodology, who see the theory of IR as a study in history and political philosophy. To do this the methodology usually involves categorizing different traditions of political thought according to an analysis of underlying norms and values (ideas) like Martin Wight's work on the three traditions of IR theory (Wight 1991).

Principally, then, a pragmatic discourse analysis of the 'discursive' strand of ideational plurality within the meta-debate of Indian grand strategy is conducted. The author is studying this debate (the source of data) between 1991 and 2014 because he wants to find out how India's strategic subcultures can be delineated in order to help the reader to understand better how discursive plurality on grand strategy is constituted. As this debate is predominately a scientific debate the empirical focus is on the contributions of scholars (the sample size is around 60 texts; sample selection follows judgement or purposeful sampling (Marshall 1996)). Hence the main bulk of empirical material will stem from secondary sources provided by area specialists, policy analysts, historians, and journalists. Scholarly authority⁵⁴ was so salient in establishing and constructing the discourse on India's strategic pluralism, as except for the popular term of 'Nehruvians' self-designations (Bajpai 2003, Mehta 2009a) are quite rare in the Indian case, that assessing their propositions as primary experts promises to bring a rich empirical yield. This qualitative research in terms of a systematic enquiry of the labels and explanations given for the different strategic subcultures proposed by researchers is set up as an interpretivist text study. Such a qualitative literature analysis has been based on a qualitative methodology software called MAXQDA 12 which helped in coding and mapping the content (labels and connected possible sets of explanations) of each scholarly input of the fairly well developed analytical literature. The procedure of coding and category-building has been guided by Johnny Saldana's "The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers" (Saldana 2013); Udo Kuckartz's "Qualitative Text Analysis: A Guide to Methods, Practice and Using Software" (Kuckartz 2014) and Margit Schreier's "Qualitative Content Analysis in Practice" (Schreier 2012). This approach to content analysis was accompanied by a written survey send to around 30 scholars and analysts working on India's grand strategy and its ideational tenets⁵⁵. These findings were further refined by the analysis of publically accessible presentations by renowned specialists in the field on cspan and youtube (IDSA channel), accordingly have these artifacts been examined

⁵⁴ For reasons, why IR scholars in the Indian context enjoy a strong position of see chapter 2 section 4.4.

⁵⁵ Additionally, the author had many informal expert conversations during the genesis of the project.

for designations of strategic worldviews. After mapping patterns of labels in the existing literature the next crucial step has been to inductively deduce the (implicit) ideational cleavages. Analytically answering the question of how or under what conditions India's strategic pluralism is delineated. As these cleavages function as the 'structuring instruments' constituting the discursive plurality in terms of the central strategic paradigms (CSP) of the nine possible Indian strategic subcultures of India's strategic culture and other debates on foreign and security policy. This 'subculture-cleavage model' will be outlined in more detail the next section of the introduction.

Methodologically the next step has been to apply this newly devised model in a case study regarding the debate of India's Israel policy as an example for a niche conflict that still has grand strategic implications and thus should reflect to whole array of competing subcultures assessing India's options and proposing alternative strategic decisions. So, in order to trace the range of strategic subcultures engaged in ideological contestations and to examine the developed model, the author first sought to find explicit labels like leftists, or Nehruvians, or neo-liberal globalists in the secondary scholarly literature as well as in newspaper editorials and other news sources of leading Indian English-speaking newspapers like 'The Hindu', the 'Times of India', the 'Indian Express' and other relevant news outlets. In a second step, he used the four 'indicators' or filters of the two cleavages (normative grand strategy-cleavage [NGSC] and cultural identity cleavage [CIC]) to find evidence for the existence of the predicted strategic worldviews. The analysis of media coverage as well as of the small but growing analytic literature on India's relations with Israel between 1992 and 2014 has also been embedded in a qualitative media content analysis using again MAXQDA 12 for coding the discernable schools of thought and answering questions regarding the role of conflict in human affairs, the nature of threats, the status of territoriality and the significance of history for defining a grand strategy.

2. India's Strategic Culture Debate

“No formal efforts or institutions of government exist to develop strategies for India, but on an ad hoc and pragmatic basis.” (George K. Tanham 1992, 67)

“India's strategic culture (...), as a composite is more distinct and coherent than that of most contemporary nation-states.” (Rodney W. Jones 2006, 3)

"I read her [India's] history and read also a part of her abundant ancient literature, and was powerfully impressed by the vigor of thought, the clarity of language, and the richness of mind that lay behind it [...] There seemed to me something unique about the continuity of cultural tradition through five thousand years of history, of invasion and upheaval, a tradition which was widespread among the masses and powerfully influenced them [...] Like some ancient palimpsest on which layer upon layer of thought and reverie had been inscribed, and yet no succeeding layer had completely hidden or erased what had been written previously. All of these existed in our conscious and subconscious selves, though we may not have been aware of them." (Jawaharlal Nehru 1981, 50, 52, 59)

2.1. Strategic Culture: Taking Stock of a Controversial Approach

a. An Overview

The quest of defining the analytical category of strategic culture has been called by David Haglund, who was thereby referring to Oscar Wilde's *bon mot* on fox-hunting, “the unintelligible in pursuit of the incomprehensible” (Haglund 2004, 479). The need to render a sharp definition of this instrument of analysis is not new and the gradual expansion and stretching of the concept is by no means abnormal, more of a sign of its healthy evolution to a more relevant social science concept. Strategic culture has, as an IR concept, been deployed in different sub-fields like strategic studies or war and military studies as well as foreign policy analysis. This has resulted in various foci regarding the scope of its two parental elements, “strategy” and “culture”. Furthermore, this approach has also been taken up by different research paradigms like constructivism (Glenn 2009), or post-structuralist approaches (Der Derian and Shapiro 1989 or Walker 1993). Usually strategic culturalists are seen as challenging the realist paradigm, even though its major charges are predominantly directed against structural realism. Because of that and due to its supplementary and refining nature the concept has become an integral part of a

realist research design (as an intervening unit-level variable) namely that of type-III neo-classical realism, the thesis' guiding approach (Lobell, Ripsman and Taliaferro 2016). Hence as an analytical category strategic culture has developed into an essential element of contemporary IR vocabulary and it is also of pivotal significance for the present attempt to delineate Indian grand strategic thought. This chapter's aim, then, is threefold; Firstly, strategic culture is introduced as an IR concept with an emphasis given on its conceptualization as an intervening variable within the neoclassical realist research agenda – the 'strategic subculture' approach. Secondly, strategic culture's reception in the Indian context is discussed and a special focus is being dedicated to the so called 'pluralistic' strand of India's strategic culture debate. This position advocates the discursive nature of strategic culture in terms of the existence of a range of strategic subcultures and thereby provides the primary empirical referent for this project. Thirdly, exactly this wealth of labels proposed by various authors is then inductively analyzed to determine common features, which are aggregated to form a pattern along which Indian grand strategic subcultures are structured.

This chapter, which as a whole is dedicated, in equal terms, to both strategic culture and its subcategory of 'ideational strategic pluralism' (ISP), is eventually divided into five sections: firstly, the development of the concept from its beginnings is traced and put into a broader IR perspective; In the second section various definitions are provided and the author's conceptualization of strategic culture is discussed; thirdly, after sketching the wider debate on Indian grand strategy, India's engagement with the strategic culture approach is being portrayed and two⁵⁶ of the three main strands of this intense intellectual debate are described; fourthly, the third current, the so called 'pluralist' strand, of India's strategic culture debate is outlined; Finally the patterns are mapped that are inductively discernable from both the accumulated scholarly contributions on grand strategic worldviews ('the pluralist strand') and from the data gained from a written questionnaire answered by experts working on Indian grand strategy. These deduced patterns, then, provide the basis for the construction of the two cleavages that underpin the 'subculture-cleavage model' that is developed in chapter 3.

2.2.The Strategic Culture Approach: The Evolution of an IR Concept

⁵⁶ The two monolithic discourse positions contend the following: the first argues for the absence of any grand strategic reasoning in India, while the second position rejects this claim by pointing to a coherent Indian strategic tradition.

2.2.1 The Origins of Strategic Culture: National Character Studies and the Cold War

The concept as such is not a new one, however, it has remained loosely defined up until today. Its origins go back much further than its first employment under the name of strategic culture in the late 1970s, with Jack Snyder being attributed to have coined the term ‘strategic culture’ in 1977 (Johnston 1995). Snyder introduced the concept in his attempt to bring culture into modern security studies by devising a theoretical approach for the interpretation of Soviet limited nuclear war doctrine (Snyder 1977). Its roots go well beyond the Cold War years, as generally culture has not been an especially new variable in international security. Strategic culture, though under a different label, has been explored since for as long as there have been clashes among socio-political entities. Thus, cultural studies of strategy may well date back to the earliest texts on statecraft, be it in ancient Greece, China or India (Morgenthau 2006). The great classical strategists in every culture, be it Kautilya, Sun Tzu, Thucydides, or Machiavelli in Renaissance Italy all have considered culture and conflict as interwoven and even Clausewitz advanced such an idea by recognizing war and warfighting strategy as a “test of moral and physical forces” (Clausewitz 1980) – with the notion of the enemy’s morale being grounded in a distinct culture. The systematic and ‘theoretical’ study of the link between conflict and culture began, however, in earnest only during the Second World War and was predominantly conducted by the Western allies (the United States and Britain). Stimulated by funding of the Roosevelt administration “national character studies” represent the first attempts in social science to establish a connection between culture and state behavior based predominantly on anthropological methodology. Most of these studies were produced during and directly after the war and targeted the roots of German, Japanese and Soviet belligerence by looking at language, religion, customs, socializing processes and the interpretation of common memories. Among the more prominent of these writings of the 1940s and 1950s by anthropologists are Ruth Benedict’s ‘Chrysanthemum and the Sword’ (1946) and Geoffrey Gorer’s ‘The People of Great Russia: A Psychological Study’ (1949), but also Adda B. Bozeman’s ‘Politics and Culture in International History’ (1960), which, as a pioneering ‘transcultural’ study of international relations, can still be counted to this body of literature. In the same vein Talcott Parsons, in 1951, defined culture as comprising of “interpretive codes” which include language, values and even substantive beliefs like the support for democracy or the futility of war” (Baylis 2007, 84). Despite their forays into hitherto uncharted waters, national character studies were mostly criticized for their stereotyping and reification of the concept of culture. But in spite of this pronounced charges these works have created a lasting legacy, as they pointed to the significance of socialization

and collective memory in understanding strategic choices. However, with the ‘scientific’ revolution in the social sciences (especially in the United States) during the 1950s such a culturalist approach fell out of favor and only some sociologists and anthropologists like Margaret Mead or Claude Levi-Strauss remained faithful by further refining the approach during the 1960s and 1970s (Baylis 2007).

a. Political Culture

But also, political scientist took up the thread again, with Gabriel Almond’s and Sidney Verba’s path-breaking work ‘The Civic Culture’ in 1965, which introduced the concept of ‘political culture’ to political science. Thus, political culture can be seen as another of strategic culture’s predecessors. Almond and Verba defined it as the “subset of beliefs and values of a society that relate to the political system” (Almond and Verba 1965, 11), which entail commitments to values like the principles and institutions of democracy, ideas on issues of morality and the use of force as well as predilections concerning the status of a state in international affairs (Baylis 2007, 85). For Almond and Verba political culture can at least be conceptualized on three levels: “the cognitive, which includes empirical and causal beliefs; the evaluative, which consists of values, norms and moral judgments; and the expressive or affective, which encompasses emotional attachments, patterns of identity and loyalty, and feelings of affinity, aversion, or indifference.” Even more relevant for this dissertation is their idea of cleavages producing sub-cultures (Almond and Verba 1965, 32 and 33). Their work inspired other political scientists like Lucian Pye, who was also a China specialist, and whose definition of political culture still echoes in some contemporary definitions of strategic culture. Firstly, he defined culture as “the dynamic vessel that holds and revitalizes the collective memories of a people by giving emotional life to traditions” (Pye 1985, 21) and political culture as “the set of attitudes, beliefs, and sentiments which give order and meaning to a political process and which provide the underlying assumptions and rules that govern behavior in the political system. It encompasses both political ideals and the operating norms of a polity. Political culture is thus the manifestation in aggregate form of the psychological and subjective dimensions of politics. A political culture is the product of both the collective history of a political system and the life histories of the members of that system, and thus it is rooted equally in public events and private experiences”. (Pye 1985, 218) For him culture turns into a ‘generator of preferences’, a ‘vehicle for the perpetuation of values and preferences’ and thus a forerunner for many cultural realists of today. However, the behavioral revolution of the 1950s and its long aftermath made also this kind of

cultural interpretive approaches a fringe phenomenon, which only survived in area studies (Lantis 2006).

b. Strategic Studies

In the realm of strategic studies, a ‘cultural explanation’ was first devised by American and British scholars during the Cold War in the late 1970s. Jack Snyder coined the term ‘strategic culture’ in his attempt to address shortcomings in the neorealist explanation of superpower rivalry by developing a unit-level refinement for the interpretation of the Soviet limited nuclear war doctrine. Snyder and thinkers like Anatol Rapaport and Philip Green before him were questioning the abstract propositions developed in ‘deterrence’ literature. These theories of deterrence in the framework of nuclear strategy were devised by scholars like Thomas Schelling and Herman Kahn during the 1950s and 1960s based on abstract models such as ‘game theory’. (, Baylis 2007 Poore 2004) Snyder rejected the expectation of these rational-choice theorists that the Soviet Union and the United States, which they considered to be just the ‘red’ and the ‘blue’ team in a rational game, would be acting based on similar calculations. Instead he argued that the leaders’ socialization and collective memory would considerably alternate their strategic choices. Consequently, elites would formulate a distinct culture in relation to security and military affairs that reflects distinct modes of strategic thinking. (Lantis 2006) He contended, “as a result of this socialization process, a set of general beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour patterns with regard to nuclear strategy has achieved a state of semi-permanence that places them on the level of ‘cultural’ rather than mere policy” (Snyder 1977, 34). For Snyder, the perceived preference of the Soviet Union for preemptive war and offensive strategies was grounded in Russia’s pre-Soviet and early Soviet history of insecurity and authoritarian rule, which in turn were caused by different organizational, historical, and political contexts. His effort was embedded in the larger aim to overcome what was considered to be an ethno-centrist outlook on deterrence theory (Snyder 1977; Booth 1979). He defined strategic culture as a “sum total of ideals, conditional emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behaviour that members of the national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other with regard to national strategy” (Snyder 1977, 33) – a definition that set the course for the next decades entailing both ‘habits of mind and practice’ (Snyder 1977, 36). After Snyder other authors working on the ideational foundations of American and Soviet nuclear strategy such as Kenneth Booth’s “Strategy and Ethnocentrism” (1979) and Colin Gray’s “National Style in Strategy” (1981) and David Jones’s “Soviet Strategic Culture” (1990) argued that the

differences between Soviet and American ideas on nuclear war fighting were instigated by deviations in variables such as deeply entrenched historical narratives, political culture and geo-strategic location (Gray 1981, Jones 1990, Johnston 1995). Gray contended that there are distinct 'national styles of strategy' with "deep roots within a particular stream of historical experience" thereby strategic culture "provides the milieu within which strategy is debated" (Gray 1981).

c. Challenger of Neorealism

So, these first cultural strategists argued that strategic culture was mounted primarily as a challenge to structural-realist assumptions about the sources and characteristics of state behavior, Gray and Jones considered it to be a powerful independent variable. Additionally, these analysts were united in their aim to surpass the alleged ethnocentrism in strategic studies. With Snyder, they set the route for strategic culture to be understood as a semi-permanent influence on strategic choice. Furthermore, irrespective of the explanatory quality these scholars attached to their 'strategic culture' variable, they rejected neorealism's 'third image' approach by re-introducing the second level of analysis to what they considered to be a distinctly non-structural 'realist' research agenda (Johnston 1995). Alistair Iain Johnston has succinctly noted:

The neorealist paradigm assumes that states are functionally undifferentiated units that seek power to optimize their utility... Strategic choices will be... constrained only, or largely, by variables such as geography, capability [and] threat... Most proponents of the strategic culture approach, however, would fundamentally disagree... In their view, elites socialized in different strategic cultures will make different choices when placed in similar situations. Since cultures are attributes of and vary across states, similar strategic realities will be interpreted differently (Johnston 1995, 35).

However, the main bulk of strategic culture research emerged in the wake of both the 'linguistic turn' and the 'cultural turn' in the social sciences as identity formation and non-structural explanations gained widespread support among IR scholars challenging the above mentioned neorealist hegemony in the field (Johnston 1995, 33). The majority of researchers who apply the term 'culture' are inclined to contend, explicitly or implicitly, "that different states have different predominant strategic preferences that are rooted in the early or formative experiences of the state, and are influenced to some degree by the philosophical, political, cultural, and cognitive characteristics of the state and its elites. Ahistorical or "objective" variables such as technology, polarity, or relative material capabilities are all of secondary importance. It is strategic culture, they argue, that gives meaning to these variables" (Johnston 1995, 34).

Hence due to their shared ideational ontology, the proponents for so called 'national styles in strategy' (Booth 1979, Gray 1981) have therefore been mainly subsumed under the label of constructivism (Wendt 2001, Bloomfield 2012). Initially, that is in the late 1970s and early 1980s, however, cultural realism was perceived differently – as a critique coming from within the realist tradition. That changed in the late 1980s and 1990s with the advent of the aforementioned 'turns' in the social sciences, like the 'linguistic turn', the 'spatial turn' (Ó Tuathail 2006) and the, for this study most important, 'cultural turn', which all occurred concurrently and signified the rise of constructivism at large. In the case of strategic culture besides this general trend especially the work of the constructivist Alistair Iain Johnston on Ming-China's strategic culture (Johnston 1995) had a great share on renewing interest in the approach. What united proponents of strategic culture was their goal to mend weaknesses in ahistorical and structural models of strategic choice at the centre of mainstream international security studies, like neo-realism. Therefore, strategic culturalists like other constructivists and dissidents against the mainstream in IR theory positioned themselves in opposition to structural realism, a stance, which had a long-lasting influence on the development of strategic and security studies. Following John Glenn, however, since the evolution of neoclassical realism to a full-fledged IR theory, the alleged incompatibility between realism and constructivism has been mitigated. Because neoclassical realism's attempt to bring domestic and ideational processes back into realist theory, has allowed strategic culture, (in terms of a 'soft-constructivism') to be re-integrated into this major research program.

Basically, then, these scholars seek to devise richer accounts of state behaviour than the one derived from Waltz's structural realism by pointing to the domestic cultural context in shaping strategic outcomes or, as Stuart Poore has put it, strategic culture considers the "relevance of the 'cultural context' in influencing strategic preferences." (Poore 2003, 45) Rather than confining themselves to the analysis of restraints and opportunities enacted by the material environment, that is the distribution of capabilities in the state system, strategic culturalists reaffirm the relevance of cultural and ideological stimuli on the motivations of states and their leaders. It is clear, however, that the research objectives among scholars vary considerably; as will be outlined in the next section (2.3. on the definitions of strategic culture) some conceive of strategic culture as an intervening variable while others contend that "ideas operate 'all the way down' to shape actual actors and action in world politics" (Farrell 2002, 50) so that it establishes both state identity and behaviour. Ultimately it is a distinction between a conceptualization of

strategic culture, which concedes a supplementary role for the approach⁵⁷ and an understanding of strategic culture supplanting existing neorealist or other theories in terms of being an independent variable on its own, which can explain foreign and security policy and consequently even global politics. Another aspect strategic culture theorists have repeatedly pointed to is their aim to ‘explicate’ behaviour and ideas which seemed to be contrary to how a “rational” state should operate. Alastair Iain Johnston again has delivered the most comprehensive account on that issue, when he argues:

Rather than rejecting rationality per se as a factor in strategic choice, the strategic culture approach challenges the ahistorical, non-cultural neorealist framework for analysing strategic choices...Strategic culture is compatible with notions of limited rationality (where strategic culture simplifies reality), with process rationality (where strategic culture defines ranked preferences or narrows options) and with adaptive rationality (where historical choices, analogies, metaphors, and precedents are invoked to guide choice)” (Johnston 1995, 34, 35).

Consequently, for strategic culture specialists there seems to be no universal model of rationality as what is considered rational in the context of one state can be perceived as irrational by another.

Now to further elaborate this differentiation John Glenn has developed a typology of four possible conceptions of strategic culture (Glenn 2009): a conventional constructivist, a post-structuralist, an interpretative and an epiphenomenal conception.

2.2.2 A Constructivist Conception of Strategic Culture – the Idea of an Independent Variable

Firstly, in contrast to scholars (and to the preference of this dissertation project) who consider culture and norms as exerting only an epiphenomenal effect on state behaviour, conventional constructivists contend that “cultural environments affect not only the incentives for different kinds of state behavior but also the basic character of states—what we call state ‘identity’” (Jepperson, Wendt, and Katzenstein 1996, 33). Adopting the constructivist approach in such a way allows strategic culture to become an independent source of explaining state behaviour as

⁵⁷ “Culture is best understood as a supplement to and not a substitute for, realist theories of strategic choice. Strategic culture can certainly help to explain ‘deviations’ from balancing behavior, but since the very concept of such deviations presumes some sort of appropriate or expected response to international conditions, it is only within a realist framework that such explanations make any sense.” (Dueck 2005, 204)

well as state formation. Here, however, Glenn draws a distinction by stating that “constructivism may encompass a variety of epistemological approaches and it may therefore be more accurate to refer to the group of writers currently under consideration as adopting a conventional constructivist approach who “subscribe to a notion of social causality that takes *reasons as causes*” (Adler 1997:329)” (Glenn 2009, 234). As for these scholars “ideas are not merely rules or ‘road maps’ for action, but rather” that “ideas operate ‘all the way down’ to actually shape actors and action in world politics” (Farrell 2002, 50). Hence in their research, these analysts try to find regular (albeit contingent) patterns of behaviour that emerge from these beliefs and ideas. Conventional constructivists therefore “hold the view that the building blocks of international reality are ideational as well as material...at the level of individual actors, constructivism also seeks to map the full array of additional ideational factors that shape actors’ outlooks and behavior, ranging from culture and ideology, to aspiration and principled beliefs, on to cause/effect knowledge of specific policy problems” (Ruggie 1998, 33). Thus, conventional constructivists merge causal theorizing with empirical validation to explain different forms of behaviour.

“identities constitute interests and actions. Neo-realists and neoliberals consciously bracket questions of interest formation, treating preferences as exogenously determined givens that exist prior to social interaction. Constructivists, on the other hand, argue that understanding how interests are constituted is the key to explaining a wide range of international phenomena that rationalists have either misunderstood or ignored”.
(Price and Reus-Smit 1998, 267)

2.2.3 A Post-Modern Conception of Strategic Culture – Deconstructing Culture as Discourse

Secondly, both post-structuralists as well as conventional constructivists again share “the idea that cultures and identities are emergent and constructed (rather than fixed and natural), contested and polymorphic (rather than static and essence-like)” (Lapid 1996, 8). Though, contrary to conventional constructivism a post-structuralist approach is primarily focused on dominant discourses and their role in shaping the social distribution of power. Therefore, these authors contend that the “narrative is thus not simply a re-presentation of some prior event, it is the means by which the status of reality is conferred on events. But historical narratives also perform vital political functions in the present; they can be used as resources in contemporary political struggles” (Devetak 2005, 164). Hegemonic interpretations of history as well as current perspectives of other states are fashioned by intra-state actors which seek to adopt them instrumentally to suit their own ideological aims. As an example, Glenn points to the practice

of summoning the idea of a Soviet threat, which aided in establishing the identity of the “imagined community” by drawing on differentiations between “inside /outside,” “domestic / foreign,” “us / them” as David Campbell has shown in his studies (Campbell 1992, 1993). Post-structuralists, then, regard strategic culture as a multifaceted resource that actors are employing in order to “render their actions both intelligible and legitimate both to themselves and to those they seek to influence” (Glenn 2009, 237). Identity is therefore considered as being “constituted of power and interests; that is, of language-power and actors’ interests.” (Weldes 1999, 226) However, for these researchers the focus is not so much on the continuity of strategic culture but rather its instrumentalization by policymakers in terms of defining the meaning of historical events, national symbols, foundational strategic thinkers, national and cultural mythologies and the like. Consequently, this stress on agency in terms of the state elite vigorous employment of different formulations of strategic culture is for post-structuralists a tool to reject “modern assumptions of social coherence and notions of causality in favor of multiplicity, plurality, fragmentation. Others emphasize the way in which countries’ historical narratives, national myths and symbols, etc. are articulated to develop discourses to serve the foreign policies of states and can thus be seen as representing a post-structuralist school of strategic culture.” (Best and Kellner 1991, 4). These scholars are concerned with critical accounts of mainstream epistemological assumptions, due to their perspective, that can be summarized as follows: “to be engaged in a discourse is to be engaged in the making and remaking of meaningful conditions of existence. A discourse, then, is not a way of learning ‘about’ something out there in the ‘real world,’ it is rather, a way of producing that something as real, as identifiable, classifiable, knowable, and therefore, meaningful. Discourse creates the conditions of knowing” (Klein 1988, 4; George 1994, 30). Therefore, post-structuralist approaches with their critical agenda of deconstruction provide a useful tool for understanding processes of policy legitimation (Klein 1988).

2.2.4 An Interpretative Conception of Strategic Culture – Culture as Context

Thirdly, the group of interpretivist scholars espouses a hermeneutic or interpretive methodology and claim to immerse themselves within a culture to comprehend the inherent logic of that culture (Hollis and Smith 1990, 82–91). Such writers posit that “different political and strategic cultures confront distinctive geostrategic problems through the prisms of their individual historical circumstances, and with unique sets of assets and liabilities, will make somewhat individual choices” (Gray 1997, 28). This school of thought can be seen as promoting the idea of strategic culture as an all-encompassing context, “a context for understanding rather than explanatory causality for behaviour” (Gray 1999b, 51). The sometimes strictly anthropological

methodology of the interpretivist perspective can nonetheless yield cultural accounts that could enhance neoclassical realist research (Glenn 2009).

2.2.5 An Epiphenomenal Conception of Strategic Culture – the Neoclassical Realist Lens

Fourthly, the epiphenomenal conception considers strategic culture to be an ideational supplementary explanation (Glenn 2009, 534) of strategic choice, that is as an intervening variable. Both for neoclassical realism and advocates of an epiphenomenal interpretation of strategic culture, the impact of strategic culture is regarded as helping to explain aberrant state behaviour to that which otherwise would be expected by the system-structure in any given international environment. For example, Jack Snyder, the originator of the concept can be seen as a representative of such an epiphenomenal understanding of strategic culture when he states:

“Differences in Soviet and American strategy probably cannot be explained by broad differences between traditional Russian and Western cultures or between Leninist and liberal political cultures. Culture in this sense did not figure in the author’s original argument about Soviet strategic culture...the term ‘culture’ was used to suggest that, once a distinctive approach to strategy takes hold, it tends to persist despite changes in the circumstances that gave rise to it, through processes of socialization and institutionalization and through the role of strategic concepts in legitimating these social arrangements.” (Snyder 1990:4)

He goes on to argue that culture is

“a residual label that is affixed to ‘explain’ outcomes that cannot be explained in any more concrete way. Thus, culture, including strategic culture, is an explanation to be used only when all else fails. In principle, differences in military strategy across states might be explained solely in terms of objective differences in the structure of their external or internal circumstances, without regard to subjective cultural differences.” (Snyder 1990, 4)

Epiphenomenal strategic culture therefore seems to be best suited to the task of supplementing neorealism and eventually neoclassical realism. Hence rather than supplanting realism, epiphenomenal strategic culture shows, “some promise of supplementing realist theories by explaining lags between structural change and state behavior, accounting for deviant state behavior, and explaining behavior in structurally indeterminate environments” (Desch 1998, 169).

d. Summary of Conceptions of Strategic Culture

As a summary, one can state that the analytical category of strategic culture has been the subject of different influences. Besides the earliest reasoning on statecraft and strategy, with its inherent cultural sensitivity and the tentative explorations into the subject by the ‘national character’ studies of the 1940s and 1950s the main roots of the concepts are to be found in the response to ahistorical and acultural nuclear deterrence theory, which was misleadingly equated with the whole of realist theory. This impulse was further strengthened by the general rise of constructivism, however, with the beginning of the new millennium strategic culture became again an accepted part of the neoclassical realist approach. In addition, strategic culture research has been categorized even more exhaustively by comparing its different conceptualizations in terms of their suitability to fit with this renewed realist research program. Epiphenomenal strategic culture at first sight seems to be most promising, however it is not the only approach to be compatible with neoclassical realism. Many scholars even use more than one of the four manifestations Glenn has identified. Constructivist but also post-structuralist and interpretivist approaches due to their emphasis on discursive and humanist methodology are by no means at odds with strategic culture being employed as an ideational intervening variable in the context of type III neoclassical realism (Lobell, Ripsman and Taliaferro 2016).

2.3. Definitions of Strategic Culture: The Strategic Subculture Approach

This section is dedicated to defining strategic culture to render it a fruitful concept fitting into the framework of the thesis. Firstly, its two constituting elements are examined namely ‘strategy’ and ‘culture’; secondly, a generational scheme based on Johnston’s proposition (Johnston 1995) is presented, which will address the different kinds of variables for which strategic culture has been put to use. Besides its status as a variable, the author will also take other characteristic features surrounding the strategic culture approach into account like, the scope of the concept and the relationship between ideas (culture) and behavior. Finally, the so called ‘too much continuity’ (the question of does strategic culture change?) and the ‘too much coherence’ problems, following Bloomfield (Bloomfield 2012) are addressed. This *problematique* which, besides the conceptualization of the scope of strategic culture as a variable, is one of strategic culture’s most eminent controversies and relevant for the definition of a strategic subculture approach. Thus, formulating such an approach will be the final task of this section by drawing on existing explorations on the subject (major definitional propositions of scholars from all strategic culture ‘generations’). In the end a working definition for a pluralist understanding of strategic culture

in terms of intervening variables, that is compatible with a neoclassical realist research design, will be provided.

2.3.1 Key Features of Strategic Culture Theory

a. Strategy's Scope

The term 'strategy' seems to be the part of the composite concept of 'strategic culture' that can be more easily defined. There is, however, no consensus on whether strategic culture should be limited strictly to military issues, reducing it to the notion of actual war fighting, as a narrow interpretation of the term 'strategy' would suggest. Or to the contrary as some authors (Poore 2003, Burgess 2009) have suggested to broaden this conceptualization and to also encompass grand strategy. Equating the scope of strategic culture to grand strategy has become the most widespread approach, which also informs the definition offered by the author later in this section. So eventually there are two possibilities to define the scope of strategy. Firstly, to use a narrow military definition linking strategic culture to the realm of actual military operations and doctrine formation, as authors working on organizational culture like Elizabeth Kier (Kier 1997) and Jeffery Legro (Legro 1995) have done. Or to limit the concept to the realm of nuclear strategy and other branches of the armed forces, as bureaucratic organizations. Secondly, there are those who conceptualize strategic culture in terms of grand strategy⁵⁸ (some speak also of a nation's security culture) and include, in addition to military capabilities, the whole range of instruments at a state's disposal such as economic prowess, cultural attractiveness and diplomatic tools of achieving a state's goals.

b. Culture

The meaning of culture, however, as the second definitional element of strategic culture is even more contentious. Defining culture, to use Zaman's words, is "as dangerous as an unmarked minefield on a dark night" (Zaman 2009, 69). He goes on to contend that because of the difficulty of understanding culture, "some have gone so far as to suggest that scholars must abandon it altogether or 'write against it'." (Zaman 2009, 69) Despite its vagueness, the approach can be seen as a sub-field of political culture as defined by Almond and Verba in their concept of 'civic culture' (Almond and Verba 1965). Jepperson, Wendt und Katzenstein argue that culture should be understood as a "set of evaluative standards such as norms or values and cognitive standards such as rules or models defining what entities and actors exist in a system and how they operate

⁵⁸ For some the notion of grand strategy is not broad enough and hence they expand the concept to include entrenched beliefs, worldviews of a society as a whole (Toje 2008).

and interrelate” (Jepperson et al. 1996, 39). Yet another distinction can be made between culture (as ideas and attitudes) and behaviour that is between culture as practice and culture as a system of meaning⁵⁹. (Poore 2003) For prominent anthropologists such as Geertz (Geertz 1973) and Wildlavsky (Wildlavsky 1985) culture can consist of ritual behaviour, and is therefore not exclusively of an ideational nature. However, as applied by political scientists, culture has to be principally an ideational category, so as to distinguish it from behaviour as the dependent variable. Yet this has not hindered many practioners of the strategic culture approach (Gray 1999a and 1999b, Kim 2004) to include behaviour in their understanding of culture. Keith Krause and Andrew Latham in their study on arms control are pointing in the same direction, when they contend that “cultural forces do not directly determine policy responses, they exercise a powerful influence on the shaping of what might be called ‘policy reflexes’. In other words, they can help shape an understanding of what constitutes ‘normal’ ‘appropriate’ or ‘desirable’ practices and responses.” (Krause and Latham 1998, 25) Finally, Neumann and Heikka in turn have tried to devise a theoretical framework in which both “practice and discourse constitute a culture” (Neumann and Heikka 2005, 8) echoing Geertz’s unified understanding of culture as ideas and practice (Geertz 1973). For them discourse is “a system for the formation of statements” (Jens Bartelson) while practice is considered to be “socially recognized forms of activity done on the basis of what members learn from others.” (Neumann and Heikka 2005, 7) Johnston uses the metaphor that strategic culture would be like a “states’ body language” (Johnston 1995, 40), echoing Bourdieu’s ‘Habitus’ concept, as it taps semi- to subconscious elements within a state’s strategic establishment. But, as an analytical tool, it goes beyond the subliminal as it works like a lens in David Elkins and Richard Simeon’s sense, pre-structuring perception (Liebig 2014a). Elkins and Simeon have suggested that “culture is unlikely to be of much help in explaining why alternative A was chosen over alternative B – but it may be of great help in understanding why A and B were considered, while no thought was given to C, D or E” (Elkins and Simeon, 1979, 142 or Poore 2003, 47).

Furthermore, strategic culture, in all its varieties, can best be grasped by a number of heuristics. The first such element would be its hybrid character. Hybridity in the context of strategic culture refers to its composite nature, meaning that both the country’s strategic culture and its subcultures are based on assumptions that are derived from many different sources which in turn are selectively and partially adapted. Generally potential sources of a strategic culture can be

⁵⁹ Theorists like Colin Gray define ‘culture’ as context. See: Gray (1999b).

roughly divided into three categories; namely ‘physical’ sources like geography, climate, distribution of natural resources, generational change and technology, ‘political’ entailing the collective memory, regime type, elite beliefs and military organization and finally ‘social or cultural’ like myths and symbols and foundational texts and other relevant artefacts. (Lantis and Howlett 2007) This process can be called the re-use of the past⁶⁰ (Mitra 2009) and has at least two implications; the first highlights the discursive character of a culture no matter how old and comprehensive it may be. The second relates to a possible instrumentalization leading to, what Johnston calls, the ‘symbolic⁶¹ versus the operational set’ of a strategic culture. Johnston contends that there are indications of two strategic cultures: “*one a symbolic or idealised set of assumptions and ranked preferences, and one an operational set that had a nontrivial effect on strategic choice....*” (Johnston 1995, 46) The former “symbolic set” is to legitimize behaviour in culturally acceptable terms. The latter “operational set” – or *parabellum* or realpolitik strategic culture – favours handling with security threats by removing them and should be empirically observable cross-culturally. For many strategic culturalists (Klein 1988), though, this symbolic or ideational level constitutes the central feature of the strategic culture approach. In India for example the symbolic set would entail not only idealist- and internationalist worldviews, but all ideological perspectives (as the focus of the subculture-cleavage typology), while actual policy would nonetheless be realist with the only exception that Indian leaders need to appeal to the structural realities of India’s post-colonial nation-building (Johnston 1995, Mitra 2011, Liebig 2013).

Despite the disagreements on the scope of strategy, the nature of culture and its potential sources, what researchers on strategic culture unequivocally share, is the common conviction about the paramount importance of culture as a unit-level attribute. They can, however, be divided, starting in the 1970s and early 1980s, into several generations or waves of scholarship, three following Johnston (Johnston 1995) or four applying Desch’s expanded scheme (Desch 1998) – a distinction still relevant even in the Indian context. These reflect distinct approaches on the subject matter, especially on the question of how to conceptualize strategic culture as an ideational variable:

c. Research Generations: Strategic Culture as a Variable

⁶⁰ For concept of the ‘re-use of the past’ see: (Hegewald and Mitra 2012) and chapter 1 section 1.3. of this thesis. The Indian sources of strategic culture will be discussed in section 3 of this chapter.

⁶¹ The ‘symbolic and operational set’ (Johnston 1995) can also refer to a distinction between what is called ‘Deutungselite’ (interpretation elite) and ‘Entscheidungselite’ (decision-makers) (Münkler 2015).

Basically, three possibilities are on offer (Johnston 1995, Poore 2003, Baylis 2007); firstly, strategic culture is regarded as an independent variable that integrates a wide variety of factors that directly determine policy outcomes. Secondly, it is devised as an ideational variable limited to the discursive plain that does not affect choice but helps to either uphold or weaken the status-quo of the domestic political system. The third variety agrees on its intervening and ideational character but expects it to exert at least a kind of agenda setting power and applies a clear separation between attitudes and behaviour. The second and the third conceptualization agree that strategic culture is foremost an ideational variable in contrast to material variables like military power, economic capacity or geography (Posen 1984). These three positions, then, make up for the ongoing theoretical controversy starting in the late 1970s with the first wave of scholars propagating it as a strong independent variable.

Thus, so called ‘first generationists’ like Colin Gray (Gray 1981, 1999a and 1999b) and Ken Booth (Booth 1979) regard strategic culture as an independent catch-all variable, which explains strategic choice as such, entailing everything from geography, technology, political as well as organizational culture, ideology, historical strategic practices, national character and even international system structure and material capabilities. Colin Gray, who is one of its most prominent representatives, has remained influential to this day. After his famous rejoinder in 1999 in the so called ‘Johnston-Gray debate’ to Johnston’s critic of the first generation he regained some lost ground and has even found some eclectic followers in India (Rosen 1996, Basrur 2001). The main criticism directed at the first generation is their de facto tautological argumentation. If strategic culture is said to be the outcome of all the above mentioned explanatory variables, then not much conceptual space is left for non-strategic culture explanations of strategic choice. But also, the “mechanical determinism” (Johnston 1995, 36) of the first generation in conceptualizing the relationship between culture and behavior has drawn some criticism. So, the notion of strategic culture, according to Johnston, is “under-determined because strategic culture alone is held to have a strongly deterministic effect on behaviour, and over-determined because the concept of strategic culture is viewed as an amalgam of a wide range of (potentially competing) variables or inputs”. (Johnston 1995, 33).

The second generation, evolving in the mid of the 1980s, conceptualized strategic culture differently. Authors like Bradley Klein (Klein 1988) considered strategic culture to be mainly instrumental. For them strategic culture, in the neo-Gramscian sense, is a tool of cultural hegemony regarding organized state violence whereby state elites aim to establish or preserve their dominant position within this realm. Thomas Berger has proposed a conceptualization of

strategic culture as “negotiated reality” among foreign policy elites. For some scholars, then, policymakers are strategic “users of culture” who “redefine the limits of the possible” in central foreign and security policy debates. Leaders can effectively become “norm entrepreneurs” in leading a state to conceptualize a specific strategic path. There is, however, much contention in the literature on showing whether elites make a conscious decision to act instrumentally or whether their acts can at least be assumed to be semiconscious and culturally dependent (Johnston 1995).

The so called ‘third generation’ which can be regarded as the most influential to date emerged in the mid-1990s after the end of the Cold War and in tune with the increasing influence of constructivism in international relations theory. In his quintessential work “Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History” (1995) that deals with the Seven Military Classics and their alleged impact on the Ming dynasty’s grand strategy, Alistair Iain Johnston set the rigorous parameters for a systematic research design. John Duffield’s work on Germany’s strategic culture is another example of such third-generation strategic culture research (Duffield 1999). Shared features include a clear-cut separation of culture and behaviour and a more narrowly focused dependent variable – that is behaviour – in the respective studies. Drawing from organizational culture research, the third generation has conceptualized strategic culture primarily as an ideational variable (Legro 1995, Kier 1997).

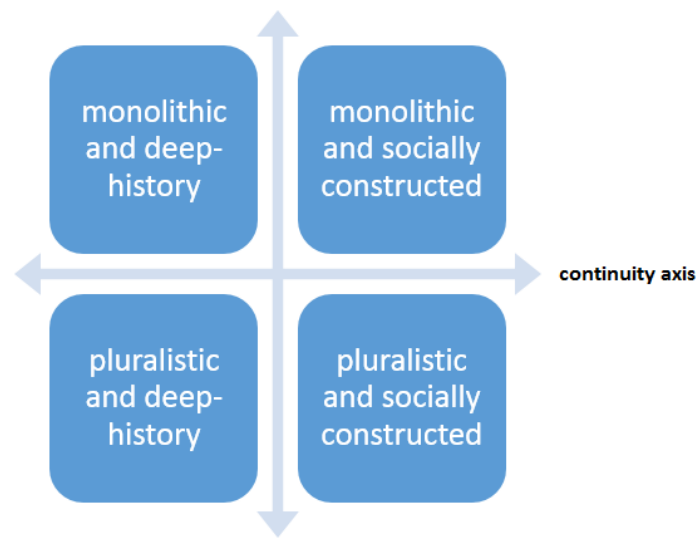
Finally, the ‘fourth’ generation is used as a label for all kinds of approaches (Desch 1998) that evolved after the mid-1990s. This eclectic approach to strategic culture entails combinations of first, second and third generation scholarship, with some scholars advocating Johnston rigor and others mitigating it (Lock 2010). For Bloomfield, the ‘fourth generation’ is the solution to the ‘spin-off’ of the Johnston – Gray debate (Bloomfield 2012) But it also signifies attempts like that of the author to reconnect the approach with a realist agenda. Especially a subculture approach based on Johnston’s modified definition, as the pluralist variation of strategic culture, fits into the neoclassical realist agenda.

d. The Continuity and Coherence Problems

Besides the problem of devising strategic culture as an (independent or intervening) ideational variable one encounters the *problematique* of the so called ‘too much continuity and the too much coherence’ problems afflicting many models of strategic culture. (Bloomfield 2012, 438) The answers to these two problems can be depicted in form of a matrix, which has also structured research positions on India. Basically ‘continuity’ deals with the question of change while ‘coherence’ addresses the issue of essentialism and parsimony. For the too much continuity

problem there are two possible answers; strategic culture is either semi-permanent with deep roots in history or it is amendable for change hence discourse and contemporary circumstances play a conditioning role. Therefore, a differentiation between two types of strategic decision-making can be made namely that between ‘strategic policy’ and ‘strategic behaviour’. ‘Strategic policy’ following Bloomfield (Bloomfield 2012, 439) signifies long-term decision-making. ‘Strategic policy’ is what Snyder regards as the state of semi-permanence and which he equates to ‘culture’ “rather than mere policy”. (Snyder 1977, 9) So here the term ‘strategic policy’ is pointing to the immutable and semi-permanent character of many strategic culture definitions. Whereas the concept of ‘behaviour’ is referring to more short-term strategic choices as they are taken, for example, during a crisis. Establishing such a conceptual distinction provides a better understanding of the problem of change as some approaches tend to state ‘too much continuity’ in strategic policy, implicitly claiming that almost no change is taking place. For them “the weight of historical experiences and historically-rooted strategic preferences tends to constrain responses to changes in the "objective" strategic environment”. (Johnston 1995, 34) Johnston contends that if strategic culture itself changes, it does so slowly, lagging behind changes in "objective" conditions (Johnston 1995, 34). Concerning the sources of change scholars are divided between those who regard strategic culture as rooted in tradition and deep history and those who ascribe change to recent developments and crisis reaction. For the advocates of a long-standing tradition it is an indigenous construct sometimes developed over millennia, where the last relevant modification had been added about two centuries ago. For instance, while not celebrating war, certain normative strands within Indian culture treat it as acceptable when good fights evil. Both major Indian epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, deal with wars, and treat rivalries as natural and normal. Even more explicitly does Kautilya’s *Arthashastra* address the use of force (Liebig 2013). But there have also always been non-violent (*ahimsa*) and pacifistic traditions in India, which considered violence as an impossible instrument of human conflict. Thus, much like the West (Christian tradition) knows ‘just war’ (*bellum iustum*), Machiavellian thought or Kantian peace are all of these normative dimensions of strategic thought evident in Indian writings on statecraft and strategy albeit clad in a different terminology. In contrast to this pluralistic understanding of different deeply-rooted ideological traditions, the view of the proponents of the traditional (first generational) monolithic and essentialist approach, does neither acknowledge the possibility for change nor the existence of counter-cultures challenging their conception of an age-old and all-encompassing strategic culture.

Figure5: The "Too-much Continuity and the too-much Coherence" Problem



Source: Drawn by the author

On the other side are those who reduce the importance of history or continuity in constituting a strategic culture to more recent (shock) events like India's independence or the country's border war with China in 1962, which changed India's strategic outlook substantially (Ali 2010) or to the influence of contemporary thinkers like Prime minister Pandit Nehru, K. Subrahmanyam or General Sundarji. Another source for change for this more near-term perspective is a so called 'strategic cultural dissonance'. Such dissonance is effected when primary features of a distinct strategic tradition come into direct conflict with one another. Wildlavsky argues that "cultures remain vital only if their core principles continue to generate solutions that satisfy human needs and make sense of the world". (Wildlavsky 1985, 69-70) In other words, a country that supports democratization and has an aversion against the use of force faces a dilemma when confronted by a challenge to democracy which necessitates a military response (Duffield 1999, Baylis 2007) or as in the case of India, when it had to reconcile the norms of non-alignment with the that of globalization (Khilnani, Kumar, Mehta, Menon, Nilekani, Raghavn, Saran and Varadarajan 2012).

2.3.2 Major Definitions of Strategic Culture: From Snyder to Johnston and Beyond

After detailing the main conceptual elements of strategic culture, now how has the approach been defined? Starting with prominent first generationists, this section's scope will span from Gray's interpretation of strategic culture to Johnston's landmark definition, before the author's subculture approach is outlined.

Besides Jack Snyder's foundational definition of strategic culture as the "sum total of ideals, conditional emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behaviour that members of the national strategic community have acquired through instruction or imitation and share with each other with regard to national strategy" (Snyder 1977, 21) there is no shortage of other definitions. Also, Ken Booth's "Strategy and Ethnocentrism" (1979) and Colin Gray's "National Style in Strategy" (1981) both representatives of the first wave of analysts, delivered foundational definitions. Colin Gray is still considered to be the main antagonist of Johnston, also in terms of him being the most quoted author in the Indian context. Other than Johnston, Colin Gray on his part deliberately avoids a sharp distinction between the culture and action of political elites as he defines strategic culture as a sum of thoughts, attitudes, traditions and explicitly *behaviours* which adds up to form a coherent all-encompassing strategic culture capable of understanding foreign and security policy (Gray 1999b, 226). Accordingly, for Gray strategic culture mainly deals with "*a security community that is likely to think and behave in ways that are influenced by what it has taught itself about itself and its relevant contexts and that education, to repeat, rests primarily upon the interpretation of history and history's geography*" (Gray 1999b, 225). In contrast to Gray's aim of replacing realism with strategic culture, Booth in his study tried to show that culture can have a distorting effect in analysing and practising strategy (as ideas and behaviour). Therefore, taking culture serious would help to overcome the ethnocentrism inherent in Western theorizing. So, for Ken Booth "*strategic culture is a distinctive and lasting set of beliefs, values and habits regarding the threat and use of force, which have their roots in such fundamental influences as geopolitical setting, history and political culture. These beliefs, values and habits constitute a strategic culture which persists over time, and exerts some influence of the formation and execution of strategy.*" (Booth and Trood 1999, 8) Booth, moreover, argues that strategic culture "*has influence on the form in which one state interacts with the others concerning security measures*" (Booth 1991, 121) and that "it includes national traditions, habits, values, attitudes, ways of behaviour, symbols, approaches and special processes chosen to influence external environment and the ways of solution of problems face to face to threats or to using of force" (Booth 1991, 121). In a comparable approach on Soviet strategic culture David Jones, another contemporary of Gray and Booth, differentiates between various strategic culture elements when he posits that there are three input levels that feed into the strategic culture of a state: a 'macro-environmental level' containing geography, ethno-cultural characteristics and history, a 'societal level' entailing a society's social, economic, as well as political structures and a 'micro level' comprising military institutions and characteristic features of the state's civil-military relations (Jones 1990; Johnston 1995). These

representatives of the first wave of strategic culture scholarship are still seen as offering substantial explanatory power.

For instance, Kerry Longhurst, in a similar fashion, distinguishes three principal features of strategic culture. Firstly, there are the essentials that originate in the formative stages of any strategic culture. These she calls “foundational elements”. These ‘foundational elements’ entail basic beliefs concerning the use of organized violence that make-up a strategic culture its fundamental features that are also regarded as highly resilient to change. These beliefs are semi-permanent and can even become constituting elements of a national identity but contribute first and foremost to the formulation of a “national paradigm” in strategic matters. Secondly, from these foundational elements flow the different expressions of strategic culture, the well-established policies and practices that dynamically relate and employ the essence of the strategic culture’s central assumptions to its strategic environment, eventually channelling and pre-selecting meanings and schemes of action. These components of strategic culture are termed “regulatory practices”. These regulatory practices are considered to change more easily. Halfway between the foundational elements and regulatory practices are, thirdly, the “security policy standpoints”. These viewpoints represent the broadly acknowledged understandings as to how central values are to be spread through policy channels, in order to structure the preferences for the actors’ decisions (Longhurst 2000; Margaras 2009).

Like the first generation, so has the second (“instrumentalization”) (Klein 1988) and third (“organizational culture”) (Kier 1997) generation remained influential and increasingly strategic culture is more and more understood as a preference generator that shapes ideas as well as behaviour. For example, Stephen Peter Rosen, as an early Johnston disciple, characterizes strategic culture as the “beliefs and assumptions that frame...decisions to go to war, preferences for offensive, expansionist or defensive modes of warfare, and levels of wartime casualties that would be acceptable”. (Rosen 1996) Similarly, Lantis and Howlett, who are also representatives of the third generation use a slightly modified definition from Mahnken (Mahnken 2008, 4), when they contend that: “[*strategic culture is an ensemble of*] *shared beliefs, assumptions, and modes of behavior, derived from common experiences and accepted narratives (both oral and written), that shape collective identity and relationships to other groups, and which determine appropriate ends and means for achieving security objectives.*” (Lantis and Howlett 2007, 3) There are many more notable scholars like Carnes Lord, Peter Katzenstein, Alan Macmillan, Elizabeth Kier and Jeffrey Legro to name but a few, who have provided gradually different

definitions, which, as will be seen, have exerted some influence even on the Indian debate (Ali 2010; Liebig 2013).

But the most widespread definition, particularly in the Indian context, comes from the Maestro himself Alistair Iain Johnston. In his quintessential work “Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History” he defines strategic culture as “*an integrated system of symbols (i.e. argumentation structures, languages, analogies, metaphors, etc.) that acts to establish pervasive and long lasting grand strategic preferences by formulating concepts of the role and efficacy of military force in interstate political affairs, and by clothing these conceptions with such aura of factuality that the strategic preferences seem uniquely realistic and efficacious [...] A strategic culture exists and persists if preference rankings are consistent across objects of analysis from deeply historical, formative periods up to the period of examination*” (Johnston 1995, 36 and 38). Furthermore, for Johnston strategic culture is “an ideational milieu that limits behavioural choices” from which “one could derive specific predictions about strategic choice” (Johnston 1995, 38) The issue that bothers Johnston the most is the relationship between strategic culture and behavioural choices. He contends that “how strategic culture affects the specific choice is an extremely complex problem.” (Johnston 1995, 46) He states that it should first of all be considered as an ideational milieu that limits behavioural choices. Hence, for him, the first step in strategic cultural research is to show that it limits in some way the options considered. Methodologically, one has to “trace strategic culture from its sources, through the socialization process, to the values and assumptions held by particular key decision-makers. This requires developing observable indicators for the presence of strategic culture so as to trace them through these first two stages”. (Johnston 1995, 115)

Strategic culture as a “system of symbols” encompasses two parts:

“the first consists of basic assumptions firstly about the role of war in international relations (that means: is war aberrant or normal?), secondly about the nature of the adversary and the threat posed (is it zero-sum or variable-sum?) and finally about the efficacy of the use of force (about the ability to control outcomes and to eliminate threats, and the conditions under which applied force is useful)”. (Johnston, 1995, 39)

Altogether these encompass the central paradigm of a strategic culture and as Johnston contends the answers to the issues raised come from historical sources, not from the contemporary milieu (Johnston 1995, 32).

The second part of Johnston's definition entails "assumptions at a more operational level about what strategic options are the most efficacious for dealing with the threat environment, as defined by answers to the first three questions. These lower-level assumptions should flow logically from the central paradigm. It is at this level of preferences over actions where strategic culture begins to affect behavioral choices directly", (Johnston 1995, 33) he claims. Hence, the empirical referent of a strategic culture is a "limited, ranked set of grand-strategic preferences that is consistent across the objects of analysis (e.g., textual sources for potential answers to the central paradigm) and persistent across time. This ranking is not, therefore, necessarily responsive to changes in non-cultural variables such as technology, threat, or organization" (Johnston 1995, 33). These grand strategic preferences can then be applied to each of the subcultures. This is, however, not part of the thesis aims.

2.3.3 Definition of a Neoclassical Realist Strategic Subculture Approach

Now in this section a strategic subculture approach based on a revised definition of Johnston's is detailed. This definition, then, provides a basic tool that can be applied on each potential grand strategic tradition in the context of the thesis 'subculture-cleavage model'. With neoclassical realism, the author shares the epiphenomenal interpretation of strategic culture in terms of its supplementary character as an intervening variable⁶², but theorizes the internal set-up in accordance with a post-structuralist/constructivist account. Its inherent plurality in terms of subcultures is reflected by its discursive nature that can be best grasped by an interpretivist methodology.

Most existing theories are conceptualized too coherently: because they assume that a state's strategic culture incorporates no contradictory strands. Or they argue that the same range of schools or subcultures is present in every other country and only the dominant tradition is seen as relevant to be studied. Thus, such models usually fall short to adequately explain how observed deviations could arise. Bloomfield, who is a rare exception in this regard, generally contends that such models "tend to be stated in a manner which is too coherent, meaning they can't account for occasional strategic-behavioural inconsistencies, and/or they suggest too much continuity and cannot thereby adequately account for changes in strategic policy over time." As an alternative, a model is devised, which deals with a singular strategic culture as comprising a variety of co-existing strategic sub-cultures. These sub-cultures offer different interpretation of the country's international context – "who a state's 'friends' and 'foes' are – which in turn

⁶² For a definition of strategic subcultures as intervening ideational variables see: Chapter 1, Section 6.

affects how that state interprets the material variables – geography, relative power, technological change, etc. –” (Bloomfield 2012, 438). According to Bloomfield:

“a strategic cultural model featuring competing subcultures enables a compromise position to be extracted from the Johnston–Gray debate. From Gray we take the notion that culture provides context; that it guides and shapes interpretation: we just have to accept that culture is a disaggregated thing with contradictory elements rather than a monolithic whole.” (Bloomfield 2012, 456)

With this approach, the delimitation of when the strategic environment of a state changes or state-identity is transformed, an outranked subculture may replace the hitherto hegemonic one⁶³ as it adopted to the shifted strategic environment or to the changed ‘image’ the state has of itself better. (Bloomfield 2012, 456) In contrast to a monolithic understanding of strategic culture, which normally would entail the whole of India’s strategic community such a pluralistic approach of different sub-cultures, which exist alongside a dominant strand or core, gains the quality of an intervening variable. Connected to the issue of subcultures is the question of instrumentality which Johnston has tried to grasp by introducing a so called ‘operational set’ (which stands for the actual decision making behind closed doors and which is said to be basically realist in nature (Johnston 1995)) and a ‘symbolic set’ which is the discourse constituting the whole diversity of subcultures. All of these subcultures are intertwined with India’s cultural space borrowing from the same pool of language, myth and metaphor, be it in form of a reference to Lord Krishna or in being familiar with Anglo-American modes of thinking. Accordingly, the respective re-use is only guided by ideological preferences and the aim to legitimate certain policies. Closely related to this kind of set-up of India’s strategic culture are issues such as nation-building and identity politics leading to questions like: What kind of India should be defended? Against which threats should India brace itself? What part should violence play in India’s external relations and finally what ideological strands are actually vying for dominance in this conflict of meaning? Hence an approach resting on the heuristic model of discursive plurality helps to unravel the complexity by offering a filter with which statements and policy aims can be categorized without necessarily addressing the hegemonic relations between them. In the case of India such ideological coalitions have positioned themselves more visibly around foreign and security policy issues especially after 1991 as the changed international structure

⁶³ However, despite the constant struggle between subcultures there can be a ‘strategic core’, that is a set of shared premises like the competitiveness of the state system or the agreement on the *raison d’être* of the state. See, for example: Stephen Cohen (2001) and Ollapally and Rajagopalan (2011) on India’s strategic core.

allowed renewed room to manoeuvre. These normative traditions can have roots in the mass public and national culture, however, due to their still marginal relevance for electoral politics, here, subcultures are limited to what is called an interpretation elite⁶⁴.

In the context of this study, then, strategic culture as an analytical category is principally understood in terms of a discursive framework consisting of various strategic subcultures (Bloomfield 2012), which represent the ‘symbolic set’ that is the ideological dimension (Johnston 1995, 40) of India’s strategic debates. To conceptualize these subcultures Alistair Iain Johnston’s approach has been modified (Johnston 1995) in terms of an expansion of the basic assumptions comprising the central strategic paradigm (CSP) as well as by the multiplication of these central strategic paradigms to allow for various subcultures. For Johnston “strategic culture is an integrated “system of symbols (e.g., argumentation structures, languages, analogies, metaphors) which acts to establish pervasive and long lasting strategic preferences by formulating concepts of the role and efficacy of military force in interstate political affairs, and by clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the strategic preferences seem uniquely realistic and efficacious.” (Johnston 1995, 46) This definition is considered to be valid for each strategic subculture as well. Additionally, the subcultures CSPs now encompass four instead of Johnston’s three foundational assumptions; The modified dimensions are the following; the first confronts the role of war and conflict in human affairs (whether it is inevitable or an aberration), the second assumption deals with the nature of the adversary and the threat it poses (zero-sum or variable sum), the third considers the status of territoriality (sacred or secular, that can be understood both as Westphalian or even post-Westphalian ascribing less value to the state’s territorial space or ‘geo-body’ (Ferguson and Mansbach 2003) and the fourth assumption addresses the significance of history for strategic choices. Similarly, the CSP is an instrument or lens of interpretation, which works as an ideological filter thereby ‘reducing’ uncertainty about India’s strategic setting. The second constitutive part of any strategic subculture, which is, as mentioned earlier, not the thesis’s concern, consists of the so called grand strategic preferences (GSP) comprising assumptions on a more operational level. This operational or policy guiding level addresses which kind of strategic options are to be pursued and hence presents answers to the four basic dimensions framed by the CSP. Johnston writes “these lower level assumptions should flow logically from the central paradigm.” (Johnston 1995, 47) Despite the different preferences all subcultures share what can be defined as the ‘strategic core’ of India’s reasoning

⁶⁴ See for a definition of the concept: ‘interpretation elite’, in the actual “Bearers of India’s Strategic Culture Debate – The Interpretation Elite” in Chapter 1 section 4.4.

on national security (even though the term for non-realists has a pejorative connotation). A strategic core, the author argues, signifies an acceptance of the basic notion of a sovereign India (leaving aside the conflicting ideas about what India is and how it should ideally be constituted) that should at least survive in order to provide well-being for its population and to protect (again the means are contested) its territory and autonomy. (Bajpai 2002, 251, Mehta 2009a, Cohen 2010)

2.4 India's Strategic Culture Debate – the Empirical Foundation

This section is dedicated to India's strategic culture debate. Firstly, obstacles are detailed, that confront scholarship studying Indian strategic culture. Secondly, the various sources that feed into strategic culture are outlined and India's peculiarities as a civilizational state and post-colonial society and their impact on grand strategy formulation are discussed. Besides the deep roots of Indian strategic culture with its many layers, also the different discursive loci of post-independence India's strategic traditions are traced. Like the debate on India's nuclear posture or on the nation's strategic exceptionalism in terms of an alleged deviation from 'realism'. Finally, the bearers of these debates, that is India's interpretation elite or strategic establishment is sketched, before the two monolithic strands of the country's strategic culture debate are featured. These monolithic discourse positions share an essentialist understanding of culture and base their assumptions on the same notion of an all-encompassing independent variable (Tanham 1992, Jones 2006). For George Tanham India lacks a strategic culture due to Hindu culture (based on a first generation understanding of strategic culture) "Westerners have different takes on global politics and strategy while Indians are determined by their peaceful effeminate culture" (Tanham 1992), (strategic culture = 0 (zero)). The reply of his initial critics stated that India has a unique strategic culture, because of Hindu culture, which offers a comprehensive explanation of Indian state behavior (strategic culture = 1). The third strand, the so called pluralist strand of the debate, basically represents a rejection of the two monolithic (too coherent) essentialist and also orientalist stances. Shared features include a more clear-cut separation of culture and behaviour and a more narrowly focused dependent variable that is behaviour in the respective studies. Examples for analysts working on India in a similar manner include Rosen (1996), Singh (1999), Basrur (2001) and Bajpai (2003). The various contributions to this line of argument have been qualitatively analyzed and a distinct pattern has been deduced. This pattern is, then, discussed in the final section of the chapter.

2.4.1 Some Obstacles to the Research of Indian Strategic Thought

However, some methodological obstacles remain for the research of Indian strategic thought. Determining adequate sources and artefacts (to which members of the strategic community in their majority are acquainted to) and tracing strategic traditions through the centuries is quite a difficult task. There are, for example, no established canons of texts derived from India's history comparable to Chinese ones on strategy and statecraft (Johnston 1995, Bajpai 2003)⁶⁵. Even more importantly, the issue of transferability, that is, the adaptation of 'Western' terminology to a vernacular context, poses some difficulties. Any strategic culture is a hybrid in terms of its constituting elements. In India, the intermingling of different idiosyncrasies is particularly pronounced. Hence issues like the deliberate re-use of the past in discourses on nation-building and identity politics (for example the emphasis given on Hindu culture's continuity), strongly impact grand strategy formulation (Liebig 2014b). But also, the contentions if thereby something uniquely Indian is created or recovered, like 'Kautilyan Realism' – a specifically Indian version of the allegedly universal concept of realism represent attempts to substitute Western terminology considered to be imprecise (Liebig 2013). In addition to the above-mentioned diversity of a possible 'canon of strategic thought' a major obstacle in systematically studying these texts is the range of languages used entailing ancient Sanskrit, contemporary South Asian idioms and English. Again, one has to turn to Johnston as methodological advice is hard to find in the observed literature. Bajpai explicitly questions the feasibility of a thorough analysis of canonical texts. (Bajpai 2003, 247) So what kind of methods according to Johnston should be used to grasp the individual elements making up India's strategic culture? The approach he proposes is fairly eclectic. Multiple methods are used to triangulate the central meanings in the texts ascertaining if they are consistent on all levels of meaning. (Johnston 1995, 49) This at least is the recommended proceeding of Johnston, who goes on to suggest using two methods specifically namely cognitive mapping and symbol analysis. (Johnston 1995) These coding procedures are used to discern causal relationships in central concepts found in the selected texts. This is however not the methodological strategy pursued in this study, which instead follows a pragmatic discourse analysis following Kuckartz (2014).

2.4.2 *The Sources of India's Strategic Culture*

⁶⁵ There are many exceptions, however, like *Kautilya's Arthashastra*, the classic play *Mudrarakshasa* or the fable collection of *Panchatantra*, and *Kamandaka's Nitisara* and later Mughal and Persian texts on statecraft (like Barani's or Nizam al Mulk Tusi's work). A major difference to the Chinese case, however, is the lack of Sanskrit knowledge among Indian intellectuals – meaning that most of them 'know', for example, their Canakya (Kautilya) in English (Liebig 2013).

But where have these ideas on grand strategy been systematically formulated? In this respect India seems (again) to be a case apart because unlike other great powers it has no tradition of well-articulated whitepapers and doctrines regarding its grand strategy that could explicitly provide the basis for policy debate and long term strategic reasoning (Chatterjee-Miller 2012). The notorious ‘*ad-hocism*’ of the highly personalized style of India’s small foreign and security policy apparatus with its preponderance of the Prime Minister and his office have, as Mitra and Schöttli argue, resulted in a deliberate policy of ‘strategic ambiguity’⁶⁶ (Mitra and Schöttli 2007). However, that does not preclude the existence of coherent strategic worldviews like in any other country of comparable size and importance.

Especially the timeframe under scrutiny for this project, that is *the period between 1991 (the start of economic liberalization) and 2014 (the election victory of Narendra Modi’s BJP and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA))* saw a rapid increase in the literary production on strategic thinking providing the backbone of intellectual contention. Empirically, then, these competing idiosyncratic ‘*orders of battle*’ become most tangible in, what the author calls the academic meta-debate that broadly deals with various aspects of Indian grand strategy. This scholarly discussion is characterized by its intermingling of four separate disputes of variable scope, which have expressed and debated views about India’s role in the world and interpret some of its strategic choices and responses (Nau and Ollapally 2012, Bajpai and Pant 2013a).

Kanti Bajpai argues that public as well as scholarly interest has increased during the last two decades and that in general “the volume of writings on these issues is enormous. Newspaper and magazine commentary is probably the largest single source on Indian thinking. In addition, the strategic community has produced a corpus of scholarly writings on security. A number of journals publish regularly on security matters. Finally, there are the texts of Indian prime ministers and other leaders who have over the years written and spoken publicly on security policy.” (Bajpai, 2003, 246) So, when leaving some critical assessments (Tanham 1992, Subrahmanyam 2005, Sumit Ganguly 2014, David Malone 2015), which in varying intensity claim the non-existence or irrelevance of indigenous ideas aside, the author was intrigued by the rich and varied traditions of strategic thought, some of them deeply entrenched in India’s cultural legacy.

⁶⁶ The concept of ‘strategic ambiguity’, also known as ‘deliberate ambiguity’ refers to a state’s instrumental practice of keeping certain aspects of its foreign and security policy ambiguous, often in the context of weapons of mass destruction (for example, ‘nuclear ambiguity’). Such an approach might be useful when the state is pursuing contrary policy aims or is trying to avoid the risks of a deterrence strategy. Such a strategic posture, however, may cause misperceptions of the state’s intentions leading to potential reactions by other states, which are harmful to the interests of the ‘ambiguous’ state. See: for example: Mitra and Schöttli (2007).

(Pant 2010) Furthermore these ideational strands, which are especially characterized by competing conceptualizations of indigenous modernity, have to various degrees deliberately re-used elements from the country’s diverse cultural space (Das 2010b, Hegewald and Mitra 2012, Mitra and Liebig 2016). Hence Indian strategic thought can borrow from several layers of influential politico-cultural phenomena that have formed the collective memory of the nation and which have produced traditions with clearly distinguishable idiosyncrasies.

Figure6: Layers of India's Strategic Culture Idiom



Source: Drawn by the author

One such layer and a decisive peculiarity of India, is the widespread self-perception of being not only a ‘ordinary’ nation-state in the European tradition but a ‘civilizational-state’. According to this concept, – ‘the state as a cultural entity’ (Das 2010b) – the Indian state’s territory encompasses the whole of ‘Hindu civilization’ and is in consequence shaped by this very culture despite its proclaimed secularist orientation (Cohen 2001, Paranjpe 2013, Jones 2006). Furthermore, the Indian state since 1947 is also a ‘post-imperial state’, with reference to the rich legacies of the Maurya and Gupta empires and other great regional Hindu kingdoms (Rothermund and Kulke 2004, Chatterjee-Miller 2013) as well as that of the Moghul empire and other minor entities of the Islamic conquest since the 8th century AD (like the Bahmanids and other Deccan sultanates) and most importantly due to India being the principal successor state of the *British Raj* with its distinct geo-strategic perspective⁶⁷.

⁶⁷ The British colonial rule 1757 Plassey to 1858 Great Mutiny first war of independence (Kulke and Rothermund 1998) steel frame of the Raj Lord Curzon perspective strategic unity of the subcontinent (Pardesi 2005) ‘Post-Imperial Ideology’ of Chatterjee-Miller (2013) speaks of victimization.

But due to centuries of British rule this great civilization is also a *post-colonial society*. So the British colonial state and the reaction to it, in terms of the national freedom movement, represent yet another layer of politico-strategic reference. As the country has on the one hand successfully emancipated itself from the trauma of colonial rule it has on the other hand remained heavily influenced by Western modernity's precepts. Its identity formation seems therefore to oscillate between references to the full 'recovery of the self' (Nandy 1983), even in terms of a restoration of its great pre-modern imperial pasts and a thorough adoption of Western standards regarding the contemporary state, politics or development to name but a few of the affected concepts. Besides the British bequeathment and the ideological legacy of the Indian National Congress (INC), the latest ideational quarry of Indian strategic thinking is represented by the willing absorption of US-inspired modes of conducting social sciences in general and IR and strategic studies in particular. (Nayar 2006, Mehta 2009a, Narang and Staniland 2012) As a consequence the common denominator in any attempt to forge a national identity are distinct hybridizations, which mix the modern or Western with the vernacular thereby transcending the conventional differentiation between the modern and the pre-modern. (Mitra 2009, Mitra and Liebig 2016) And this struggle to build an Indian nation becomes very much visible in the sphere of strategic policy-making and evaluation, where one can, eventually, differentiate between roughly five strata of cultural-historical reference; Firstly, the ancient and medieval 'Hindu' and 'Buddhist'⁶⁸, secondly the controversial and sometimes out-rightly rejected period of Muslim dominance, thirdly the heritage of British colonial rule, fourthly the great tradition of Indian nationalism since the 19th century and finally the ideational impact of both a hegemonic United States of America as well as the ideology of an anglicized globalization (Mansbach and Ferguson 2003). Again, these different sources have provided the ingredients for hybridizations and have found expression in the various grand strategic epistemic communities.

Due to India's long history and its continuity in terms of 'cohesion through plurality'⁶⁹ (Liebig 2014a) the list of ingredients is impressive. Actually, one can distinguish at least four historical-cultural strands impacting strategic culture. Firstly, the Hindu literary canon, especially the '*smritis*' (Gautam 2013) encompassing the great epics and the Arthashastra. The rich history

⁶⁸ From the Vedic period (contested hypothesis of an Aryan invasion around 1500 BC to the 11th century AD (Indian middle ages) to the predominance of Muslim rulers after the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate, see, for example: Romila Thapar (1996) or Kulke and Rothermund (1998).

⁶⁹ The concept of 'cohesion through plurality', according to Mitra and Liebig (2016), refers to its inclusive pluralism that "gives Indian culture exceptional elasticity with respect to ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity. More generally, differences and contradictions tend to be accepted – 'as-well-as' instead of 'either-or' – and eventually brought into some sort of synthesis instead of insisting on unilateral solutions" (Mitra and Liebig 2016, 171).

and tradition of Islamic statecraft (Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Empire) have so far not enjoyed a comparable appreciation and has, in tune with the concept of the recovery of the self, been side-lined (Nandy 1983, Ali 2010, Vivekanandan 2014). Secondly, the British legacy plays an important role in Indian reasoning about strategic affairs. Lord Curzon's strategic outlook had created a lasting gap between the geo-strategic perception of the British Raj or '*Akant Bharat*', the undivided land, and the reduced capabilities resulting from partition (Mohan 2003). Thirdly, the national movement has also left an imprint on Indian strategic thought, partly introducing and revoking the idealist school of thought in foreign and security policy and even more importantly the idea of secular modernity permeating Indian society and polity, which is said to go back to the Buddha or at least to the Emperor Ashoka (Kim 2007). Additionally, it asserted a very accommodating approach to the past, by very aptly hybridizing concepts and institutions from various sources. Finally, the last twenty years saw American ideas (International Relations vocabulary) and institutional set ups ('think tanks') increasingly shape India's conduct of its strategic discourse (Mohan 2003).

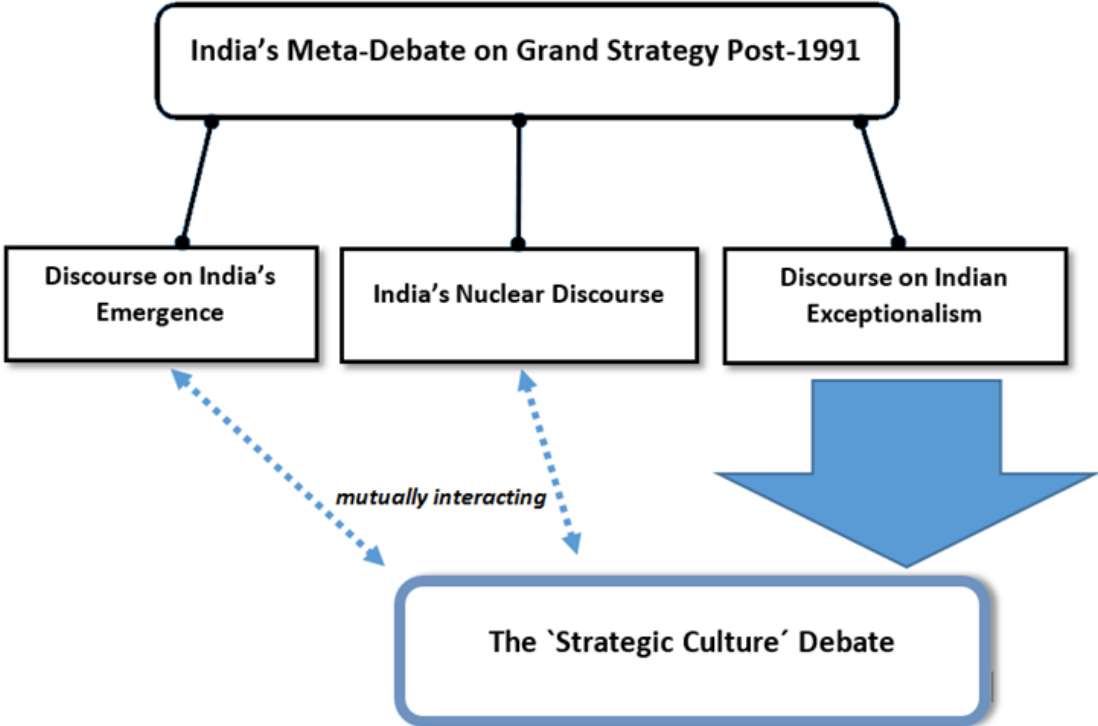
As strategic culture is often regarded as a product of unique lessons that are internalized by successive generations of decision-makers its hybrid nature provides plenty of sources like the collective memory of its subcultures, comprising myths, narratives, and symbols and the interpretation of 'physical' sources like geography. This occurs primarily through education and socialization in classic texts that embody a (national) political-military literary tradition (Johnston 1995, 48). In the Indian case these are the great epics like the Mahabharata, which is considered to be the most widespread and relevant followed by the Ramayana and the Arthashastra. (Datta-Ray 2014) Within the Mahabharata especially the Bhagavad-Gita and the '*Bhimsa sermon*' are relevant artefacts of inquiry. Both major Indian epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, are dealing with wars, and treat rivalries as natural and normal and even more explicitly does *Kautilya's Arthashastra* address the use of force as an accepted means of politics. For instance, while not celebrating war Indian culture regards it as tolerable when good fights evil (Menon 2012) or the *dharma* has to be restored (Vivekanandan 2014). Much like the West knows just war, Machiavellian thought or Kantian peace, are these very same dimensions of strategic thought evident in Indian writings on statecraft. (Bajpai 2003; Liebig 2013) But also the classic play *Mudrarakshasa* or the fable collection of *Panchatantra*, and *Kamandaka's Nitisara* and later Mughal and Persian texts on statecraft (like Barani's or Nizam al Mulk Tusi's work) as well as British documents on strategy (Viceroy Curzon) and contemporary IR Theory should be analyzed to draw upon similar thought figures in order to see if congruence in preference rankings can be established (Johnston 1995, Gautam 2013). All of these texts appeared

over a period of about 1500 years of varied intellectual, social and strategic contexts which could be comparable to the corpus of the Seven Military Classics in China, but nonetheless lack the coherence of the Chinese canon, as Bajpai has argued (Bajpai 2003) – therefore they are more comparable to the diverse Western literature on strategy.

2.4.3 The Meta-Debate on India’s Grand Strategy

Now, however, where have the different schools of thought been categorized? First of all, besides domestic manifestations all of the debates (constituting India’s meta-debate on grand strategy) have an additional international dimension that is also concerned with the consequences of and possible impediments to India’s strategic behaviour. Hence both Indian as well as international researchers have, in order to understand the ideas that try to influence or to formulate grand strategy, categorized the competing traditions in the different sub-fields of this meta-debate, however only within the so called ‘strategic culture’ debate has the conceptualization of ideational plurality reached its maximum expression. Nonetheless though, the author argues, has the corpus of scholarly literature on strategic culture been mutually influenced by the three other discursive (scholarly but also essayistic and journalistic) manifestations concerning India’s national security and grand strategy.

Figure7: Discursive Loci of Indian Strategic Worldviews



Source: Drawn by the author

2.4.3.1 *The Discourse on the Emergence of a Great Power – India Rising:*

The first to mention and chronologically the most recent has been the controversy surrounding India's rise post-1991. The talk about India's emergence started almost immediately after the end of the Cold War with India's economic recovery from a balance of payments crisis and got into full swing after the nuclear explosions in 1998 and the successful implementation of further economic reforms⁷⁰. Its main normative concern has been how (means and ends) and if (obstacles) the eventual rise of India to major power status is going to be achieved. This analytical discussion after the end of bipolarity implicitly and explicitly stressed, as a side effect, the relevance of knowing how Indians are thinking about strategy in an attempt to better assess the country's trajectory. (Karnad 2008, Basrur 2012) Following this logic, the enquiry, then, should comprise the tracing of alternative worldviews which might one day either determine future policy or force the current ideational hegemony, namely the so called 'Nehruvian consensus' to compromise. Especially analysts and public intellectuals, like Pratap Bhanu Mehta, Sanjay Baru, Kiran Pasricha, Raja C. Mohan, or Bharat Karnad working in or in close connection to the 'think tank industry' or more broadly in applied strategic studies emphasized the importance of distinguishing between various Indian perspectives (mostly neo-liberal institutionalism and offensive realism) in order to get a more nuanced prognosis (Bhatnagar 2015, Karnad 2015). One can even speak of a hype surrounding India's changing status, for example, according to the Lexis-Nexis academic database newspaper headlines after 2001 that include a combination of "India AND rise", show more than a thousand hits (March 2014). If such a database inquiry is extended to encompass all English language news sources, the number of related hits increases even further. (Lexis-Nexis, Chatterjee-Miller 2014, 2) Two prominent examples of influential international scholars writing about a rising India's strategic worldviews have been Stephen P. Cohen (Cohen 2001) and Sandy Gordon (Gordon 2013). Despite India's controversial record and decades of neglect the international observers virtually seemed to wait for the new 'shooting star', that could one day compete with China (Gilboy and Heginbotham 2012). As a consequence, especially the international discussion mostly perceived India's rise as benign and as not endangering the status-quo, that is the US-led liberal world order. In the case of the debate on India's rise the international academics (Indians and non-Indians) ignited both the till then nascent self-reflection in India (enhancing ideational plurality) and created a stronger concern for Indian national security and strategic planning, with a spillover and later

⁷⁰ For GDP growth rates between the 1990s till the mid-2010s see World Bank: "India Country Overview 2014" and India's GDP growth rate (annually): <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG> (retrieved 09/08/2016).

on an extensive mutual exchange between the broader domestic debate as well as the Indian and global academic debate (Kumar 2010, Chatterjee 2014, Narang and Staniland 2012, Basrur 2012).

2.4.3.2 The Debate on India's Nuclear Strategy:

Closely connected to the larger stream of scholarly writing on India's emergence is the second discourse, that also had implications for the conceptualization of Indian grand strategic plurality. One could even argue that the discourse on India's 'nuclearization' is just another variety of the former discussion of India's rise (as nuclear weapons are widely seen as an attribute of great power status), however this debate had a clear public profile of its own. The, for Indian standards, quite vociferous and broad controversy was centred on the question whether the country should strive for the acquisition and testing of a nuclear weapons capability. The argument as such can be divided in roughly two phases; one before and one after the nuclear tests in May 1998. In the first period between 1993⁷¹ - and May 1998⁷² (Priyanjali Malik 2010) the question was whether India should become an overt nuclear weapons state and end the phase of 'nuclear ambiguity' since the 'peaceful nuclear explosion' conducted in 1974. While the time after Pokhran-II was marked by the less heated discussion on India's not yet devised nuclear doctrine (a draft doctrine in 1999 with no-first-use policy and in 2003 a Strategic Forces Command (SFC) was institutionalized and the India Nuclear Doctrine issued (Perkovich 1999, Tellis 2001)) and if a fully operational nuclear-triad should be developed instead of employing just the already available 'credible minimum deterrence' capability. The contestation was accompanied by analysts explaining the reasons for India's nuclear build-up in 1998 and its somewhat reluctant expansion from a 'symbolic weapon' to an instrument of hard power thereafter. Some of them like Priyanjali Malik identified the various positions competing from the early 1990s

⁷¹ Still in 1988, at the third Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD III), Rajiv Gandhi elaborated on a "world free of nuclear weapons" and put forth the so-called Rajiv Gandhi Action Plan aiming at a "binding commitment by all nations to eliminate nuclear weapons in stages, by the year 2010." in: CBRN South Asia Brief no. 12 March 2009 "India & Nuclear Disarmament. Chasing a Dream" by Rekha Chakravarthi, Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), New Delhi.

⁷² The parties to the Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT) of 1963, as part of the international architecture to limit nuclear weapons, like the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) of 1968, held an amendment conference after the end of the Soviet Union in 1991 to debate a proposal to transform the existing treaty into a tool that could help ban all nuclear-weapon tests. The UN General Assembly's approval, negotiations for a comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT) began in 1993, which were held in the Conference on Disarmament. On 10 September 1996, the CTBT was accepted by a large majority of more than two-thirds of the General Assembly's member states thereby further increasing the pressure on India to decide upon its nuclear option, before facing massive condemnation and severe sanctions after the treaty might actually be ratified by a majority of the United Nations member states. "Resolution adopted by the general assembly:50/245. Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty". United Nations. 17 September 1996.

on to define the aims and rationale behind India's nuclear policy ('hawks', 'doves' and 'owls'). (Frey 2006, Malik 2010) In the same vein did analysts like Rajesh Basrur in his work on nuclear weapons and India's strategic culture (Basrur 2001), Brahma Chellaney's contribution on the deterrence posture (Chellaney 1999) Bharat Karnad's "India's Nuclear Policy" of 2008, Šumit Ganguly's "India's Pathway to Pokhran II" (Ganguly 1999) and many others address the strategic ideas and perceptions that were at the heart of India's nuclear discourse, mostly referring to either Hindu-national or some sort of great power consensus in terms of realist ideas as the drivers for weaponization.

2.4.3.3 The Discourse on Indian 'Strategic Exceptionalism':

Thirdly, the oldest and maybe richest debate can be subsumed under the label of 'Indian exceptionalism', which signifies a deviation from the precepts of realist theory and reflects an indeed longstanding controversy among IR scholars working on India's behaviour in the state system since the days of Prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru. A controversy which for a long time had almost exclusively shaped India's perception in the field as mainstream international-relations theories generally tended to regard post-independence India's strategic behaviour as contradictory and incoherent (Mitra 2009). As a consequence, many analysts have attempted to devise explanations of the deviating behaviour of the country. Essentially contemporary India has been regarded, to state it mildly, as a peculiar kind of great power; a large country that is not behaving in the way a rising power should. (Cohen 2001, Pant 2011) Repeatedly sceptics contended that India suffers from a "lack of strategic vision" in terms of grand strategy. Another even more rigorous group among these analysts posited that in consequence it would even lack a tradition of strategic thought completely (Tanham 1992, Subramanyam 2005). Secondly, besides the charge of a complete lack of strategic thinking, India is seen as having "weak strategic institutions" (Burgess 2009), which have prevented the development of a comprehensive national security strategy in other words India is lacking the ideational as well as institutional capacity for long term planning. *Pars pro toto* Chatterjee-Miller writes: "India's inability to develop top-down, long-term strategies, means that it cannot systematically consider the implications of its growing power. So long as this remains the case, the country will not play the role in global affairs that many expect." (Chatterjee-Miller 2013, 18) Thirdly, there is a predominance of domestic politics leading to so called 'ad-hocism' (Datta-Ray, 2015) and reactive policy-making in the realm of foreign policy. Fourthly, analysts argue that for a developing country India's unusual record of civil-military relations, with its clear and well established civilian claim to leadership "has significantly reduced the effectiveness with which India can wield its military

as an instrument of national power” (Pant 2011, 18). Finally, India would exhibit a strong moralist stance towards international security. Hence rhetoric as well as actual policy would expose the influence of an internationalist and idealist ideology, synonymous with the legacy of India’s first Prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru (Karnad 2015). A perceived preference for system-level goals contrary to the pursuit of ‘national interests’, like global disarmament and ‘*Panchash-eela*’, the centrepiece of the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) is claimed to be the major defining characteristic of India’s approach to international politics. (Malone 2014) Basically, the responsibility for India’s perceived deficits is mainly directed at ‘Nehruvianism’ and the general legacy of the independence movement.

In explaining this perceived aberration research can roughly be divided among two traditions both primarily locating explications on the unit-level (Rathbun 2008a); firstly, neoliberal approaches emphasizing India’s institutional and economic weaknesses (Behera 2007) as well as realist explanations, which already since the Sino-Indian war of 1962 pointed to the flawed, that is allegedly idealistic mind-set of the Indian leadership. (Maxwell 1971) Secondly the debate, due to the early consideration of internationalist and moralist ideology among Indian leaders, became easily susceptible to the constructivist upsurge in IR theory during the 1990s that gave greater explanatory power to identity and ideas (Goldstein and Keohane 1993). But no matter which approach they preferred, most researchers found India somehow to be the manifestation of ‘an idealist inflection from the realist norm’ (Engelmeier 2009). There are, hence, three positions that can be determined: Firstly, some scholars attributed this perceived anomaly to ‘applied idealism’ or to an ‘idealist inflection’ (Engelmeier 2009). Its roots may also to be found in a deep-seated consensus among India’s policymakers as well as intellectuals that the country has a kind of natural ‘entitlement’ to the status of a great power due to its ancient and sophisticated civilization. These pundits argue that, if India should lack material power it more than compensates this constraint with its allegedly historically-proven moral and ethical superiority (Narlikar and Narlikar 2014). Secondly, another common position sees the combination of idealism and realism⁷³ as the main feature of India’s strategic outlook. (Chacko 2013) This hybrid between an idealist and a realist position has been described as a way to, on the one hand, engage the necessities of identity politics (the idealist heritage of the national movement) and on the other to engender the conditions for development and autonomy. (Paranjpe 2013) Observers have denoted this balancing act as ‘deliberate ambiguity’ (Mitra 2009, Paranjpe

⁷³ Sometimes a special kind of Indian realism is diagnosed with a reference to Kautilya’s work, the Arthashastra (Mehta 2009a, Liebig 2013).

2013) in order to reconcile these divergent goals with utmost flexibility. Raymond Aron takes a geo-political position on the same problem, he perceives Nehruvian foreign policy to be idealist on the global level but operating within the logic of realism at the regional level that is South Asia. (Aron 1973, Mehta 2009a, Pant Handbook) Another synthetic explanation of India's 'exceptionalism', which is attracting a growing number of followers has been the introduction of Stephen Krasner's concept of 'modified structuralism'⁷⁴ (Krasner 1982 and 2001). Finally, one of the most prominent examples of a 'third' way (Chacko 2013) and in line with the search for a distinctly Indian version of the allegedly universal concept of realism has been the attempt to depict the dissonant strategic record as 'Kautilyan realism'. 'Kautilyan Realism' is sometimes understood as a nativist substitute for Western terminology considered to be imprecise and insufficient to describe Indian reality (Liebig 2013) or to represent at least a different ranking of grand strategic preferences is attributed to Kautilyan thought. Kautilya's *Arthashastra*⁷⁵ whose re-use immediately starts with its rediscovery in 1904 by Shamashastry and entails the whole reception history, stretching from Prime minister Nehru to the current Indian President Pranab Mukherjee (Liebig 2014a), has during the last ten years gained increasing prominence leaving behind the confinement of the intellectual circles. However, today's Indians know their Kautilya or Chanakya as he is commonly dubbed, mostly in English. Though the far more widespread 'knowledge' of Kautilya today does not indicate an increase in the dissemination of its explicit content, rather a widespread metaphor for a cunning politician or ruthless *Realpolitik*, making it no match for the really popular *Mahabharata* (Liebig 2014a). Nonetheless does the renewed interest for the work of Kautilya represent another aspect of 'revitalism' (Cohen 2001) that aims at a re-assessment of the '*smritis*' (Gautam 2013) encompassing inter alia the great epics, the *Arthashastra* and others concerned with strategy and conflict. Similarly, former national security adviser Shivshankar Menon speaks of 'realism-plus' to emphasise the uniquely Indian strand of this theoretical concept by pointing to the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* and their influence even on Gandhi's thought to show the modification of a concept based on a universal understanding of human nature with a culturally-derived ethical relativization (Menon 2012).

⁷⁴ Stephen D. Krasner in his article "Structural causes and regime consequences: regimes as intervening variables" *International Organization* 36, 2, Spring 1982 basically defines 'modified structuralism' as a possibility of states to have a preference for system-level goals (disarmament or other internationalist goals in the case of India) that might sometimes trump the 'national interests' (balancing China) determined by the anarchical structure of the state system.

⁷⁵ Kautilya the Indian Machiavelli, how he is popularly termed was an adviser and a political theorist, who compiled existing shastras on statecraft at the time of Alexander the Great 320 BC at the court of Chandragupta Maurya, who toppled the Nanda dynasty in Magadha. See: Liebig (2013).

2.4.3.4 *The Debate on India's Strategic Culture*

The rise of the idea, then, that culture and civilizational heritage could help explain the peculiarities of Indian strategic behaviour spans the bridge to the fourth and for this study most relevant debate on strategic culture⁷⁶, with grand strategy being strategic culture's scope. The introduction of culturalist explanations in the 1990s came as a direct outflow of the above-mentioned attempts to account for India's divergent strategic record of 'exceptionalism' (Paranjpe 2013) and produced the greatest wealth of literature. As such, however, the concept of strategic culture in IR is not a new one as scholars have attempted to explain continuity and change in security policy in cultural terms for several decades, but in the Indian context it fell on especially fertile ground. So the notion of such a 'culturalist turn' that rooted "strategic choice in deeply historical, formative ideational legacies" (Johnston, 1995, ix) was mounted as a challenge to structural-realist assumptions about the sources and characteristics of state behaviour and to surpass the alleged ethnocentrism in strategic studies (Booth 1999); additionally, due to their shared ontology, the proponents for so called 'national styles of strategy' (Gray 1981) have been mainly subsumed under the label of constructivism (Johnston 1995, 33) (Wendt 2001, Bloomfield 2012). Hence strategic culture research mainly emerged in the wake of both the 'linguistic turn' and the 'cultural turn' in the social sciences as identity formation and other non-structural explanations gained widespread support among IR scholars challenging neo-realist hegemony in the field (Johnston 1995). Due to the thorough adaptation of the concept in India, the whole variety of the Western theoretical discourse enriched by innovative complements to some of its positions can be found today (Bajpai 2002, Ollapally and Rajagopalan 2012). Its first peak of scholarly engagement was reached in 1992 after George Tanham's landmark essay worked as a trigger for what later became known as the 'Tanham debate' – the first stage of India's tryst with strategic culture. He argued that due to 'Hindu culture' "Indian elites show little evidence of having thought coherently and systematically about national strategy" (Tanham 1992, 50). So, from the early 1990s on strategic culture as a synonym for "Why is India not acting like other rising powers?" became a buzzword in the strategic community as well as among the informed Indian public again promising to explain the perceived aberration from realism's path (Frey 2006, Engelmeier 2009). The idea of such a 'strategic culture deficit'

⁷⁶ Chapter 2 as a whole is dedicated to the analytical category of strategic culture and its pluralistic strands in particular as the empirical manifestation of the scholarly debate.

became a much used *topos* that even an Economist⁷⁷ article stated that “India’s lack of a strategic culture hobbles its ambition to be a force in the world”. The perceived additional explanatory power for existing models of strategic choice fitted perfectly into the complexities of the Indian case. What researchers on strategic culture share is the common conviction about the paramount importance of culture as a unit-level attribute. They can, however, be divided, starting in the 1970s and early 1980s, into several (three to four) generations or waves of scholarship (Johnston 1995) – a distinction still relevant even in the Indian context. These reflect distinct approaches on the subject matter, especially on the question of how to conceptualize strategic culture as an ideational variable⁷⁸.

Even though in all the three other discourses (on India’s rise, on nuclear armament and on exceptionalism) three basic positions on strategic thought and grand strategy in particular have emerged since the early 1990s, however, only in the controversy on Indian strategic culture has the idea of ideational variables been fully expressed.

2.4.4 The Bearers of India’s Strategic Culture Debate – The Interpretation Elite

a. The Domestic Dimension of the Debate

So, who are the actual bearers of these strategic subcultures? Before sketching the social group whose cleavage-structure is the content of this dissertation, it has to be axiomatically stated that strategic subcultures as aggregated worldviews exist independent of specific persons and that individuals may switch paradigmatic positions depending on the issue at hand. Thus, adherents to, for example, elitist ‘great power realism’ might come from both the Congress (Indian National Congress [INC]) as well as the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) or any other political party entertaining an interest in national security, thereby cross-cutting party affiliations (Bajpai, Basit and Krishnappa 2014). Nonetheless though every strategic choice (in terms of foreign and security policy controversies) India is facing will therefore be accompanied by roughly the same constellation of grand strategic perspectives. That said, the existence of these competing intersubjective “domestic ideational frameworks” as Chatterjee-Miller (Chatterjee-Miller 2014, 2) has put it, among the strategic establishment are subsequently the reflection of entrenched and fundamental lines of conflict. So, researchers, despite claims to study “national” strategic ideas

⁷⁷ The Economist ‘Can India become a great power?’, March 30th 2013 <http://www.economist.com/news/leaders/21574511-indias-lack-strategic-culture-hobbles-its-ambition-be-force-world-can-india>

⁷⁸ See: Chapter 2 section 3 Definitions of Strategic Culture: The Strategic Subculture Approach.

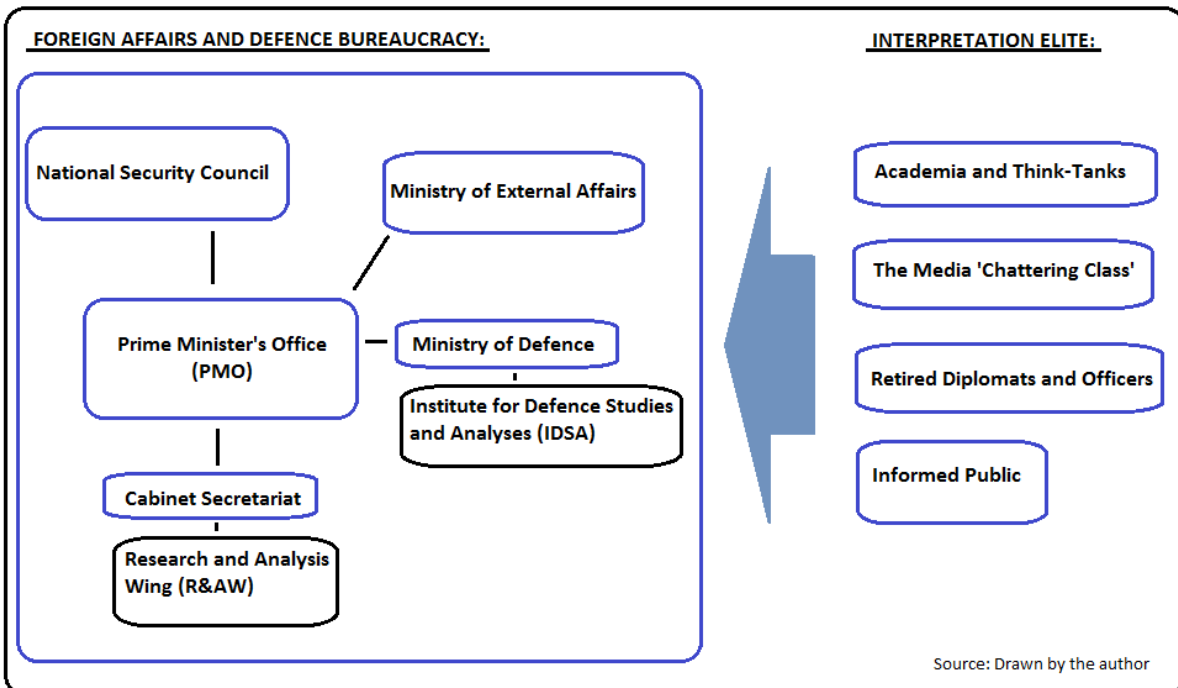
and culture, have primarily concerned themselves with these epistemic communities constituting the so called “strategic enclave” in New-Delhi (Narang and Staniland 2012, 80). Furthermore, Indian decision-makers and the broader public are socialized to age-old philosophical traditions (Singh 1999), which are thought to make the different strands of India’s strategic culture more palpable compared to that of other countries (Vivekanadan 2014). Therefore, subcultures are said to be more easily discernible than that of states whose collective memory covers only a more recent past and questions of grand strategy are impacting a far bigger share of the electorate. (Narang and Staniland 2012) But that is not to say that India’s strategic community flanked by a restless ‘chattering class’ is not as vibrant and ideologically diverse as the broader polity. Then, who exactly forms this strategic elite in India? Following Chatterjee-Miller again, who puts India into the “category of a statist society with strong elite control of foreign policy decision-making” (Chatterjee-Miller 2012, 7) first a distinction needs to be made between the ‘bureaucratic black box’ of India’s central foreign affairs and defense bureaucracies and the country’s ‘Deutungselite’. This study, then, is not about lifting the veil that covers the handful of political and bureaucratic decision-makers and the capable and discreet army and intelligence apparatus concerned with planning and strategy as well as actual policy implementation. These actors would be located mainly within the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO), the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA),⁷⁹ the Ministry of Defense (MoD)⁸⁰ and since 1998 within the office of the national security adviser (NSA)⁸¹ with its National Security Advisory Board (NSAB). Yet, that is not to say that these high-level bureaucrats and politicians like any other member of India’s strategic elite have not been socialized in or sympathise for one of the nation’s strategic subcultures. However, advocates of ‘Nehruvianism’, ‘Hindutva’ or ‘Neo-liberal Globalism’ (Bajpai 2003, Das 2012) might be found across political parties as these strategic worldviews are neither necessarily congruent with the cleavage structure of India’s party system nor are individuals bound to the subculture traditionally closest to a respective political party.

⁷⁹ Also, popularly called the ‘South Block’, (with the policy planning division and public diplomacy departments (Chatterjee-Miller 2012, 8)

⁸⁰ The ministry is concerned with strategy planning in defense and supported by the Chief of staff of the armed forces, as well as by the Research and Intelligence Wing (RAW). An institution, which marked by high levels of secrecy, a prominent example of the efficacy of Indian intelligence, in general, has been the preparation of Pokhran II, standing in the tradition of Kautilya’s recommendations on spy craft (Liebig 2014a and 2014b).

⁸¹ Except for the armed forces personnel all of these offices are staffed by Indian Foreign service (IFS) officers (Datta-Ray 2014).

Figure8: India's Strategic Establishment



Instead the more visible and vociferous part of India’s strategic establishment interested in debating problems of grand strategy will be the focal point of this research. Accordingly, this thesis’ attempt to outline the terrain of strategic paradigms is directed at India’s comparatively small interpretation elite, that, like its decision-making counterpart, is marked by high encapsulation, in terms of being Delhi-centric and comprise of individuals that underwent a comparable socialization⁸². Additionally, this exclusive circle is marked by what can be called ‘hybrid socialization’ meaning the exposure to both Western as well as vernacular concepts of statecraft and politics manifesting itself in distinct forms of indigenous modernity. Moreover, besides the relatively small size of this group the coherence and power of the strategic worldviews, according to Narang and Staniland, is further enhanced due to “the low electoral salience of foreign policy” (Narang and Staniland 2012, 49) in Indian politics. This comes in line with Devesh Kapur’s landmark survey of 2009, that concludes that “there is widespread evidence that the mass public is poorly informed about foreign policy issues” (Kapur 2009, 88) as foreign and security policy has not yet become a topic which has any significant relevance for the vast majority of the electorate. So, despite of India being a vivacious democracy its debates related to grand strategy are at a very early stage of vibrancy and are almost exclusively the domain of IR scholars and strategic analysts. This group of the intelligentsia assessing and commenting

⁸² Generational change as well as regional and social/caste challenges are slowly leading to diversification even in the realm of India’s strategic community however (Corbridge and Harriss 2000).

India's foreign and security policies, then, broadly consists of what can be called the strategic community and informed public (Frey 2006). According to Bajpai, Basit and Krishnappa (2014) India's strategic community entails members, whose professional background is ranging from civil service positions (former diplomats, civil servants and politicians) and the armed forces (former officers) to the media⁸³ and most importantly the academia and policy institutes. Beyond that, the concept of the informed public is also applied in this context as it entails citizens, that are following foreign and security policy issues on the media (on TV, the newspapers and on the internet) and are also trying to advocate for certain policy prescriptions through different channels, and are therefore both part as well as audience of the narrower defined strategic community. Predominantly these debates are being played out in the English-language newspapers and news-channels as well as academic journals with a nation-wide audience⁸⁴ and may only have a limited effect on actual policymaking (Mehta 2009a, Chatterjee-Miller 2013). Besides the 'chattering class' a nascent think tank industry is evolving that equips the respective epistemic communities with conceptual 'ammunition'. These discourse contestants among others include US-style think tanks like the Institute of Defense and Strategic Analysis (IDSA) funded by the Ministry of Defense or the Takshashila Institution, the India Foundation, the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), the Vivekananda International Foundation (VIF), the Ananta Aspen Centre, the Indian Council for World Affairs (ICWA) or the Centre for Policy Research, which enhanced the quasi-scientific character of the debate. So far, the Indian deliberation on grand strategy with all of its strands has in its most comprehensive expression been a scholarly IR-debate or to put it differently a semi-public debate guided by IR concepts and parlance. Then, primarily due to, what can be called the effect of scholarly authority, that is the analysts unchallenged conduct of the debate, could the quasi-scientific element become that formative. Exponents of the disproportionate role analysts have been playing are such authoritative figures of Indian origin as the following scholars and public intellectuals: K. Subrahmanyam, a leading figure of India's strategic studies, Kanti Bajpai, Raja C. Mohan, Harsh V. Pant, Deepa Ollapally and Rajesh Rajagopalan, who represent the 'domestic' drivers of these strategy related controversies. As members of India's strategic community these literati have played a dual role of both categorizing Indian thinking and at the same time advocating a certain perspective. So their highly influential talk of India's rise has both met and shaped the growing need to formulate a broader strategic vision of India's place in a globalized world. While the discussion of

⁸³ Often pejoratively referred to as the 'chattering class', despite being a vital element of any vibrant democracy (Kornblut 2006).

⁸⁴ Even though newspapers in the vernacular languages to various degrees do also follow international events (Kapur 2009).

the country's deficits created a 'spill-over effect' that aroused and partly directed what Corbridge and Harriss call 'elite revolts' (Corbridge and Harriss 2000) against the 'Nehruvian consensus' in Indian politics in general and its strategic policies in particular.

b. The International Dimension of the Debate

Furthermore, besides the domestic dispute there has, from the beginning, been an international dimension to the scientific element of the debate. International scholars with their Indian counterparts both instigated as well as observed the increasingly more active ideational frameworks that have been addressing either the specificities of India's grand strategy or that of its emergence. Among them are famous names of IR and strategic studies like the RAND analyst George Tanham or political scientists like Stephen P. Cohen, or senior non-Indian scholars like Sandy Gordon, Ali Zaman, Manjari Chatterjee-Miller, Rodney Jones or Harald Müller to name but a few. This broad academic discussion as will be outlined in more detail in the next section shifted from the until recently very influential rationalist-structuralist models of strategic choice in a neorealist fashion and from the as prominent neoliberal approaches with their explanatory emphasis on institutional and economic factors to culturalist explanations of Indian state behaviour. This pronounced ideational focus since the early 1990s linked strategic studies on India with the constructivist mainstream in IR theory (Wendt 1999, Finnemore and Sikkink 2001) by giving prominence to the role of identity and ideas as well as history and culture at the unit—that is the individual state's level⁸⁵. However, as Chatterjee-Miller has noted, among those who study ideational influences on India's strategic policy a basic distinction has to be made, namely between two approaches. "First, there are those who focus on historically mapping and categorizing "world views" among the elite. Second, there are those who focus on policy and strategic issues that either generate or are affected by these historical worldviews. Both of these two categories of scholars assume that foreign policy ideas do not differ from grand strategy and these ideas, if they do matter, are mostly drawn from historical sources (for example Nehruvianism)." (Chatterjee-Miller 2014, 3) So what Chatterjee-Miller observes is a conflation or equation of ideas with grand strategy, she laments that "there is little distinction drawn between grand strategy as comprising of ideas and grand strategy as influenced by ideas, or even both. Yet, discussions of foreign policy by themselves do not constitute grand strategy even though they may inform it." (Chatterjee-Miller 2014, 13) However even the classic contemporary definitions of grand strategy articulated by Liddell Hart and Andre Beaufre as well as the ones offered by other grand strategy theorists like Collins, Kennedy, Posen, Luttwak, Ross or

⁸⁵ See: Kenneth Waltz, 1979 on neo-realism and reductionist theories as well as the levels of analysis.

Rosecrance and Stein do share a comprehensive notion of grand strategy that is both based on ideas as well as influenced by them (Chatterjee-Miller 2014, 13). Therefore, a differentiation between grand strategy as debate and grand strategy as a vessel for ideas and an analytical category offering a part of the explanation of India's suboptimal achievements in the realm of IR has to be made. This distinction is necessary as authors like Pant (Pant 2011) have explicitly pointed to the possible impact the normative public discourse on grand strategy and strategic culture might have on actual policy formulation. Hence such a debate would work in terms of a self-affirmation changing and 'normalizing' India's outlook and behaviour according to its growing economic and military clout. Authors like Nau and Ollapally (Nau and Ollapally 2012) have pointed to the influence such domestic debates can exert on strategic choice due to an undetermined international environment like that after the end of superpower rivalry. Furthermore, for the purpose of this thesis, which is not about tracing the actual grand strategy of India, both groups (domestic and international) are relevant as they constitute the epistemic network whose utterances are the empirical basis for the study of Indian strategic pluralism.

2.4.5 The Three Strands of India's Strategic Culture Debate

Now what are the scholarly positions that have marked the contestation for decades? Basically, there are three strands of thinking; The first position, or the so called Tanham proposition, posits that strategic culture should be equated with realism and as India deviates (in terms of its 'ad-hocism', its nuclear ambiguity, or the military's record of the use of force (Gilboy and Heginbotham 2012)) from realist prescriptions it lacks a strategic culture. The reason for this deficit, so the argument goes, is to be found in 'Hindu' culture (Tanham 1992).

However, this simplistic and orientalist interpretation (in terms of a stereotypical understanding of the 'other', like Tanham's 'Hindu' cultural attributes (Tanham 1992, 15) caused a vigorous response. The counter-position contended that India, to the contrary, has a unique strategic culture and a lively tradition of strategic reasoning exactly because of Hindu culture. The followers of this stance, mirroring the third strand of the 'exceptionalism' debate, which either advocate for the existence of a distinctly Indian manifestation of realist thought or for India's strategic tradition being best grasped by Krasner's modified structuralism, proposed different conceptualizations of this all-encompassing strategic culture. Rodney W. Jones defined, what he calls an "omniscient patrician" Hindu inspired strategic culture, while Michael Liebig or Arndt Michael speak of a Kautilyan strategic culture ("Kautilya is the DNA of India's foreign policy" (Michael 2008, 99)). This strategic culture, in which implicitly the whole strategic establishment has been socialized in is also regarded as an independent variable that entails a wide variety of factors

that directly determine policy outcomes. Hence for the second discursive position India's strategic culture is very coherent and represents unbroken continuity with the past (Singh 1999).

Finally, the third position, that arose challenging the other two perspectives of the debate is principally based on a pluralist understanding of strategic culture outlined above. Basically, its advocates argue, in line with the "one strategic culture" proponents, that the claim of India allegedly lacking a tradition of strategic thinking would in itself describe the distinct features of a strategic culture⁸⁶. Secondly, however, strategic pluralists would reject the notion of a thorough socialization of the whole of India's strategic community by a single culture, because for them every collective is characterized by a similar range of competing worldviews. Hence scholars, sharing such an argumentation, rejected both monolithic and *long durée* notions of strategic culture and instead embraced complexity and proposed a pluralistic understanding of strategic culture, in which the concept gains the quality of intervening ideational variables while the conception of a deterministic relationship between grand strategic ideas and behaviour is declined. But here the communality among proponents of Indian strategic pluralism ends. Some authors, as will be outlined in more detail in the following sections, are suggesting the existence of a binary constellation of Indian strategic thought for example between strands of 'Ashokan' versus 'Kautilyan' or 'Machiavellian' thought (Singh 1999, Kim 2007, Ogden 2013), while others are arguing for three strands of thinking (Cohen 2001, Bajpai 2003, Sagar 2009, Das 2010a and 2010b) or even four like Mohan's additional 'neo-Curzonian' and 'Forward School' besides 'defensive realists' (Singh 1995, Pardesi 2005, Mohan 2008). There are even examples proposing up to six schools of thought (Ollapally and Rajagopalan 2012, Bajai 2014) that are supposed to constitute India's strategic universe.

2.4.5.1 The Two Monolithic Strands on India's Strategic Reasoning:

a. The 'No-Strategic Culture' Advocates:

The first who formulated still in the kind of national psychology studies a culturalist account of Indian strategic thought was Nirad Chaudhuri in his famous "The Continent of Circe: An Essay on the Peoples of India" dating back to 1965. The next in line of providing a monolithic account of Indian strategic culture and the instigator of India's so called strategic culture debate, was George Tanham, a RAND Cooperation scholar, who in his influential finding in 1992, called

⁸⁶ Referring to an 'Indian way' of deploying the country's military, diplomatic, economic or cultural tools for the purpose of national security (Bajpai 2014).

“Indian Strategic Thought: An Interpretive Essay”, posited that India lacked a strategic culture. Tanham ascribed the limits in strategic thinking to India wanting political unity historically (downplaying the formative impact of subcontinental empires like the Mauryas, the Guptas or the Moghuls to name but the most prominent among them). Additionally, he contended that the Hindu concept of time would discourage planning, especially long-term planning crucial for setting up a nation’s grand strategy. Moreover, he argued that the Indians were largely excluded from strategic decision-making by the British authorities leading to an estrangement on matters of strategy on the side of India’s elites; and, lastly, that there has been limited interest in strategic planning among policymakers ever since (Tanham 1992). He received prominent support from K. Subrahmanyam, one of India’s leading post-independence strategists and a fervent support of a more muscular India (Subrahmanyam 2005), who basically agreed with Tanham’s diagnosis. A verdict, which still echoes with many analysts outside of India, who have strong reservations regarding the fulfilment of India’s great power aspirations in the foreseeable future.

b. The ‘One Strategic Culture’ Advocates:

Primarily, however, this argument was met with resistance, as scholars and commentators of Indian strategic affairs were rejecting it in respect to its simplistic and out-richtly essentialist (some would argue even orientalist) character. It was posited that, exactly because of Hindu civilization India as a modern nation state would possess a unique and rich strategic culture.

A prominent example is Rodney Jones, who like Tanham, compiled a study on India’s strategic culture on behalf of the US government in 2006, thereby taking a position contrary to Tanham’s. For Jones, India has a strategic culture and in the first lines of his work he contended that “India’s strategic culture is not monolithic, rather is mosaic-like, but as a composite is more distinct and coherent than that of most contemporary nation-states. This is due to its substantial continuity with the symbolism of pre-modern Indian state systems and threads of Hindu or Vedic civilization dating back several millennia” (Jones 2006, 3). But despite his claim of its mosaic-like character he proposes an essentialist label called “omniscient patrician” to grasp India’s variation as a whole. Interestingly though, he qualifies this coherent notion by stating that *India’s strategic culture has drawn selectively from various threads of its past civilization values and larger political culture. The dominant war and peace elements of India’s strategic culture lean more to the realpolitik side of the mythological and religious spectrum, and away from the pacifist themes that had gained prominence, temporarily, as a result of publicity about Mahatma Gandhi’s influence on the nationalist movement. But both sources of inspiration, a readiness for war and pacifist inclinations, have validity in the strategic culture.* (Jones 2006, 20)

In Jones's analysis like in that of many essentialist authors behaviour and ideas are also bound together. Another example of this ideational strategic monism is Shrikant Paranjpe's work, who, while claiming to be a disciple of Johnston, also puts forward a monolithic account (pointing to 'deliberate ambiguity' as the defining feature of India's strategic culture, he does so, however, without the rigour demanded by Johnston (Paranjpe 2013). In his book "Nation-Building and Foreign Policy in India" Tobias Engelmeier gives yet another example of a monolithic approach. Engelmeier describes India's strategic culture as a whole to be characterised by an idealist inflection from the realist norm thereby explicitly referring to Johnston and Jones as well as Gray but despite this conceptual refinement he does not allow for any possible dissenters within the Indian strategic establishment (Engelmeier 2009). Likewise have authors such as Rajesh Basrur (2002), Manjeet Pardesi (2005) or Stephen Burgess (2009) outlined the main features of India's strategic culture. Even though they acknowledge its multi-faceted nature, they nonetheless argue in favour of a composite understanding of that culture, in contrast to the identification of distinguishable streams of thinking.

Thus, what Engelmeier, Paranjpe or Burgess and other monists have in common is their attempt to merge the two seemingly contradictory strands of tradition of idealism and realism. Empirical examples for such a mixed record are reflecting Johnston's distinction between symbolic and operational sets of strategic culture. The caveat in the Indian case, however, seems to be the actual influence of the "symbolic set", that is the discursive level on policy choices, in terms of a certain preference for system-level goals (which could be termed as 'idealist') over unit-level goals, which amount for the 'national interest' in realist parlance (Aron 1973, Waltz 1979). So, scholars have pointed to evidence or even proof of India's symbolic set having reservations on the use of force as the preferred route to security strengthening the perception of the aforementioned 'idealist inflection'. A possible explanation for this preference points to the argument that pursuing idealist goals in foreign policy correlates with the values inherent in India's nation-building process and furthering them should create legitimacy for the ruling establishment⁸⁷. For instance, in the Indo-Pakistan war of 1947/48, India refrained from completely integrating the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. Instead, the Indian government brought the issue to the United Nations. In 1962 India agreed on a Chinese proposed ceasefire instead of continuing the armed conflict after receiving foreign weapons then available. Furthermore, India accepted an armistice in the second Indo-Pakistan war of 1965 and even gave back territorial

⁸⁷ See: Stuart Corbridge and Harriss (2000) on the concept of 'elite revolts' and the importance of identity politics in Indian politics at large.

gains during the Tashkent Conference in 1966. The Indian government also abstained from expanding the 1971 War into the Western part of Pakistan. In a similar vein, after entering the ranks of a nuclear power, India voluntarily opted for a non-first-use (NFU) doctrine, as well as a unilateral moratorium on testing further nuclear devices. Additionally, it openly pursues a minimum deterrence posture in an attempt not to trigger a nuclear arms race with its neighbours. Essentially, Indian policy choices have supported and ultimately built a culture of restraint (Ali 2010).

On the other hand, insight in India's *parabellum* culture or the "operational set" (Johnston 1995) can be gained from India's record of its resort to force. A record which is comparable to China's in terms of the frequency of its use of force in conflicts (Gilboy and Heginbotham 2012). The first case can be observed within months after the declaration of independence. The use of force involved military operations in bringing the princely states of Junagadh and Jammu and Kashmir into the Indian Union, actions that were soon followed by so-called 'police action' against Hyderabad. India expelled the Portuguese from Goa in 1961. A so called "forward policy" was pursued in order to tackle the Chinese menace along the Himalayan border since the late 1950s. This policy culminated in Prime minister Nehru ordering the eviction of the Chinese from their positions on territory along the McMahon line, India claimed in 1962. India extended the scope of the 1965 conflict with Pakistan that was in the initial stages confined to Kashmir to the plains of the Punjab. It also interfered in the domestic conflict in the Eastern part of Pakistan in 1971, eventually helping to create the independent state of Bangladesh. In 1984, India likewise occupied the Siachen glacier in Kashmir and has upheld its position there ever after. India's peace keeping operation in North and East Sri Lanka changed into a robust military operation in 1987 causing fears among India's South Asian neighbours of a violent regional hegemon (Cohen 2001, Mohan 2004; Ali 2010;). Many other authors like Jaswant Singh, India's foreign minister between 1998 and 2002, during Prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's government, or Shivshankar Menon, who was inter alia India's 4th National Security Advisor between 2011 and 2014, argue, even though ambiguously, for the existence of a distinct and coherent strategic culture⁸⁸ – it is, however, India's strategico-cultural pluralism, which should now receive attention as the main focus of this thesis.

⁸⁸ Both, however, can be counted among the pluralists, as they share with them an immanent dyadic understanding of strategic culture. In the case of Jaswant Singh, he explicitly counter-poses the scheme of a realist strategic culture against the prevailing Nehruvian hegemony "Nehru's legacy, whether still relevant or not, remains dominant, in the process providing a kind of continuity to independent India's strategic culture, even if that continuity be of negative attributes like veneration of the received wisdom;

2.4.5.2 The Pluralist Strand: India's Strategic Subcultures:

In contrast to a monolithic understanding of strategic culture, which normally would entail the whole of India's strategic community a pluralistic approach of different subcultures, which can exist alongside a dominant strand, gains the quality of a range of intervening variables. Hence such an innovative approach resting on the heuristic model of discursive plurality adds an analytical value to neoclassical realism's broader research agenda (Ripsman, Taliaferro and Lobell 2016). It does so by offering a 'filter' – the subculture-cleavage model is just systematizing its implicit character – with which the competing policy aims of any Indian foreign and security policy can be categorized without necessarily addressing the hegemonic relations between them. Such a discursive approach, as will be shown, enjoys increasing popularity among scholars of India's grand strategy, as it is not inevitably related or solely compatible with neoclassical realism. As stated earlier this 'pluralist' strand of the broad debate on India's strategic culture is, primarily, marked by, firstly, various understandings of what 'subcultures' are and how they should be termed and, secondly, by disagreement on the exact number of them constituting India's perceived strategic pluralism.

Firstly, it has to be stated, that subculturalists understand strategic culture as a constant discourse that is not limited by the narrow confines of grand strategy, as it is deeply rooted in Indian history and culture. In this ideological struggle both India's ancient as well as contemporary history play equally important roles in terms of providing resources for identity-formation. In the same vein scholars of grand strategy have widely been using concepts and designations from India's past in order to grasp both indigenous traditions of statecraft and strategy as well as the importance of identity and the 'self' in the formulation of India's grand strategy.

Secondly, India's strategic traditions in terms of the denominators used by scholars looking at the ideational foundations of Indian strategic behavior in general are detailed. In the observed literature authors seem to share a common understanding of the pluralist character of strategic thinking. However, only a part of them is explicitly using the expression 'strategic subculture' to define the deeply rooted and comparatively long-lasting nature of India's strategic worldviews. Led by Kanti Bajpai, who was among the first to speak of subcultures in his attempt to adopt and multiply Johnston's approach to fit the Indian particularities (Bajpai, 2003 and

an absence of iconoclastic questioning, a still continuing lack of institutional framework for policy formulation; lack of sense of history and geography, an absence of sufficient commitment to territorial impregnability; and a tendency to remain static in yesterday's doctrines, even form." (Singh 1999, 58), while Shivshankar Menon points more into the direction of the unique blending of India's strategic traditions in terms of "realism-plus" (Menon 2012).

2013), others were soon following his example like Runa Das (Das 2012 and 2014), Ali Zaman, (2006) Shivshankar Menon (2012), Behera (2007), Sagar (2009), and Paranjpe (2013), Shidore (2013) who were all unmistakably applying the term 'subculture' to their pluralistic interpretations of strategic culture and its implicitly discursive character. In contrast to subculturalists, other scholars have, however, despite sharing the notion of relative continuity and discursive plurality of India's strategic pluralism, refrained from labeling the detected composite ideas on grand strategy as 'strategic subcultures' instead they are using a variety of different terms. Ollapally and Rajagopalan, for example, speak of 'schools of thought' (Ollapally and Rajagopalan 2012) and Harsh Pant plainly identifies different kinds of 'strategic thought' (Pant 2011). Others, in turn, have introduced concepts like 'strategic paradigms' (Cohen 2001), (grand) strategic traditions, epistemic communities (with their distinct canons of foundational thinkers and texts) (Kim 2009) or have even based their elaborations on Sabatier and Jenkins Smith's advocacy coalition approach (1995), transferring their idea of 'deep beliefs' into the realm of strategy formation (Goswami 2013).

Thirdly, there is yet another caveat in respect to the study of the pluralist strand of Indian strategic culture scholarship, which is the narrow range of worldviews, due to the smallness of India's strategic enclave in New Delhi as mentioned in section 4 of this chapter. Most scholarship has sought to answer, if any particular subculture at a certain time enjoys a dominant or hegemonic position or if ideological positions are water-downed and forced to compromise (Cohen 2001, Nau and Ollapally 2012). Thus, scholars are still revolving around the question of how to conceptualize a 'strategic core' in relation to ideological plurality or to put it differently whether an 'operational strategic culture', that is the dominant subculture, is effectively overriding all other normative influences⁸⁹ as some of them would argue. However, there are even other propositions; authors like Cohen (Cohen 2001) and Mehta (Mehta 2009a) contend that the notion of a 'strategic core' in terms of a common denominator is derived from the overlap ("the common ground") of the various paradigms. Raising the issue of a strategic core constituted by such an overlap of competing paradigms and the structuring imprint of the respective dominant subculture will have to be answered by future research however (Nau and Ollapally 2012). Such an alleged commonality, in terms of a 'strategic core', is reflected by the consensus among all the variations of strategic thought that, despite fundamental differences they, according to Bajpai (Bajpai 2003), agree on the centrality of the sovereign state in inter-

⁸⁹ For realism as a normative approach in itself see, for example: Barkin (2003), Kitchen (2010).

national relations; they consider interests, power and the use of force as the defining characteristics of international relations; furthermore, for them power has a military and an economic dimension. This communality is not self-evident as the example of the European Union shows, where economic power has been given precedence over military prowess (Toje 2009). Authors have noted that this common ground could be regarded as India's core strategic culture, which would be modified depending on the issue at hand (Cohen, 2001, Mehta 2009a, Ollapally and Rajagopalan 2012). The interpretations of this 'strategic core', besides 'realism plus' (Menon 2012), are now ranging from idealism to 'deliberate ambiguity' (Mitra 2009), as a concept taking into account the contradictions caused by the necessities of identity politics with its deliberate re-use of the past to appeal to the mass electorate to concepts like 'Kautiylan Realism' and 'strategic restraint'. (Rudolph and Rudolph 1967, Mitra 2009, Ali 2010, Dasgupta and Cohen 2011, Gautam 2013, Liebig 2014a).

Yet another position, however, argues for the study of subcultures in their own right. As a consequence, the idea of a strategic core⁹⁰ is not abandoned but its relevance is decreased, an approach also the author favors.

In fact, scholars disagree about the relationship between the different subcultures. Bloomfield, for instance, assumes competitive and non-negotiable ideational tenets. What he calls "waiting in the wings" refers to groups with only limited latent influence but who might one day become dominant, changing that state's grand strategic outlook substantially (Bloomfield 2012, 453). In contrast, Ollapally and Rajagopalan argue in line with the notion of a 'strategic core' that Indian perspectives on strategic affairs still "fall within a fairly narrow range" (Ollapally and Rajagopalan 2012, 80), and that the different ideological positions have intersecting views with plenty in common. For Narang and Staniland, however, "this "strategic core" does not apply to all Indians or all parties" (Narang and Staniland 2012, 81). The visibility of these positions has, however, in the wake of the earlier mentioned 'elite revolts' (Corbridge and Harriss 2000) against the 'Nehruvian consensus', increased. For the purpose of identifying the various subcultures Corbridge and Harriss's concept of 'elite revolts' in Indian politics has, for the author, been a useful tool, as it takes into account various factors like generational change, caste quotas, or regionalization of political elites in terms of popular democracy, phenomena which are expected to even effect foreign and security policy. Essentially, Corbridge and Harriss argue that

⁹⁰ For the author, a strategic core represents the basic consensus among a strategic community concerning the centrality of the state-system, and state respectively regime survival. Beyond these foundational elements the discourse is heterogeneous (Bajpai 2003, Dasgupta and Cohen 2011).

there are different ideological coalitions that are struggling for dominance, like Hindu-nationalism, Neo-liberalism, or new regional elites (Corbridge and Harriss 2000). The resulting competition, not only in the realm of strategic affairs, has created a landscape of epistemic communities, which authors like Kanti Bajpai or Deepa Ollapally claim to have enough cohesion to be regarded as proper schools of thought (Bajpai 2003, Ollapally and Rajagopalan 2012). Hence the repercussions of these ideological coalitions against the Nehruvian consensus in Indian politics were also strongly felt within India's strategic community. Therefore, Corbridge and Harriss's analytical instrument, by posing the question of 'what kind of India do the different elite factions envisage', is helping to build a bridge to the phenomenon of identity politics as a central feature of regime survival and stability (Abraham 2007). Thus, some scholars have pointed to the relevance of identity politics for the formulation of foreign policy and hence grand strategy (Abraham 2007, Engelmeier 2009, Chacko 2013), a concept to which the author will dedicate more space in chapter 3 as it represents one of the constituting elements in the delineation of grand strategic thought. However, only very limited research has been conducted on whether these subcultures or schools have distinct reference texts and deviating narratives from one another concerning the main features of their possible central strategic paradigm to use Johnston's concept again. How much do they have in common while striving to influence operational policy simultaneously, remains an open question?

But beyond the question what the policy-guiding ideas are at any given moment, authors have time and again highlighted the existence of competing worldviews, albeit with little agreement on their number and eventually with no explanations provided on how they have created their labels. Finally, the various subcultural labels are presented; the following paragraphs will assemble the manifold scholarly suggestions on India's ideational strategic pluralism, that have been gained through a qualitative literature analysis, according to a three-folded structure; the first group entails the authors with a dichotomous understanding of pluralism, followed, secondly, by scholars who argue for the presence of three distinct strategic worldviews and, finally, those who propose a delineation beyond this triadic categorization.

2.4.5.2.1 A Dyadic Structure of Indian Strategic Pluralism

Besides Kanti Bajpai (Bajpai 2002), who was the first to introduce a genuine non-monolithic approach to the study of India's strategic culture, other authors have enriched the debate like Pratap Bhanu Mehta who considers strategy formulation as being orchestrated along two strands: an idealist, Ashokan, one and a realist, Kautilayan, one (Mehta 2009a). A similar distinction has been drawn by Rashed Uz Zaman (Zaman 2009), who speaks of a tradition inspired

by Kautilya and an alternate 'idealist' or Buddha-Ashoka tradition to which also Gandhi belonged. A slightly different take Marcus Kim has formulated in the edited volume of 'Neorealism versus Strategic Culture' (Glenn, Howlett and Poore 2004), where he proposes a dichotomy based on a Kautilyan strand and a Gandhian paradigm. Similarly, Stephen Cohen is using the terms, Gandhian versus Machiavellian respectively in an attempt to contextualize Kautilyan thinking. Cohen perceives the Gandhian or Nehruvian perspective as being credibly challenged by "a renascent conservative-realist perspective" (Cohen 2001) that is the Kautilyan subculture. However, he sees yet another more ideologically inspired "Hindutva" or Hindu revivalist viewpoint emerge, which puts some of his work into the triadic camp. Additionally, Cohen together with Sunil Dasgupta also argues for a common 'strategic core' that he calls India's aim for 'strategic restraint and autarky' (Dasgupta and Cohen 2011). The former National security adviser Shivshankar Menon speaks of 'realism-plus' to emphasize the uniquely Indian strand of this theoretical concept by pointing to the Mahabharata and the Ramayana and their influence even on Gandhi's thought thereby hinting to its mixed or dual nature (Menon 2012). Likewise K. Subrahmanyam, the doyen of post-independence India's strategic thinking, who initially took a skeptical stance on the notion of India having a distinct strategic culture conceded in his 2005 book 'Shedding Shibboleths: India's Evolving Strategic Outlook' the division of the country's strategic community into two groupings: on the one hand the "relatively small but very vociferous" 'boy scouts' (Subrahmanyam 2005), who are more contented to perceive India as one of many other ordinary great powers that needs to cultivate its military clout and on the other hand the majority that already sees India as a 'civilizational' great power. Another exponent, W.P. Singh Sidhu identifies in his chapter "Of Oral Traditions and Ethnocentric Judgements", that sets out to reject Tanham's proposition, two strands of thinking; he writes: "another obvious strand of Indian strategic thought, which has remained constant since the time of Chandragupta Maurya, through even Gandhi's non-violence era and right till the present day (but has been mentioned only in passing in the [Tanham's] essay under review), is the concept of realism. Clearly, it was not described as "realism" by Kautilya, the official strategist for the Mauryan empire, as for that matter by Gandhi or Nehru. Yet it was more than evident in their writings and in their actions" (Sidhu 1996)⁹¹. For Namrata Goswami there are again generally two main standpoints marking India's strategic culture. One is what she calls "hardcore realism" the other 'Nehruvianism'. But she also gives her own account of strategic culture in general, which is echoing Johnston but still reverts back into a more coherent and monolithic understanding of

⁹¹ Edited volume by Mattoo and Bajpai (1996) as a reply to Tanham, as one of the earliest systematic attempts to engage with Tanham's assessment.

strategic culture, by stating that: *[S]trategic culture is an ideational milieu by which the members of the national strategic community form their strategic preferences with regard to the use and efficacy of military power in response to the threat environment. Each country has its own way to interpret, analyze and react to external opportunities and threats. As a member of the Indian strategic community, let me assure you that we do have a strategic culture where we closely assess the external environment and debate on the efficacy of the use of military power in addressing external threats. That India tends to give priority to dialogue over the use of military power in foreign policy does not mean that it does not have a strategic culture; it just means that the strategic preferences are different from the normal understanding of how Great Powers behave. (Goswami 2013)*

Jaswant Singh, former Indian foreign and defense minister between 1998 and 2002, in turn, advocates in his famous book 'Defending India' an alternative approach to what he calls "Nehru's idealistic romanticism" (Singh 1999, 34) and a tradition of pacifism rooted in Jainism, Buddhism and Bhakti. His perspective is, however, also ambiguous towards Kautilyan thought and more in favor of solid contemporary realism, however, he grants the *Arthashastra* the status of a major building block of the realist tradition. Partha Ghosh, told the author in 2014, that he would identify two broad ideational streams of strategic thought; firstly, a realist worldview that goes back to the *Vedas*, the *Mahabharata* and of which the *Arthashastra* is just one element. Secondly, an idealist tradition, which in the practice of statecraft has never really been palpable and can be considered as a mere fig-leaf. For Chris Ogden, again India's strategic landscape is roughly divided into the Nehruvian or Congress strategic paradigm or security identity (Ogden 2014 and 2016) on the one side and a Hindutva or BJP security identity on the other. Priya Chacko, in her "Indian Foreign Policy: The Politics of Postcolonial Identity from 1947 to 2004" (2011), argues in a similar way, when she posits that basically Indian strategic reasoning can be divided between a Nehruvian or Congress strand and a Hindutva or BJP perspective.

2.4.5.2.2 *A Triadic Structure of Indian Strategic Pluralism*

Besides the relatively convenient and parsimonious differentiation of Indian strategic thinking in a dualistic fashion a second camp of scholars has evolved, which grants complexity a slightly bigger share. These authors are envisioning the make-up of India's strategic pluralism to be constituted by three competing subcultures or strategic traditions. Stephen Cohen⁹², one of the

⁹² Stephen Cohen has additionally introduced a further distinction between 'moderate Nehruvians' and 'militant Nehruvians' (Cohen 2001).

leading US South Asian security analysts, whose distinction between Gandhian and 'Machiavellian' thought has been mentioned in the dyadic section above, has also formulated a third so called 'revitalist' paradigm, which is competing with the other two by drawing from India's Hindu heritage in a modern nationalist way. Among the first, who have gone beyond a dichotomous understanding of pluralism have been Sandy Gordon and Ross Babbage in their 1992 piece "India's Strategic Future: Regional State or Global Power?" (Babbage and Gordon 1992), where they trace three different strategic worldviews dividing India's foreign and security policy community; these are Nehruvians, Militant Nehruvians and Hindu nationalists (Ollapally and Rajagopalan 2012).

Among the proponents for the existence of three Indian strategic subcultures, Kanti Bajpai's contributions can be seen as one of the most influential to date. Bajpai refers in his early work on India's strategic culture in 2002, in accordance with Johnston's model (Johnston 1995), to three basic assumptions as making up the central strategic paradigms of three worldviews or subcultures, he identified in the Indian Post-Cold war context. In addition, he argues that, these strategic viewpoints can, also this time in terms of Johnston's scheme, be depicted by their competing grand strategic prescriptions, which are answers to the respective central strategic paradigms (Bajpai 2002). Since the end of the Cold War, according to Bajpai, at least three strands of thinking are contesting for hegemony; these three schools of thought, with distinct central strategic paradigms, are called 'Nehruvianism', 'Neo-liberalism', and 'Hyperrealism'. According to the Nehruvian perspective the 'natural condition' of anarchy should be alleviated through trust and confidence building measures between nations, because the alternative of preparing for armed conflict and a balance-of-power logic would be both devastating and ultimately useless. Whereas for neoliberals, the concept of mutual gains is the central element for a beneficial relationship between nations, especially after achieving interdependence. Consequently, neoliberals regard economic power as one of major tools at a state's disposal, that can be enhanced by creating free markets at home and by the promotion of free trade abroad. Finally, the so-called 'hyperrealists' have a more pessimistic outlook as they do not believe in transformative social change, for them there are only never-ending sequences of inter-state threat, counter-threat, rivalry and conflict, where the outbreak of violent conflict can, in turn, only be avoided and hedged by applying threat and the use of force itself. For hyperrealists the safest road to a stable and peaceful strategic environment is the unremitting buildup of military capabilities and the will to employ these very instruments. They reflect both IR (idealism versus realism) and domestic (revitalism or more broadly 'elite revolts' against Nehruvianism (Corbridge and Harriss 2000) cleavages but revolve around a 'strategic core' regarding the nature

of the state system. Runa Das is following in Bajpai's footsteps as she proposes, in several of her works "Strategic Culture, Representations of Nuclear (In)Securities, and the Government of India: A Critical Constructivist Perspective" (2009a), "The prism of strategic culture and South Asian nuclearization" (2009b) and "Strategic culture, identity and nuclear (in)security in Indian politics: Reflections from critical constructivist lenses" (2010b) three relatively similar labels: Nehruvianism, 'Hindutva' nationalism and neo-liberal Nehruvianism (Das 2010b). Bajpai's role model has found other imitators as well, like Sarang Shiddore, who speaks of Moralism, Realism and Liberal Globalism as India's three central strategic paradigms. Harsh V. Pant is also following in the footsteps of Bajpai, when he agrees on the emergence of three "streams of thinking" namely Bajpai's Nehruvianism, neoliberalism and hyperrealism. (Scott 2011) Swapan Dasgupta, is yet another example of threefold division into firstly, Nehruvianism, secondly, Neoliberalism and, thirdly, Hindu-Nationalism (conversation with the author 2017). Also for Bharat Karnad there seems to be a tripartite division of India's grand strategic traditions; There is the still dominant Nehruvian worldview and there are two competitors, on the one side there is a neoliberal or globalist perspective and on the other side there is an emerging offensive realist subculture that is based on Hinduism's great civilizational heritage (Karnad 2015).

2.4.5.2.3 A Polyadic Structure of Indian Strategic Pluralism

Some scholars, however, found even the three-way split of India's strategic pluralism as not satisfactory to grasp the high level of complexity. Among those who delineate four subcultures or worldviews are, for example, Raja Mohan, who has elaborated the distinction between realists further by introducing a 'Forward or Neo-Curzonian' school of Indian strategic thought (Mohan 2003). "For sections of the Indian foreign policy elite who have long dreamed of a powerful role for India in its surrounding regions, Curzon remains a source of strategic inspiration [...] Jaswant Singh, India's external affairs minister from 1998 to 2002, belongs to the Curzonian school in defining India's role in its neighborhood. He is sharply critical of the failure of Jawaharlal Nehru in creating a strategic culture suited to its geographic requirements." (Mohan 2003, 204-205) Mohan, himself, can be portrayed as an exponent of a neo-liberal school of thought, while he has detected besides 'realists' a Nehruvian grand strategic tradition and an increasingly visible Hindu-revitalist perspective.

Another of the rarer proponents of four strategic subcultures or 'visions', how he likes to call them is Rahul Sagar. For him Moralists, Hindu nationalists, Strategists and Liberals are fighting within India's strategic establishment for ideational hegemony (Sagar 2009). Finally, there

those are in favor of the delineation of up to six schools of thought or subcultures. Beyond that number, the author, could not find any empirical evidence of advocates of seven or more strategic subcultures. The most prominent promoters of six grand strategic paradigms are on the one hand Ollapally and Rajagopalan⁹³ and again Bajpai in a volume edited together with Saira Basit and V. Krishnappa on “India’s Grand Strategy. History, Theory, Cases” from 2014, where he argues for the perception of six strategic subcultures.

Now, Deepa Ollapally and Rajesh Rajagopalan delineate six schools of thought as they share a somewhat broader perception of foreign and security policy; three of which are variations of Nationalists (Standard-, Neo-, and Hyper-) the others are Great Power realists, Liberal Globalist and Leftists (Ollapally and Rajagopalan 2012). These ‘Standard-Nationalists’ in Ollapally’s terms are identical with what Bajpai has coined to be ‘Nehruvians’ and would in most other cases be located between the idealist and the realist perspective. Starting with the ‘founding fathers’ of modern India, this subculture sees itself as being guided by the principles of the national movement. This set of beliefs, called ‘Nehruvianism’ is still vivid in today’s India (Hall 2017). Prime minister Nehru developed the language, the ideas as well as the institutions shaping Indian foreign and security policy and which is known to this day as the post-independence ‘Nehruvian Consensus’. They have been closely related to the Congress Party. Their Indian variation of idealism is said to be inspired by Gandhi’s concept of ‘*satyagraha*’ and Buddha’s, Ashoka’s and even Akbar’s thoughts. But Nehru’s widespread categorization as an idealist in terms of security policy, Jaswant Singh pointed to his ‘idealistic romanticism’ (Singh 1999) is not shared unequivocally by scholars in the field (Liebig 2014a). Engelmeier’s idealist inflection (Engelmeier 2009) would also fit them as a designation as they are rhetorically abjuring power politics, even though for them war and conflict are integral parts of the human condition and there has been little reluctance to use force in situations ranging from Goa to Sri Lanka and East Pakistan. Generally strategic autonomy and territorial integrity are high rated values for ‘Nehruvians’ as they favour a defensive grand strategy with a preference for internal balancing and reluctance for ‘entangling alliances’. But finding an appropriate label which fits into international relations terminology is not easy. Some describe the dominant strand of India’s strategic culture as ‘deliberate ambiguity’ (Mitra 2009, Paranjpe 2013), as ‘strategic restraint’ (Dasgupta and Cohen 2011) or as ‘Kautiylan realism’ (Liebig 2013) to name but a few. In between what Ollapally and Rajagopalan calls Standard-Nationalists and Leftists are the Neo-Nationalist

⁹³ Even though Deepa Ollapally has also taken different positions on the question. See, for example, Ollapally and Rajagopalan (2011), where she has identified only two subcultures.

coalition. They are also Nehruvians but ones who care more for domestic economic needs than over foreign and security ambitions. This kind of Nehruvianism entails left of centre sections of the Congress, as well as other left parties, civil society groups and regional parties. A key strand of thought related to this group of neo-nationalists is their perception of India as a developing country.

It might be debatable if 'Leftists' representing primarily India's two major communist parties, the Communist Party of India (CPI) and the Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPM) and the more radical 'intelligentsia' as a very vocal element of the 'chattering class' (Bagchi 2011) are important enough in national security policy to be included in such a calculus. However, they gained a more prominent position in leading the effort against the United States-India nuclear deal in 2005 and they have been very determined in opposing closer ties with Israel (Bajpai, 2003, Das 2010a and 2010b, Ollapally and Rajagoplan 2012). A key strand of thought related to this group of leftists is their perception of India as a developing country. They are standing in the 'Nehruvian-Gandhian' tradition but unlike 'Standard-Nehruvians' they focus more on domestic economic needs than on India's foreign and security ambitions staunchly secularist and anti-militarist. This kind of Nehruvianism entails left of centre sections of the Congress, as well as the mentioned left parties, and civil society groups. So, they could be added to a broader leftist coalition representing the 'Ashokan' or Gandhian tradition with a clearly accommodationist outlook emphasising better relations with China and Third World solidarity (Bajpai 2003). They may represent the most undiluted variation of secularist and idealist thought (encompassing modern, post-modern and post-colonial approaches) but still leftists predominantly share the notion of the state and the international system with the other subcultures.

As the 'Nehruvians' ideas of non-alignment and disarmament became heavily contested in the 1990s due to the earlier mentioned 'elite revolts' against a perceived post-independence 'Nehruvian consensus' (Corbridge and Harriss 2000), the 'hyper-nationalists' (in contrast to Bajpai and others, Ollapally and Rajagopalan are not using a culturalist terminology in their approach – like 'Nehruvians' or 'Gandhians' and the like) or 'revivalists' (a more restricted understanding of indigenous modernity) as Cohen (Cohen 2001) has called them (who wish to reclaim the cultural legacy of Hindu civilization and its "glorious" past and enhance India's militaristic or masculine attitude towards global politics) are representing the most pressing milieu in Indian

strategic affairs in terms of reclaiming lost heritage. Their affinity for military power and autarky and the partly revision of the regional⁹⁴ as well international status quo is much stronger than the traditional Nehruvian demand. Their voice became significantly stronger in the post-Cold War era especially concerning issues of international arms control and domestic military policies, which might even remotely or potentially limit India's capabilities (Bajpai 2003, Das 2010a and 2010b, Ollapally and Rajagopalan 2012, 90). Furthermore, Hindu-revivalists also began to play a more prominent role in India's strategic discourse after the nuclear tests in 1998 due to a change in fashion favouring a more openly realist rhetoric. The camp of well-known realists in the tradition of Patel include Brahma Chellaney or Pratab Bhanu Mehta. For these great-power realists, which can be regarded as also reviving the 'Kautilyan' strand in realist thought, it is not a question of whether India's will become a great power but only when. According to the literature (Liebig 2013), however, Kautilya seems not to be outspokenly popular among BJP or RSS followers compared to Savarkar's impact on grand strategy formulation. They believe in the responsible but comprehensive development of India's economic and military power combined with a global outlook, which would not be confined by national or regional issues. For 'great-power realists' with their offensive grand strategic preference the biggest obstacle in achieving great power status is the lack of a grand strategy and the reluctance in the exercise of power (Mehta 2009a, Das 2010a and 2010b, Ollapally and Rajagopalan 2012, 92). Whenever in power the revivalists agenda has been watered down be it because of coalition politics or a resisting bureaucracy. It remains to be seen if Hindu revivalists will be able to influence the Modi government's foreign policy in any palpable way.

Ollapally's 'Liberal globalists', which are again synonymous with Bajpai's neoliberals and also with Das's 'neo-liberal Nehruvians' became more influential after the Cold War ended. Their main opponents are the so-called hyperrealists whose autarkic orientations the neoliberals believe would minimize India's chance of successfully participating in economic globalization. Liberal globalists "pay far less attention to military power than others, and to ideology or moralism in foreign policy" (Bajpai 2003, Ollapally and Rajagopalan 2012, 97). For them diplomacy and trade are much more important for India's relations with the outside world, a prominent example for this stance is India's 'look east' policy at the beginning of the 1990s. They propagate a more relaxed relationship with the West, especially the United States and are regarded as the big winners who have modified Indian strategic discourse in tune with economic

⁹⁴ The post- 'partition of the British Raj' order, that is implying a preference for strategic unity of South Asia compared to achieving its political unity (Pant 2011).

liberalization and the accompanying integration into the global economic system, seeking a new equilibrium with the Nehruvian establishment (Mohan 2004).

Kanti Bajpai has, after authoritatively laying the foundations of a three-fold discursive plurality, expanded his scheme. In his earlier mentioned edited book on India's grand strategy from 2014 he introduces three additional subcultures. So, besides the familiar traditions of Nehruvian, Neoliberal and Hyperrealist thought he argues for three minor strategic subcultures. These are the Marxist, the Hindutva and the Gandhian school of thought (Bajpai, Basit and Krishnappa 2014). In a fairly recent volume edited by Jacob Happymon called "Does India think strategically? Institutions Strategic Culture and Security Policies" (2014), the author contends in the introduction that there are several groupings of strategic perspectives in the Indian context ranging from the Left to Hindu-Nationalists, with Nehruvians and Liberals in between (Happymon 2014).

Narang and Staniland (2012) have identified several strategic worldviews by linking their observations to political parties and premier-ministers ranging from Prime minister Nehru ('Nehruvianism') and Congress rule including Prime ministers Indira and Rajiv Gandhi to the Janata intermezzo and the coalition governments since the early 1990s – to each of these personalities and parties the authors have defined a worldview, that circulates around the broad 'core' of grand strategic thought (Narang and Staniland 2012, 81).

This section's purpose has been to give a cursory survey of the number and labels that are being used to come to terms with Indian strategic thought. As was outlined the following pattern can be traced, which will provide the basis for the qualitative analysis of the final section of chapter 2; Indian strategic pluralism has been structured either by two, three, four or six subcultures or traditions or whatever the conceptual vessel has been named by the respective author. The next step will be a mapping of these strategic subcultures in order to deduce a preliminary cleavage structure of grand strategic plurality.

2.5 The Pattern: Mapping the Labels of India's Grand Strategic Thought

Finally, this section is dedicated to the qualitative analysis of the scholarly debate on India's strategic pluralism. As outlined in the methodology section of the introduction this enquiry has been conducted in terms of an interpretivist text study, that has been based on a content analysis of the scholarly contributions to the pluralist strand of India's strategic culture debate. Thus, in a first step, this section will detail the empirical sources as well as the methods used to interpret

the patterns structuring this ideational pluralism. In a second step the numbers of subcultures, that had been established in the last section, will be discussed as they form the basis of the delineation of strategic pluralism. Thirdly, as a further refinement the labels will be checked for possible explanations or implicit derivations from IR theory, party politics or nation-building processes. Fourthly, the question of continuity will be addressed, as it deals with the nature of the subcultures in relation to India's past. Three distinctions have been devised; firstly, the claim for long-lasting continuity and coherence of strategic traditions, secondly, continuity's very opposite, that is an abstract understanding of strategic thought solely based on contemporary concepts of IR theory and thirdly, a deliberate instrumentalization of the past according to both discursive necessities as well as historical and cultural dependencies. Fifthly, a three-fold categorization of the labels of Indian grand strategic thought is being proposed. All of the observed designations fall within one of these three baskets; the first contains labels, which are derived from IR or grand strategic terminology, the second encompasses subcultures, which have been deduced from indigenous sources, both from India's pre-19th century past and from the country's nationalist movement as well as from its post-independence history. The third vessel, finally, entails hybrid categories, which have been formed by combining the two previous types of designations. The final and sixth analytical step of this section will be to aggregate these findings in terms of two inductively devised dimensions; a normative IR or grand strategy continuum and a cultural identity continuum, comprising the different ideological positions embedded in India's strategic subcultures. These two dimensions reflecting the conflicts structuring Indian strategic pluralism are, then, working as proto-cleavages and will take center-stage in chapter 3, that is dedicated to social cleavage theory and its adaptation to International Relations.

2.5.1 A Qualitative Content Analysis of the Labelling of Indian Strategic Pluralism

Now in order to analyze and interpret the pluralist branch of India's strategic culture debate the method of qualitative content analysis has been employed: the empirical sources or communication artifacts consist of both around 65 written contributions by scholars on the topic and a survey and conversations conducted by the author plus additional multimedia sources (like youtube and cspan: <https://www.c-span.org/video/?299187-3/foreign-policy-debates-india>). This data material has been coded with the help of the MAXQDA12 software, a tool in the tradition of Max Weber's qualitative data analysis. However, "coding is only the initial step toward an even more rigorous and evocative analysis" (Miles, Huberman, Saldana 2013, Chapter 1, 8) and after the first 'rough' coding categories have been build. "Coding is thus a method

that enables you to organize and group similarly coded data into categories or “families” because they share some characteristic – the beginning of a pattern” (Miles, Huberman, Saldana 2013, Chapter 1, 9). Thus, classification is “reasoning plus your tacit and intuitive senses to determine which data “look alike” and “feel alike” when grouping them together (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 347)” (Miles, Huberman, Saldana 2013, Chapter 1, 10). This assessment highlights the inductive nature of this kind of interpretivist work, which can lead from coding to category building to theoretical assumptions – here in the case of ideational elite cleavages. The initial codes consisted of the various labels of strategic thought and, if at all traceable, the authors’ explanations given for these designations. The intuitively developed codes were, firstly, IR-rooted conceptualizations of strategic thought, secondly, party-system based elaborations and, thirdly, broader identity-related ‘explanations’. These codings were then grouped according to the numeric structure within they were found – dyadic, triadic or polyadic. Additionally, the artifacts were searched for statements regarding the relationship between the detected labels of strategic thought and Indian history and its cultural space. Another possible solution to determine the likely number of subcultures would have been to discuss the various propositions made in the literature and then triangulate the number of schools of thought by the quantity of respective references made by each of the authors. This procedure has been implemented only in terms of grouping the redundant labels in one of the three main categories. Finally, based on this first cycle of coding, three umbrella-categories have been created, following Mayring (2000, 3): labels, which are firstly, exclusively derived from modern IR-terminology, secondly, labels, which are based on an indigenous terminology (with the further differentiation between those designations, which stem from the nationalist movement to India’s post-1947 history and those labels, which are rooted in India’s ‘ancient’ past). Finally, the third category, addresses so called ‘hybrid’ terminology, which basically refers to the mixing of the former two categories – a prominent example would be the label of ‘Kautilyan-Realism’ (Menon 2012, Liebig 2013). In a last step, based on these three broad categories following Miles, Huberman, Saldana (2013) - Chapter 11: “Drawing and Verifying Conclusions”, an inductive conjecture has been drawn between the IR-derived labels and those, referring to India’s cultural identity. These two broad structuring features implicitly work as a common denominator; a continuum of paradigmatic IR positions (ranging from idealism to realism) and besides this dominant cleavage a second variable termed ‘cultural identity cleavage’ concerned with nationalism and identity (Hindutva, hyperrealism, Kautilyan thought, standard nationalists) has been extrapolated, thereby introducing vernacular terminology and in some cases marking an attempt of hybridization by re-

ferring to indigenous traditions of IR theory. Hence, preparing the way for a constitutive theoretical understanding of these lines of conflict among India's strategic elite in terms of the earlier mentioned ideational cleavages. These two inductively deduced cleavages, are, then, supposed to function as 'structuring instruments' in the framework of the 'subculture-cleavage model of grand strategic thought', which aims at systematically delineating India's ideational strategic pluralism.

Now these codes and categories that have been used to inductively analyze the around 65 textual artifacts about the ideational foundations of grand strategy are discussed in more detail in the following paragraphs; the first patterns that have been deduced and, which had already been outlined in section 4 of this chapter, are the numerical structures of strategic pluralism. This has been done, firstly, in terms of the numbers of labels: constellations of two, three, four and six schools of thought have been identified in the texts as well as in the survey. These findings have then been grouped according to a dyadic, triadic or polyadic structure of Indian strategic pluralism. Secondly, the majority of authors seem to prefer a dualistic understanding of pluralism. Around 40% of the examined contributions share a dyadic structure (26 of the 65 authors for example). Interestingly, however, this dichotomous conceptualization is not necessarily reflected in the so called 'Idealism-Realism divide'. The mostly employed labels or the 'top 5' are the following; Nehruvian, Neoliberal, Hindu-Nationalist, Idealist, Gandhian. What has, additionally, become clear is the great variety of labels that are being used. In absolute numbers around 30 different labels for Indian strategic worldviews have been detected, by the author. Redundant labels have been identified, that is how often realist or idealist designations or others like the various types of Nehruvian thought have been used. These are, then, (without the inclusion of minor variations) the aggregated labels of India's strategic subcultures: *Idealism, Internationalism, Marxism, Leftism, Askokianism, Akbarianism, Gandhianism, Nehruvianism, Neo-Nehruvianism, Realism, Great Power Realism, Hyperrealism, Realism Plus, Kautilyan Realism, Kautilyanism, Machiavellism, Moghul Grand Strategic Tradition, Hyper-Nationalism, Standard-Nationalism, Neo-Nationalism, Revitalism, Hindu-Nationalism or Hindutva-Nationalism, Neoliberalism, Neoliberal Globalism, Neo-Curzonianism*. Thus, these are the labels, that have been found in a substantial part of the strategic culture debate, that explicitly and implicitly rests upon the notion of discursive plurality.

However, despite this abundance of labels, there is no evidence in the literature so far on how to delineate and explain the causes for these apparent lines of discord or cleavages – there is no

explanation given of why scholars assume two, three or six subcultures structuring the ideational pluralism. The following questions have guided the analysis of the author; Do scholars mention any of their thoughts, which have led them to devise their subculture labels? The answer is no. All authors assume that their labeling is self-evident. There is not one example, where a strategic culturalist explains why he is using scientific IR jargon or why his or her labels are derived from party political contentions or why historical and cultural attributes are attractive to name India's strategic schools.

So, the author read the data by asking: Are these cleavages reflecting the lines of conflict of international relations-specific expressions of elite dissent? Are the debates between these subcultures an expression of broader socio-economic divisions present in the whole polity? Or are these disputes, consequently, the result of party-system cleavages? Or, in turn, do these competing streams of thinking come from the embroilments of nation-building? Or was India's past used as an inexhaustible quarry to forge a national identity? Only implicit were the answers to these questions, the author found in the literature, that is mainly through the designations used and their accompanying annotations to describe their respective content. Authors like; Gordon and Babbage (1992) or Malik (2010) exclusively use IR labels. Then, there are those, who apply party-alignments like Muni and Mohan (2004), Sikri (2009) or Ogden (2014) and finally, those strategic culturalists, who appeal to identitarian and cultural designations, like Rosen (1996), Kim (2009) or Datta-Ray (2014). So, information has been coded in order to fit into one of these three categories (IR labels, party-system labels and identity labels). What seems to be sure, however, is that any of these subcultures or schools of thought has its own idiosyncrasy at their disposal encompassing different foundational texts, historical narratives and ideas about the state, organized violence and the respective threat perception, which reflect to various degrees attempts to recapture cultural heritage and to devise a kind of indigenous modernity. No matter, where the roots of the differently constructed subcultures are to be found, what they all aim to address is the following; What kind of India do they envision? That is the definition of the 'self'. By formulating a certain idea of India, the question arises with whom and in what way this India interacts with. So, who are the significant 'others' for the Indian state? And, finally, how should that India act? What kind of grand strategy and foreign policy should it pursue to guarantee its security or enhance its status in a multi-polar and multi-civilizational world? Again, the available data does not provide exhausting conjectures to fully address these questions, only hints are extractable as the writings on grand strategic ideas seem to be based on mostly implicit assumptions. These extractions will be incorporated, however, in the definition of the two ideational cleavages that will be elaborated in chapter 3.

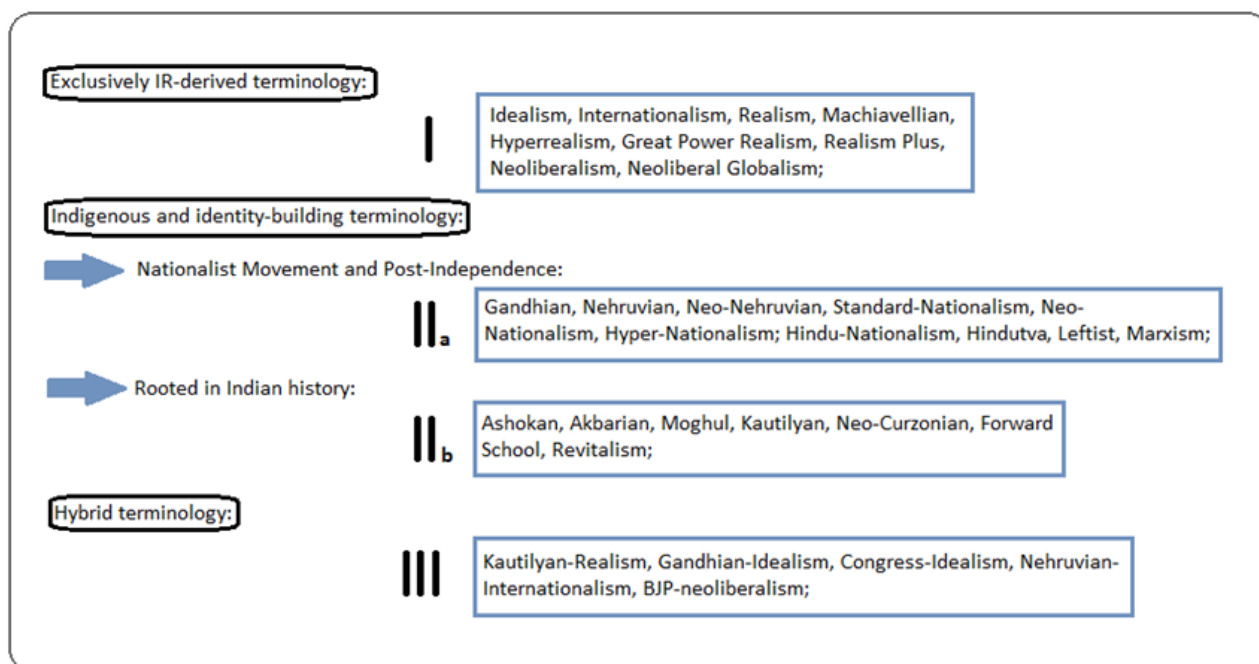
Besides the lack of explanations for India's strategic pluralism, the question of continuity of subcultures has also preoccupied the author. Because, how continuity is conceptualized has implications on the quality the clash between paradigms has. Already in the last paragraph on the underlying causes for the fragmentation of India's strategic culture the various time frames became visible. Thus, a three-fold distinction has been made whether authors have stated any remarks on the origin of their grand strategic labels. Are they rooted in deep-history or are they discursively constructed according to the necessities of India's identity politics, or are they derived from abstract categories of modern IR theory? These three positions on the question of continuity have been corroborated by coding the references on the temporal classification of the subcultures. So, the advocates for uninterrupted continuity, like Singh (1999), Jones (2006), Liebig (2013) or Paranjpe (2013) argue for a notion of a strategic culture that is deeply rooted in history and therefore "semi-permanent" (Snyder 1977). Similarly, the second group of scholars, like Basrur (2009) or Das (2010b) promote an instrumental relationship between the past and discursive practices, as does the author. For both distinctions, India's past is important as it provides the basis for a deeper understanding of the roots of Indian strategic plurality and links strategic culture research to identity formation. Pointing to questions like the deliberate re-use of the past, instrumentalization and identity formation, but also about uniqueness and civilizational heritage and its relationship with indigenous modernity. Finally, the third camp consists of those, who claim that strategic pluralism is discursively constructed, however, the discourse position is deduced only from the concepts and the idiom of the day. Their understanding, is abstract and one can even speak of an ahistorical and *ad hoc* understanding of strategic subcultures. Be it IR or party-political affiliations they only refer to the current and contemporary (going back in history only within the limits of independent India). However even this ahistorical and to a certain degree also acultural pragmatism is, nonetheless, reflecting the relevance of identity politics for the formation of grand strategy in general. Authors like Mehta (2009a) or Narang and Staniland (2012) simply have another focus on Indian history and culture. They refrain, maybe deliberately, from excavating or 're-inventing' age-old strategic traditions, instead they prefer well-established categorizations like idealism, internationalism (Nehru 1988) or standard nationalism (Ollapally and Rajagopalan 2012) to be able to speak to a greater audience, that is familiar with mainstream modern or Western IR and strategic studies.

2.5.2 *Three Terminological Patterns of Grand Strategic Labels*

However, even this past analysis of the continuity as one of the central features of any strategic culture approach can only be a building block in the more comprehensive understanding of

discursive plurality. Therefore, three categories called, firstly, ‘*IR-terminology*’, secondly, ‘*Indigenous-terminology*’, and, thirdly, ‘*Hybrid-terminology derived labels of strategic subcultures*’, have been devised out of the previous coding on numerical structure, causes and continuity (Miles, Huberman, Saldana 2013, Chapter 1). These analytical tools, which seem to structure the labeling process of Indian strategic subcultures are detailed below, before the two cleavages are theorized. These three categories, eventually, aggregate the dimensions gained from the first cycle of coding. Figure 9 is used to illustrate the distribution of labels among the three analytical categories (with one having two sub-categories in terms of Indian history):

Figure9: Labels of Indian Strategic Subcultures



Source: Drawn by the author

2.5.2.1 IR-Derived Labels of Strategic Subcultures: ‘Of Obstinate Idealists’

Such a three-tiered pattern seems to be adequate as each category reflects the recurring employment of, firstly, normative IR labels (great power realists, neo-liberal institutionalists, internationalists, idealists). These labels are seldom used exclusively, that is not only IR paradigms are employed to catch India’s ideological perspectives on grand strategy. However, these normative traditions are applied as self-evident in regard to grand strategy formation (even if they are at the same time strangely combined with other domestic or vernacular designations). But, despite this imprecision on the causes for their application in delineating discourse positions (subcultures), there seems to be a clear preference among the scholars, who use a modern IR-idiom, for portraying these schools of thought as abstract manifestations of strategic thought. By abstract, the author means, an ahistorical and acultural approach, which perceives international

relations as governed by laws, which are not altered by time and space. Therefore, the contemporary theories on IR and strategic affairs fully grasp, what can also be considered ‘anthropological constants’ (Menzel 2001). However, most of the observed authors prefer to combine mainstream IR cleavages (based on modern and Western International Relations terminology) with vernacular labels in their effort to provide more precise delineations of Indian strategic thought. Scholars, who fall within this category are the following: Gosh, Pant, Bajpai, Narang and Staniland, Das, Cohen, Goswami, Mehta, Wahe Guru, Zaman, Menon, Engelmeier, Jones, Behera, Abraham, Ganguly, Liebig, Mitra, Chatterjee-Miller, Müller, Raja, Schaffer, Rosen to name major exponents.

2.5.2.2 Indigenously-Derived Labels of Strategic Subcultures: ‘Of Nehruvians’

The second category that has been inductively extrapolated concerns itself with so called indigenous labels. These labels like Nehruvian subculture (Bajpai 2003), Gandhian strand (Kim 2009) or Kautilyan thought (Mehta 2009a) can be subsumed as referring to indigenous terminology and concepts from both the times of India’s freedom struggle against British rule and contemporary Indian politics, but also from India’s pre-modern past. A past, which sometimes can be better described in imperial terms like the Maurya Empire or the Moghul Empire, or in cultural and religious terms like stemming from the Vedic or Hindu tradition – despite these indeterminacies, basically all scholars, who use these vernacular designations for their labelling assume an uninterrupted ‘Indian’ culture, which forms the ‘natural’ background for the modern Indian nation-state. What has already become visible in the context of the varieties of subcultural continuity, has also led the author to draw a differentiation within the ‘Indigenous-terminology derived labels’. As the labels, which have been derived from vernacular thinkers, and concepts can obviously be divided into two broad groups. The first sub-category encompasses the designations that have their roots in India’s nationalist struggle since the late 19th century or are even referring to the legacy of British rule and its strategic outlook on the Indian subcontinent, like the ‘Neo-Curzonian school’ or the ‘Forward School’ (Singh 1999, Mohan 2003), which still reflect differing positions concerning the geo-political treatment of India’s ‘near-abroad’. But here, also, key Indian political thinkers like Gandhi (‘Gandhian tradition’ [Cohen 2001]) or Nehru (‘Nehruvianism’ [Bajpai 2003] or ‘Neo-Nehruvian thought’ [Ollapally and Rajagopalan 2012]) are included and other modern ideologies like ‘Hindutva’ or ‘Hindu-Nationalism’ (Das 2010a), or ‘Leftist’ (Ollapally and Rajagopalan 2012) and ‘Marxist’ schools of thought, which have been shaping India’s post-independence history. Finally, also those labels,

which have nationalism in their name (Standard-Nationalism, Neo-Nationalism or Hyper-Nationalism) and are therefore clearly anchored in the post-1947 contentions on nation-building and identity politics. Authors, who have included designations from this sub-category are Bajpai (2003), Upadhyaya (2008), Das (2010b). The second sub-category, called ‘Rooted in Indian-history’, subsumes all strategic subculture markers, which have been derived from India’s pre-modern (or pre-Raj) history. Examples include Buddhist, Ashokan, Akbarian thought (labels, which should signal a deep continuity of so called idealist thought through ‘Indian’ history) (Abraham 2010) a conceptualization, which also entails Gandhi’s concept of *ahimsa* and *satyagraha*. Other designations used in this category are ‘Kautilyan thought’ or ‘Moghul grand strategic tradition’ or the general term of ‘revitalism’, which signifies the ‘recovery of the self’ (Nandy 1983) or the modern instrumentalization and selective ‘borrowing’ from the past. The detected scholars regarding these subcultural labeling are the following: Cohen (2001), Sagar, (2009), Kim (2009), Menon (2012), Liebig (2013),

2.5.2.3 Hybrid-Labels of Strategic Subcultures: ‘Of Kautilyan-Realists’

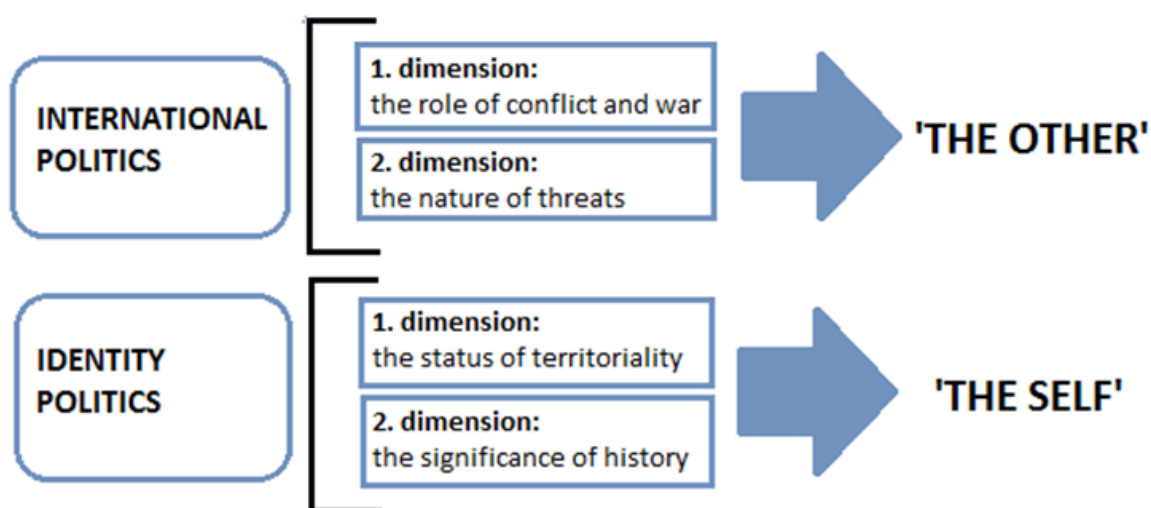
Finally, the third category, which has been built from the lower level codes, is called ‘Hybrid-terminology derived labels of strategic subcultures’. Essentially, it represents a mix of the two former categories. In that sense, it is a hybridization of the genuinely strategic idiom and the vernacular. Examples of these comparatively rare mixed labels are ‘Kautilyan-Realists’ (Menon 2012) and ‘Gandhian-idealists’ (Kim 2009). Based on these three above outlined categories the two ‘proto’-cleavages will be sketched in the next section.

2.5.3 *The Two ‘Proto’ Cleavages: The Grand Strategy and the Identity Dimension*

This in-depth of analysis of the scholarly debate on India’s strategic subculture has led the author to deduce two dimensions of ideational conflict, which he found as a recurring pattern in the wealth of scholarly categorizations. These two dimensions or ‘cleavages’, how the author likes to call them as a fitting heuristic, reflect the lines of conflict between different normative positions on grand strategy. Thus, the purpose of these two ideational elite cleavages, which are cross-cutting each other, is to delineate the competing subcultures of India’s strategic establishment. So far no one has ever introduced the notion of such a cleavage to the Indian context. The adaption of cleavage theory to IR in general and to the Indian case in particular will be detailed in chapter 3, however. Now, what became clear to the author has been the recurring and in a way even redundant use of similar labels by various scholars. After aggregating the various codes, employed in the first step of content analysis, and the building of the, above discussed, three categories (Miles, Huberman, Saldana 2013), these were, finally, reduced to two essential

dimensions. This inductive process has been guided by the observation that all identified patterns can be condensed to these two; So, in order to be as parsimonious as possible, one can even speak of the two lowest common denominators. As a consequence, the labelling and therefore, implicitly, the delineation of Indian strategic worldviews can be considered as being structured by, firstly, a continuum of normative positions regarding grand strategy (or more broadly international relations) and secondly, and importantly a cross-cutting continuum or cleavage of ideological positions on (cultural or national) identity. Eventually, these two dimensions together represent the essential characteristics of every strategic paradigm or subculture, as they deal on the one hand with inter-state relations (the “others”) and questions of strategy (“how to act?”) and on the other hand with the “self”, that is how India’s state identity is perceived.

Figure10: The Four Basic Assumptions Constituting a Strategic Subculture



Source: Drawn by the Author

One can argue that these normative perspectives sometimes correspond with the western left-right spectrum and can find its expression in party political orientations – this, however, only gets part of the picture. As some of the strategic subcultures, due to the structural conditions of grand strategy formation – where certain perspectives, like, for example, so called ‘great power realists’ (Ollapally and Rajagopalan 2012) share a *de facto* aura of statesmanship, are cross-cutting party affiliations. Basically, however, does the so called “normative grand strategy cleavage” only implicitly represent the left-right divide⁹⁵ of the broader Indian polity. Grand strategy as a policy still has a fairly limited audience in India’s political system (Narang and

⁹⁵ The question remains, if this modern and predominately Western conceptions of a left-right divide is fully applicable to the Indian case.

Staniland 2012). Thus, to describe the range of ideological positions or worldviews on grand strategy and the nature of international politics, the modern and basically Western IR-concepts still seem to be the most suitable. Also in this attempt to denounce the different normative traditions in India with respect to strategic affairs a distinction ranging from idealism over institutionalism (and only marginally over structuralism or Marxism) to realism has been made. The actual content of these positions will, however, be defined in the next chapter, where the basic assumptions on “how should India act in the international state-system?”, as the constitutive dimension of this cleavage will be discussed.

The other pattern, that has been aggregated, is derived from the repeated use of indigenous concepts and terminology. These references, which are sometimes, as in case of ‘Kautilyan thought’ clearly aimed at grand strategy and IR, do have, however, a mostly general outlook on India’s polity, like, for example, ‘Gandhian’ ideas or ‘Nehruvianism’ to name but a few. This ideas-based conflict structure, called “cultural identity cleavage”, then, incorporates the other foundational continuum of normative perspectives concerning the “self”. Leaving all fine tuning aside, this is where the specifically Indian context gets palpable. It is also the dimension, where, secondly, the narrow focus on grand strategy gets broadened and thirdly, where the roots of the different grand strategic vision for India are to be found. Cultural identity as a broad category, is, then, also a link to India’s ongoing nation-building process, which finds its manifestation in identity politics. These contestations on identity and especially the competing visions and ideas on India’s strategic trajectory are marked by a struggle between the Nehruvian foundations of the contemporary Indian state and its challengers like Hindutva, Neoliberal or more left-leaning ideologies. In this context, especially Hindu-nationalists have excavated various ‘items’ from India’s past and collective cultural memory (Halbwachs 1991). But already Premier minister Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi and the Congress in general have re-used different aspects of India’s Hindu past (Mehta 2009a). In today’s debate on grand strategy and strategic culture such labels and sometimes self-designations like ‘Nehruvian’ or ‘Gandhian’, therefore, facilitate the identification of normative positions. Even the inclusion or mentioning of Moghul or Islamic strategic traditions says, basically, more about the political agenda of the scholar than about the relevance of these conceptualizations in the broader semi-scientific debate, however. A case apart are hybridizations like Kautilyan-Realism, or Ashokan-idealism, even though they too fall among this bracket, what they are pointing at is, however, firstly, a distinct variation of realism or idealism, that is uniquely Indian and, secondly, to a combination of both cleavages. As they, at least superficially demonstrate a merging of the identity dimension with a normative grand strategic perspective. Again, these two ‘cleavages’ or lines of conflict seem to structure

the majority of pluralist understandings of grand strategic thinking and will form the basis for the delineation of Indian strategic thought, according to the ‘subculture-cleavage’ model further outlined in chapter 3.

2.6 Summary of Chapter 2 ‘India’s Strategic Culture Debate’

Before these two structuring devices or features of India’s ideational strategic pluralism are engaged in more detail, a summary of the last chapter on strategic culture is provided. The main purpose of this chapter has been to introduce the concept of strategic culture, as one of the foundational elements of the ‘subculture-cleavage’ model of grand strategic thought. This has been done by, firstly, tracing the evolution of strategic culture as an IR-concept from its pre-modern origins to recent conceptualizations. Secondly, key features of strategic culture theory have been defined and the pros and cons of a subculture approach have been discussed, before a working definition, in the framework of neoclassical realism, has been devised. Thirdly, with the strategic subculture approach defined, India’s strategic culture debate has been engaged. This scholarly debate was, firstly, located within the so called ‘meta-debate’ on Indian grand strategy, which entails, besides strategic culture, discourses on India’s emergence, its nuclear policies and last but not least the ongoing controversy about the country’s perceived strategic exceptionalism. Secondly, the different sources, that is the different layers of India’s strategic culture have been detailed, before the bearers of strategic culture, the strategic establishment, have been elaborated. Finally, the three streams of the scholarly dispute have been sketched. After the presentation of the two essentialist positions, the emphasis has been on the pluralist strand, which had puzzled the author due to the arbitrariness of its contributions. In order to delineate and systematically analyze its inherent structure, finally, the collected data, in terms of scholarly literature and a survey among scholars has been analyzed, according to a humanist and hermeneutic methodology. After a two-step process of qualitatively coding the material, three categories have been aggregated, which have, then in a third and final step inductively been theorized in terms of a two ‘proto’ ideational elite cleavages, which will work as the independent variables within the ‘subculture-cleavage’ model, that structure Indian strategic pluralism, the dependent variable of this dissertation project. Now, the next chapter seeks to introduce the other core concept of this thesis; the idea of classical social cleavage theory adopted to IR and used in the context of discursive plurality to structure the various discoursed positions in terms of strategic subcultures.

3. India's Grand Strategic Cleavages

“We must be clear about the fact that all ethically oriented conduct may be guided by one of two fundamentally differing and irreconcilably opposed maxims: conduct can be oriented to an "ethic of ultimate ends" or to an "ethic of responsibility." (Max Weber 1965)

“Many a Congressman was a communalist under his national cloak.” (Jawaharlal Nehru, 1958)

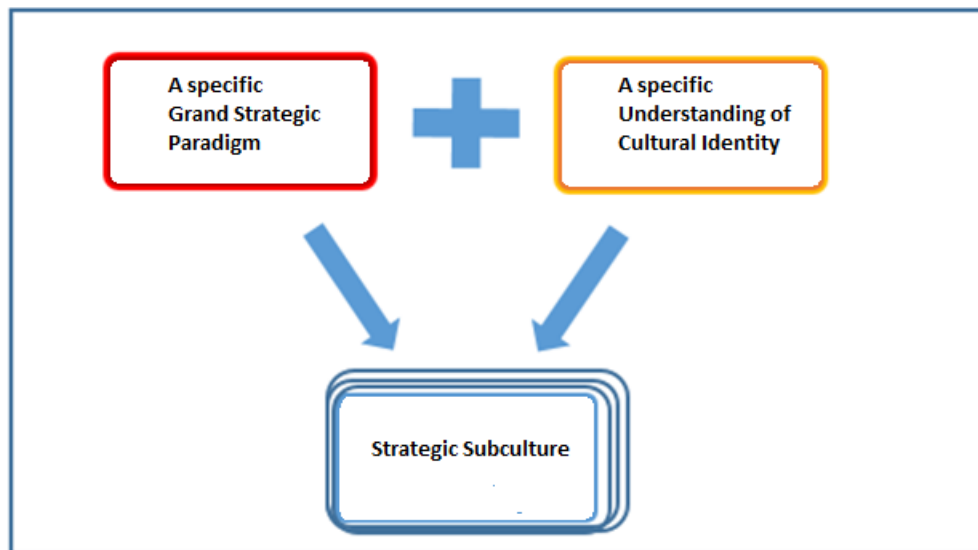
3.1 Cleavage Theory and its Adaptation to the Study of Grand Strategy

a. An Overview

As the task of this thesis is to develop an analytical instrument to comprehensively delineate India's strategic subcultures, this chapter is dedicated to the conceptual elaboration of the two inductively constructed 'proto-cleavages' based on the qualitative analysis of the scholarly discourse on strategic culture, conducted in the previous chapter. In this chapter, these two cleavages are theoretically refined to work as 'semi-permanent ideational elite cleavages in the realm of grand strategy', as the author has termed them, to provide the ideational set-up of Indian strategic subcultures, in terms of a coordinate system, within, which the individual subcultures' central strategic paradigms are to be located. This resulting 'subculture-cleavage model', that is the combination of these two cleavages, namely a "normative grand strategy cleavage" and a "cultural identity cleavage", as the analytical tool structuring Indian strategic pluralism in terms of its strategic subcultures, eventually merges the normative responses to the structural logic of the global state-system with the crosscutting interpretations of India's indigenous modernity and statehood. In order to do this, these two cleavages will be conceptualized by intro-

ducing Cleavage Theory and adopting it to the author's strategic subculture approach⁹⁶ - consequently, fitting it into the context of International Relations theory in general and the study

Figure11: A Schematic Depiction of the Constiution of a Strategic Subculture



Source: Drawn by the author

of Indian grand strategic ideas in particular.

Now, what is being done in this chapter specifically; Firstly, social cleavage theory is reviewed and its conceptualization as a 'niche' IR-concept since the late 1960s is discussed. Secondly, the author's own approach is devised, which is called "semi-permanent ideational elite cleavages in the realm of grand strategy". These are cleavages, that deal with the 'self' and the 'other' in grand strategy formation. In order to develop the concept into an employable analytical category, it is being based on Gary Goertz's classic guide on building qualitative 'Social Science Concepts' (Goertz 2006). This cleavage concept is, then, combined with the other fundamental analytic tool of the thesis, the earlier discussed strategic culture approach (Beitelmair-Berini's strategic subculture approach) to form a heuristic to delineate Indian grand strategic thought. Consequently, this model should constitute the central strategic paradigms of each subculture and subsequently, unambiguously demarcate the subcultures as a whole. After this general conceptual foundation, has been laid the two cleavages are detailed in section 2 and 3; Eventually, as the findings of the qualitative analysis of the scholarly strategic subculture debate suggest, 'ideational elite cleavages' are constituted in terms of Robert Putnam's or Subrata Mitra's 'two-level game'⁹⁷ (Putnam 1988, Mitra 2011), that means by the normative positions regarding the nature of International Relations (roughly framed by the so called 'idealism-realism divide')

⁹⁶ See chapter 2 section 3 for the development of the strategic subculture approach primarily based on Johnston's (1995) and Bloomfield's (2012) work.

⁹⁷ For Mitra's conceptualization of the 'two-level game'; see: Mitra (2011).

(Guzzini 2013), which deals with the outside world towards which any grand strategy is directed. And following Putnam's distinction further, besides this outward-looking dimension, a domestic or identity-dimension connected to the phenomenon of 'elite revolts', addresses the self-perception of each actor, in terms of the respective understanding of the past and its territorial manifestation. Both of the cleavages will be build according to a similar scheme; firstly, the "normative grand strategy cleavage", with its basic assumptions or, according to Goertz, its secondary-level dimensions and its potential indicators in the realm of grand strategy are being developed. Then the same procedure is applied to the cross-cutting "cultural identity cleavage", with its roots in Indian identity politics. Finally, the theoretical structure of the evolving 'sub-culture-cleavage model' is presented.

3.1.1 Social Cleavage Theory – The 'Rokkonian' Approach:

Social cleavage theory can be considered as a classic political science concept, which is mostly in use in the subfield of comparative politics and there, especially, in the study of party systems. As a theoretical approach, originating from Georg Simmel's work "Soziologie" in 1908⁹⁸ and developed further by anthropologists like Evans-Pritchard or Kroeber in the first decades of the 20th century, it had its heydays in political science in the late 1960s to the 1980s (Rokkan et.al. 1999). It has, despite a certain drop in popularity, become a staple ingredient for understanding the lines of conflict, be they social (e.g. class conflict), ethnic or religious to name a few of the possible divisions within a society or state. The two founding fathers of the approach in political science have been Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan. Lipset in his 1960 book, called "Political Man", laid the ground for the concept, while Stein Rokkan, firstly in cooperation with Lipset in the introduction to their 1967 edited volume on "Party Systems and Voter Alignments", evolved the concept further in a number of essays (Rokkan 1970), in more recent times Peter Flora, one of Rokkan's principal disciples, and his colleagues have edited a reconstructed version of his work on the state and nation formation and mass politics in the European context (Rokkan et.al. 1999). Stein Rokkan, beyond his pioneering work on cleavages has, firmly anchored in the tradition of historical sociology, remained one of the most influential comparativists to date grounding his theorizing first and foremost on the study of history. Rokkan's contribution occupied for long time "a central role in the literature on the formation of European party systems and in studies of contemporary voting behavior" (Bornschieer 2009, 1). As will be shown in the section on IR-theory, it has, however, inspired other researchers to adopt its structural insights to other fields of inquiry. But, before applying the concept in the context of

⁹⁸ Georg Simmel speaks of "Spaltung", which has been translated into English as 'cleavage'.

grand strategic reasoning, which is different from structural or material settings usually associated with the approach, firstly Rokkan's interpretation will be detailed to get an impression of basic characteristics of his pioneering cleavage approach. This so-called "Rokkonian" concept of cleavage, denotes "a specific type of conflict in democratic politics that is rooted in the social structural transformations that have been triggered by large-scale processes such as nation-building, industrialization, and possibly also by the consequences of post-industrialization and globalization" (Bronschier 2009, 2). In his work Rokkan selected only events, which affected all European nations, like the Reformation, the National Revolution after the Napoleonic Wars, the Industrial Revolution and the International Revolution after the creation of the Soviet Union. Rokkan called these four outstanding developments in European history 'critical junctures' (Rokkan 1971, 402), which worked as triggers for social mobilization, each adding a new layer of cleavages to the existing divisions. Like Marx Rokkan sees these modernization processes at the root of conflicting interests, which in turn lead to cleavage structures. Importantly, these conflicting interests are shaped by the ideology of actors, for Rokkan they are the pathways along which these interests are being formulated, or to put it in constructivist (post-structuralist) terms, interests are socially constructed. Especially, the twin processes of the national and the industrial revolutions have gained primary significance in his work, as these revolutions led to long-term alignments, due to congruent interests, between social groups and political parties. In contrast to Marx, however, Rokkan, on the basis of the observed social interests, goes on to distinguish, following Weber and Parsons, between three inherent behavioral dimensions; an economic, a territorial and a cultural dimension (Fix 1999, 33), which have shaped both the state-building and the later nation-building processes. Especially, the territorial and cultural dimensions are also to be found in the context of Indian strategic pluralism, in terms of the competing interpretations of space and the significance of civilizational heritage. Derived from these three dimensions Rokkan developed his four 'master variables' (Rokkan 1973, 90), that determined the emergence and the content of all European party systems till the end of 1960s. These four basic cleavages in Western European civilization are deduced from the previously mentioned dimensions in the following pattern; The antagonisms that emerged from the national revolution have been territorial and cultural, hence Rokkan identified, what he calls, the 'centre versus periphery' cleavage in the territorial dimension, as it was activated by "the conflict between the central nation-building culture and the increasing resistance of the ethnically, linguistically, or religiously distinct subject populations in the provinces and the peripheries". Whereas the 'state versus church' conflict, that is the religious cleavage evolved from "the

conflict between the centralizing, standardizing, and mobilizing Nation-State and the historically established corporate privileges of the Church” (Lipset, Rokkan 1990 [1967], 101) he places within the cultural dimension. Finally, the cleavages that have emerged along the economic dimension are the ‘capital versus labor’ (class) and the ‘urban versus rural’ cleavage. As opposed to the territorial and cultural clashes, functional oppositions have risen only after the national territory had been consolidated and the state had been internally stabilized by ensuring a basic level of political-cultural homogenization. For scholars working in the tradition of Rokkan, the processes of state formation and external boundary making have been essential prerequisites for the domestic configuration of the polity along functional lines, as Caramani (2004) and Bartolini (2005a) have contended. Taking up Rokkan (Rokkan et.al. 1999) again, cross-local resistances for the first time appeared during the industrial revolution, which in the 19th and early 20th centuries fashioned two cleavages: “a sectoral cleavage between the first and the secondary sectors of the economy, opposing agricultural and industrial interests, and, as the historically youngest divide, the class cleavage. While this last cleavage has not necessarily been the strongest one, it has probably received most attention in comparative politics because it has come to structure politics in every European country” (Bronschier 2009, 2).

The spontaneous denotation of the term “cleavage” is a deep and enduring division between collectives grounded in some sort of confrontation. Though the meaning of the concept may therefore seem forthright, struggles over its definition have beleaguered its study. Although the word has been, and remains to be connected with different adjectives, such as “social”, “attitudinal” or “political”, some kind of agreement among those following the Rokkanian heritage has evolved that follows the cleavage definition introduced by Bartolini and Mair (1990, 213-220), and lately vindicated in greater depth by Bartolini (2000 and 2005). Following their conceptualization, a political division has to entail three components to establish a cleavage: “(1) A social-structural element, such as class, religious denomination, status, or education, (2) an element of collective identity of this social group, and (3) an organizational manifestation in the form of collective action or a durable organization of the social groups concerned” (Bronschier 2009, 2). A cleavage is therefore essentially a “compounded divide”, following Bartolini (2005) and Deegan-Krause (2006, 2007), including interests, ideological or attitudinal perspectives, and a robust organizational basis. Despite the three basic definitional tenets, derived from Rokkan’s work by Bartolini, he and Deegan-Krause and other scholars, who have developed categorizations for the detected divisions that display some, but not necessarily all, of the three proposed components that should define a full-fledged cleavage. Keeping the basic definition

intact several authors like Herbert Kitschelt (Kitschelt 1997) have nonetheless refined the approach by *inter alia* incorporating conflict patterns from post-socialist and non-European societies. However, party systems cleavage theory has rarely been applied elsewhere, that is beyond the political party framework let alone foreign policy. According to Bronschieer, “in its original formulation, the concept is tightly interwoven with the Western European historical path to nation-state formation and industrialization, precluding its direct application to other contexts.” (Bronschieer 2009, 1) That is, however, only one way to look at the potential of the approach. Since Stein Rokkan never gave a clear definition of what he meant by the term ‘cleavage’, its meaning can be used in reference to all sorts of divisions and conflicts (Bartolini 2000, 16). Therefore, Bartolini is complaining that its meaning remains loose as even some scholars continue to apply the term “cleavage” interchangeably with “division” or “conflict” (Moreno 1999) and others refer to ‘political’ cleavages thereby depriving the concept of any link to Rokkan’s social structural variables. Allardt and Pesonen further distinguish between ‘structural’ and ‘non-structural’ cleavages (Bartolini 2000, 16), refining the original concept. Still others identified ‘cultural’ cleavages, like the author himself, assuming that “it is a set of beliefs rather than any than any demographic attribute that defines one’s location along the cleavage” (Ingelhart 1984, 25). What has been shown now is the relative flexibility of the ‘Rokkanian’ approach in preserving its key features, while adopting to different research agendas. Thus, the following question is relevant in the context of the thesis: Has the approach been employed in International Relations, as another sub-discipline of political science? The answer is yes.

3.1.2 Adaptations of Cleavage Theory in International Relations:

Based on the previously discussed work of Seymour Martin Lipset and Stein Rokkan’s on party-system cleavages (Lipset and Rokkan 1967, Rokkan et.al. 1999) and on Gabriel Almond’s study on “The American People and Foreign Policy” Ole R. Holsti and James N. Rosenau were the first to launch forays into the study of foreign policy cleavages in the United States (Holsti and Rosenau 1988, 1990 and Holsti 1996). In 1988 Rosenau and Holsti, in their work on “The Domestic and Foreign Policy Beliefs of American Leaders” developed their cleavage approach by questioning the idea of a foreign policy consensus in the US. To this day most of the scholars working with cleavage theory belong to liberal approaches to international relations, due to its emphasis on the domestic sources of foreign and security policy. Yet it is still a small number of IR scholars, who have tried to harness the concept and there are even fewer, who have adopted a cleavage based approach to the realm of grand strategy. Examples are scholars of foreign policy analysis like Jon Hurwitz and Mark Peffley, "How Are Foreign Policy Attitudes

Structured? A Hierarchical Model," (1987b), E.R. Wittkopf, "Faces of Internationalism: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy" (1990), William O. Chittick, Keith R. Billingsley, and Rick Travis, "A Three-Dimensional Model of American Foreign Policy Beliefs," (1995), and Shoon Kathleen Murray, Jonathan A. Cowden, and Bruce M. Russett, "The Convergence of American Elites' Domestic Beliefs with their Foreign Policy Beliefs," (1999), who all increased the stock of analytical literature. If there is a consensus among the authors it is about the ideational nature of foreign policy beliefs and the realization that the cleavage approach offers an analytical tool to cope with the deeply entrenched ideological perspectives characterizing not only foreign policy decision-making but the scholarly world of international relations theory as well. Their work can be divided between those, who have focused on (American) elite beliefs on foreign policy and grand strategy and those, who look at public opinion and the more deeply ingrained attitudes of the nation (Hansel, Khan and Levaillant 2017, 137).

3.1.3 Cleavages in the Context of Neoclassical Realism

Increasingly, however, in the realm of IR, cleavage theory gets conceptualized in terms of ideational elite-cleavages. An approach that is especially valid for India, due to the near irrelevance of grand strategy for electoral politics, as it is of concern to only a small enclave in India's polity (Staniland and Narang 2012). Another more recent example has been Brian C. Rathbun, a self-declared neoclassical realist, whose foundational work "Does One Right Make a Realist? Conservatism, Neoconservatism, and Isolationism in the Foreign Policy Ideology of American Elites" (2008) emphasizes the existence of three ideational cleavages that mark American foreign and security policy. These cleavages are associated with factions of the political right in American politics, namely, conservatism, neoconservatism and isolationism (Rathbun 2008b, 272). This distinction is the starting point for his elaborations on the subject, where he develops an analytical framework that distinguishes between egoism (realism) and altruism (idealism) and goes on to further differentiate egoism in terms of realism and nationalism (Rathbun 2008b). In the end Rathbun, based on the cleavage approach, defines the three ideational traditions of America's political right, as stated above (conservatism, neoconservatism and isolationism) in great detail.

Exactly such a landscape of semi-permanent or at least longstanding ideological coalitions are being analyzed by neoclassical realists also under the rubric of strategic culture (like neoclassical realism's model of grand strategy formation (Kitchen 2010)). Now the thesis's attempt to

delineate Indian strategic pluralism in terms of strategic subcultures essentially turns the independent variable – in the context of neoclassical realism, it is used as an intervening variable – of strategic culture into the “dependent variable” of ideational plurality.

3.1.4. Definition of Semi-Permanent Ideational Elite-Cleavages

Due to neoclassical realism’s more eclectic approach the incorporation of cleavage theory into the study of the belief systems of decision-maker as well as of their strategic culture has become a conceptually sound endeavor, as the case of Brian Rathbun showcases (Rathbun 2008b). Hence the cleavage approach has left the confines of liberal theory (Murray, Cowden and Russett 1999) and has like constructivism become an instrument for all research paradigms to apply. Even though, as a heuristic cleavage theory has proofed to be adoptable to the study of ideational strategic pluralism; there are, however, limits to such a one-to-one conceptual transfer, that is why, an independent definition of cleavages in the realm of grand strategy is necessary. There are distinct similarities, however, especially Rokkan’s, earlier mentioned, territorial and cultural dimensions, which are shaping identitarian cleavages (Rokkan et.al. 1999), are very close to the notion of an identity cleavage in regard to a state’s self-understanding. Now, by defining the author’s interpretation of cleavage theory the following fundamental question is answered; Is cleavage theory consistent with the strategic subculture approach? Already Gabriela Almond and Sidney Verba in their famous work on political culture dedicated a section on the existence of subcultures (Almond and Verba 1965, 26-29). For them each political culture consisted of a number subcultures, which would regroup around a specific cleavage structure, they call “subcultural cleavage” (Almond and Verba 1965, 26).

The first significant feature is the static bias inherent in the cleavage approach, which is usually addressed by the so-called “freezing hypothesis” on the empirical observation of the long-term stability of European party systems. Lipset and Rokkan (1990, 28-33) stated that “[...] the party systems of the 1960s reflect, with few but significant exceptions, the cleavage structures of the 1920s”. Despite their foundation in the long-term development of social structure (as a macro-historical phenomenon (Bronschier 2009)) cleavage politics, as any other form of political struggle, is open to processes of realignment and dealignment (Bartolini 2000, Martin 2000, Mair 2001), in other words - change. Thus, the notion of such a ‘frozen’ or semi-permanent character of cleavages makes the concept seem well suited for an incorporation into the pluralist strategic culture approach. Now, before elaborating the notion of semi-permanence further, a definition of ideational elite cleavage is given. As was outlined earlier so called ‘cleavage scholars’ generally assume that, unresolved conflicts, no matter what their concern is, overtime tend

to harden to structures. So, in order for conflicts to be transformed into the kind of structures that are conceptualized as cleavages, a certain continuity is required (Fix 1999, 39). Such cleavage-structures, that is the relative temporal stability of conflict configurations, enable political actors to form an identity. Because, due to their structural nature these lines of conflict provide so called 'Deutungsschemata' that are schemes of interpretation, helping actors to demarcate their normative positions (Fix 1999, 41). So far research has primarily focused on how semi-permanent conflict structures have performed as catalysts in shaping the institutionalized identities of domestic political actors, be they political parties or social movements. In the present case, however, the concept used for these schemes of interpretations is the strategic subculture approach. Like parties, strategic subcultures draw from so called 'Rezeptwissen', in English, 'how-to-do-knowledge' (Schütz 1972, 85-101), which, in their case, is a stock of shared and familiar knowledge concepts on international relations in general and on a state's grand strategy in particular. Importantly, this type of knowledge around which strategic worldviews are built results from the respective terminology used to describe a specific cleavage constellation, for example the ideological contestation on how to understand the nature of inter-state conflict. As mentioned in chapter 2 section 3 on definitions of strategic culture these 'Deutungsschemata' or strategic subcultures are similar to the concept of "deep beliefs" as developed by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1995) in their advocacy coalition approach. These deep beliefs and thought figures help to reduce transaction costs in interpreting situations and devising according strategies. Thus, subcultures work as filters in terms of 'frames'. The concept of such a 'frame', used among disciples of Rokkan, has been derived from Erving Goffman, a representative of 'symbolic interactionism' a scholarly approach in the tradition of Max Weber's historical sociology (Snow and Bedford 1988, Fix 1999). Also, Elkins and Simeon (1979), whose work has informed the definition of strategic subcultures, use a similar heuristic, when they introduce a conceptualization of culture in terms of belief systems that exactly shares two basic characteristics; firstly, 'culture' works as a lens structuring options, almost in the same way as a 'frame' (Goffman 1963) does. Secondly, Elkins and Simeon understand 'culture', one can interchangeably insert 'schemes of interpretation' here, as being of *long durée*, or in other words of being semi-permanent (Snyder 1977), thereby bringing us back to the unifying feature of continuity between cleavages and subcultures. Besides their long-term nature, cleavages, in addition, reflect latent conflict structures, like in the thesis' case, in the field of Indian foreign and security policies, which keep, like in a feedback-loop, the entrenched structures of conflict alive. Along these lines of conflict strategic traditions could evolve. For the author, strategic subcultures, as a synonym for these traditions, are a conceptual vessel through which these latent tensions and

structural contradictions are manifested and alliances between likeminded actors are forged (Fix 1999, 39). Following Rokkan and Max Weber, again, who postulated that “not ideas, but material and ideal interests, directly govern men's conduct. Yet very frequently the 'world images' that have been created by 'ideas' have, like switchmen, determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest” (Weber 1988, 252). This famous quotation of Max Weber on the role of ideas as ‘switchman’, or to use other well-known metaphors, like ‘filters’, ‘lenses’ or ‘frames’, echoing Goffman or Elkins and Simeon, leads the way to the discussion of the defining elements of the “semi-permanent ideational elite cleavages”.

Thus, these foreign policy or grand strategy cleavages to label them more concisely, are, firstly, ideational in nature that is ideas-based and they are therefore not material or social in the ‘Rokkanian’ sense. According to soft constructivism, they represent reaction-schemes for the formation of positions (subculture), which can be seen as socially constructed, while the hardened or “frozen” (Rokkan et.al. 1999) conflict patterns are structural in nature. The lines of conflict are, instead, reflecting the incessantly competing positions constituting the grand strategic discourse. Ideational strategic pluralism denotes, like in Hindu philosophy or in the *Mahabharata*⁹⁹ the different *darshanas*¹⁰⁰ or schools of thought, that are vying for the power of interpretation. Secondly these contestations are not identical with domestic or party-political cleavages, they are rather adopted to the conditions of a foreign policy or grand strategy discourse. Consequently, the necessities of the subject – a country’s grand strategy – request other normative positions, which are not always congruent with party political propositions. This divergence is further increased by the third characteristic, namely the detachment from mass politics. This detachment or seclusion of grand strategy assessment and formation from electoral politics, though common to most countries, has in the Indian case, created a distinct elite domain. A fact that neither regionalization nor caste quotas in terms of popular democracy (Corbridge and Harriss 2000) has changed significantly – Indian grand strategy is still primarily Delhi-centric and run by a nascent strategic community with a small nation-wide mostly English-speaking audience (Narang and Staniland 2012). Hence, cleavages predominantly represent elite conflicts, prevalent among this interpretation elite and strategic community of a state. In most democratic countries, grand strategic orientation and foreign policy are seldom decisive electoral issues and except for what can be called ‘a flight into foreign policy’ by domestically pressured

⁹⁹ Smith in Blackburn, Claus, Flueckiger and Wadley (1989), xxxii *nivritti* and *pravrtti* competing ideologies are on display on how a king’s dharma should be fulfilled.

¹⁰⁰ *Darshana* (Sanskrit, lit. view, sight) Besides its spiritual meaning in terms of seeing a deity or a saintly person. The term additionally refers to the six orthodox schools of classical Hindu philosophy.

elites and attempts to demarcate national identity. Paraphrasing Nehru's statement, that foreign policy is the trademark of any truly independent country, grand strategy formulation has played, besides being an ingredient to the country's identity politics, hardly any role in national politics. The social dimension of grand strategists in India, with their limited interest and potential in getting involved in mass politics is further discouraged by the aforementioned relative homogeneity of the group of people commenting as well as implementing strategic policy. Only in the context of identity politics grand strategy becomes a playground for so-called 'elite-revolts' (Corbridge and Harriss 2000). These revolts can have a grand strategic dimension, as counter elites formulate alternative interpretation of the state as well as the nation and their way of approaching the world. Grand strategy thereby turns into an instrument of state formation and nation-building for contesting elite factions or subcultures, due to their differing assumptions regarding the 'self' and the 'other' inherent in any of their strategic paradigms. Consequently, the various answers to questions like 'what kind of India' should brace itself against 'what kind of threats and/or competitors' are exactly flowing from the cleavage-structures immanent to India's grand strategic behavior.

Fourthly, this leads to the already detailed fundamental characteristic of the cleavage approach its long-lasting nature. Worldviews concerning questions of war and peace and on how to counter threats and engage with the outside world are constant. They are older than modern states as they are prevalent in all collectivities with the social capacity of utilizing some sort of organized violence (Rosen 1996). These cleavages, then, are to be understood as an anthropological constant or at least cultural in terms of their deep-rootedness. In the Indian case these normative conflict structures are already distinguishable in ancient Hindu culture. The existence of a highly-developed pluralism in terms of statecraft and political theory is well documented (Modelski 1964). Hindu tradition is marked by different philosophical schools, which diverge on both the role of the state/ruler and the way how human conflict should be treated. One can even speak of a pre-modern Hindu international relations or foreign policy theory debate, that evolved from its implicit beginnings in the *Vedas* to the Epics and many *shastras*, again the most famous *Arthashastra*, *nitis*¹⁰¹ and other works of the *smritis* (Gautam 2013). This body of 'strategic' literature also influenced and partly merged with similar Persian traditions entering the subcontinent, *bharat*, through the Islamic invasions starting thoroughly with the campaigns of Mahmud of Ghazni in 1001 (Rothermund and Kulke 1998).

¹⁰¹ *Nitisastras* are works on ethics, like the Kautilya attributed *Chanakya Niti Shastra*.

Quite similarly, modern international relations theory is structured by different normative paradigms, which follow their own research agendas. These paradigms can almost converge with broader political ideologies and therefore political parties in the 'Rokkonian' sense. For example, idealism is often equated with a leftist (mostly socialist/social democratic) or liberal outlook. Structuralism is associated with Marxism and again other 'critical', that is emancipatory, ideologies of the left (Reus-Smit and Snidal 2010). Liberal institutionalism has traditionally been linked with liberal thought, however, it has become a normative perspective being shared by social democrats, conservatives or other main-stream political ideologies, to use the Western political spectrum. Even realism is not confined to conservatives or even nationalists, as a widespread stereotype has it, but to the contrary is cross-cutting traditional party-political affiliations (Rathbun 2008b). Questions of grand strategy and statesmanship, to follow Max Weber, in "Politics as a Vocation", can be engaged in two ways, either in terms of a so-called 'Gesinnungsethik', an ethic of conviction or by pursuing a 'Verantwortungsethik', an ethic of responsibility. Weber describes this distinction in the following way: "We must be clear about the fact that all ethically oriented conduct may be guided by one of two fundamentally differing and irreconcilably opposed maxims: conduct can be oriented to an "ethic of ultimate ends" or to an "ethic of responsibility." This is not to say that an ethic of ultimate ends is identical with irresponsibility, or that an ethic of responsibility is identical with unprincipled opportunism. Naturally nobody says that. However, there is an abysmal contrast between conduct that follows the maxim of an ethic of ultimate ends—that, is in religious terms, "the Christian does rightly and leaves the results with the Lord"—and conduct that follows the maxim of an ethic of responsibility, in which case one has to give an account of the foreseeable results of one's action." (Weber 1918) Thus, realism, as a theoretical and normative tradition is firmly standing on the ground of an ethic of responsibility, in the Weberian sense, making it therefore attractive for decision-makers of different ideological backgrounds. And as the ongoing debate on Kautilyan thought and its role in shaping Indian policies proves, realism like other 'modern' international relations research paradigms has gained an enhanced sense of continuity in terms of age-old vernacular debates in India. In sum, a cleavage's temporal stability stems from, firstly, the almost anthropological trait of finding answers to the never-ending problems of steering a collective through a conflict-laden social environment. Secondly, as a peculiarity of the Indian phenomenon, cleavages on statecraft and strategy far precede post-independence India's history and disputes on these issues have been led for centuries on end. Finally, even the sub-discipline of political science, international relations, is marked by deep-seated conflicts on the nature of the subject, which are grounded in contrasting worldviews on human nature, the state, and

power to name but a few of its contested core concepts (Menzel 2001, Ferguson and Mansbach 2003, Reus-Smit and Snidal 2010).

Now, after the key elements of understanding the specific kind of cleavage approach employed in the framework of the subculture-cleavage model has been discussed a crisp definition is offered. Semi-permanent, ideational elite-cleavages represent a cleavage complex, that deals with state identity in the realm of grand strategy in the sense that it is concerned with the normative dimension of both the internal (self-conceptions) and external (the state's threat environment and how to address it) elements of grand strategic paradigms. What makes such a conceptualization of cleavage theory suitable for combining it with the strategic subculture approach, as defined in chapter 2 are the three shared features: firstly, the common ideational basis. Both concept exclusively deal with ideas and do not take actual behavior or institutions into account. Secondly, both approaches have a fundamental commonality in their interest in the long durée and therefore cultural nature of the ideas and worldviews under concern. Finally, as is stated in the introductory passage, elite-cleavages like strategic subcultures address only a limited group of people within the state – the strategic community, which is divided into various factions. Delineating these competing elite groups, which are the nation's interpretation elite that formulates, assesses and legitimatizes grand strategy and ultimately seeks to establish its influence in the actual state apparatus and among policy-makers, is the task of this dissertation project.

3.1.5 IR-Cleavages as Multi-Level and Multi-Dimensional Concepts:

Now, after the cleavage concept has been clarified in general, a more basic aim is addressed, namely, how these semi-permanent, ideational elite cleavages that have been deduced from the evaluation of the data collected from India's strategic subculture debate, conducted in the previous chapter can be conceptually refined. In this section, the two inductively devised 'proto-cleavages' are theorized in terms of a multi-level and multi-dimensional social science concept. More specifically, the conceptualization of the two cleavages, which structure India's strategic pluralism (the normative grand strategy cleavage [NGSC] and the cross-cutting cultural identity cleavage [CIC]), relies on Gary Goertz's guide to building concepts (Goertz 2006). This has to be done, as so far no one has elaborated ideational elite-cleavages regarding grand strategy on a conceptual level. Goertz posits that "concepts are theories about ontology" (Goertz 2006, 5): they are theories about a basic-level concept like democracy or cleavages, which in turn is constituted by secondary-level dimensions, which are again operationalized on a third, so-called indicator level. What Goertz tries to provide is a tool-box for qualitative social scientist to coherently delimit a social object or phenomenon. For him concepts are linked to definitions, as

ultimately there is no difference between defining something and offering an analysis of a concept. In contrast to a semantic understanding of concepts, Goertz, still being in favor of qualitative research, advocates for the involvement of a theoretical as well as empirical analysis of the object or phenomenon denoted to by the term, for example 'cleavage' (Goertz 2006, 30).

If social science concepts are theories about ontology, then they are "theories about the fundamental constitutive elements of a phenomenon" (Goertz 2006, 5). These constitutive elements signify the central features of a phenomenon and its interactions, for example, what constitutes a cleavage on grand strategy? Additionally, the 'Goertzian' approach consists of the above mentioned 'three-level' framework for concept formation. As this is a pioneering work, the ideational cleavages are referred to as the basic level in order to emphasize the cognitive centrality of the concept, following the logic of Eleanor Rosch and her co-researchers (Rosch et al. 1976). It is the noun to which adjectives like grand strategic or identitarian or elite are attached. It is also this basic level that is used in the theoretical proposition of the subculture-cleavage model. The next level in Goertz's three-tiered model is the secondary level. For example, the normative grand strategy cleavage is made up by assumptions concerning the role of war and conflict in human affairs or on the nature of threats to political entities. These are the foundational dimensions of the basic level grand strategy cleavage conception. It is on the secondary level, where the multidimensional character of concepts gets palpable, it is also the level, where much of the ontological analysis of concepts takes place, as they are solid enough to be operationalized at the last level. Thus, finally, at the bottom comes the so-called indicator or data level. Alternatively, Goertz calls it, the operationalization level, where actual empirical data is integrated (Goertz 2006). This level is detailed enough that data can be collected, which allows a categorization. In the present case, it will be done dichotomously that is, for example, the aforementioned secondary dimension of the role of war in human affairs will be operationalized at the indicator level in terms of a distinction between an understanding of war as either aberrant or natural – zero or one (Johnston 1995). Typically, these indicators are the variables that are coded and which provide the empirical basis for a further adaptation and refinement of a concept (Saldana 2013).

The second aspect of such a concept structure is the question of how constitutive elements at one level are put together or arranged to generate dimensions at the next higher level. So, the basic-level concept of a "normative grand strategy cleavage" is constituted by two constitutive dimensions at the secondary level and these, in turn are endowed with the empirical data gained on the indicator level. Two structural principles for building multidimensional and multilevel

concepts are applied to combine these dimensions to reach the basic-level cleavage concept. The first dates back to Aristotle and constructs concepts employing the structure of necessary and sufficient conditions, which is used to define the constitutive dimensions of the basic level concept. “In classic philosophical logic to define a concept is to give the conditions necessary and sufficient for something to fit into the category. Each of these necessary conditions is a secondary-level dimension: the structural glue that binds the secondary-level dimensions together to form the basic level is the mathematics of the necessary and sufficient conditions” (Goertz 2006, 7). While the other is based upon Collier and Mahon’s (1993) work which familiarized the idea of family resemblance concepts within political science circles, this approach has been deployed to determine the respective indicators. It can be regarded as the contrary to the necessary and sufficient conditions principle, because it entails no necessary conditions. “All one needs is enough resemblance on secondary-level dimensions to be part of the family” (Goertz 2006, 8). For Goertz, according to the mathematics of logic, “the logical AND typifies the necessary and sufficient condition, while the logical OR is the natural way to model the family resemblance structure. Necessary conditions can be defined as those that do not permit substitutes. In contrast, the family resemblance approach is characterized by the fact that the absence of one characteristic can be substituted for by the presence of others. The continuum that connects the necessary and sufficient condition and family resemblance poles is thus the degree to which substitutability is possible” (Goertz 2006, 12). In the case of this project, to devise semi-permanent ideational elite cleavages, in terms of two concrete, intimately connected, cleavages on grand strategy and cultural identity, both structuring principles are employed. The necessary and sufficient condition is applied to the constitutive dimension of each of the two cleavages, while the family resemblance structure is suitable for the data level – which will logically deduce the actual number of strategic subcultures. After the discussion of foundational conceptual principles behind this specific cleavage approach, the two cleavages will be detailed, based on the inductively gained insights from the evaluation of the scholarly debate on India’s ideational strategic pluralism.

3.2 The Normative Grand Strategy Cleavage (NGSC) – The ‘Outside’ Dimension

The analysis of the literature on Indian subcultures, the survey conducted among scholars of India’s grand strategy as well as the various in-depth conversations with Indian experts revealed, that a recurring pattern in their parlance and labelling has been an explicit reference to paradigms of international relations, all relevant for the formulation of grand strategy. Indian

and non-Indian scholars alike have described India's grand strategic or foreign policy factions with labels stemming from mainstream international relations theory. These labels like realism, idealism, institutionalism or neoliberalism do not simply reflect a scholarly interest but represent an attempt to grasp the ideological positions inherent in the study as well as the practice of grand strategy. Additionally, this clear reference to the normative research traditions gives evidence to the subject's unique quality. Foreign policy and grand strategy are primarily concerned with and directed at the social sphere outside of a state's boundaries. Grand strategy copes with the experience and the relative position of the polity in regard to the various 'others', beyond its territorial borders (Abraham 2010). For an emerging power like India the interaction with the state system is of paramount importance. Even though states remain the primary actors in an age of global politics, a myriad of other players (NGOs, international regimes, international organizations) have entered the various stages of India's relations with the world, ranging from the bi-lateral to the regional and up to the global level (Ferguson and Mansbach 2003). Despite the comprehensive aim of most IR-approaches, which do not have grand strategy as their main research focus, scholars of Indian foreign and security policy obviously share an exclusive unit-level approach, therefore all identified strategic worldviews, even those with system-level preferences take an India-as-actor perspective. Thus, views on grand strategy are foremost concerned with reading the international state system (Kitchen 2010). However, according to neoclassical realism, structural forces are seldom plainly evident and most of the time the external environment seems undetermined (Nau and Ollapally 2012). How a state should act and what kind of strategic options are on offer for policy-makers to choose from, remains highly contested (Lobell, Ripsman and Taliaferro 2016).

Therefore, calculations regarding the means and ends of grand strategy are being based on differing assessments. Does a state aim for the preservation of the status-quo or should a revisionist strategy be pursued? Has a coalition favoring an expansionist or an accommodationist policy been successful in taking over the state apparatus or key decision-makers? What kind of grand strategic foci are being proposed by the various paradigms? Should a specific threat, like Pakistan be at the centre of attention or a broader regional outlook, like South Asia, in terms of securing the territorial integrity or setting up a regional sphere of influence populated by friendly-minded states? Or is the striving for status and recognition central to a state's self-conception? Regarding the means employed, grand strategic worldviews diverge, for example, on the notion of power. Should a state rely more on its 'hard', material power assets, like military or economic prowess or should 'soft' or ideational power, like cultural attractiveness, and public diplomacy

(Nye 2004) be given precedence? In short, should grand strategic goals be achieved by cooperation or assertion? Closely related is the question regarding the relationship between what grand strategy should achieve and the underlying meaning of conflict. The wide array of connotations given to conflict, violence and war provides the groundwork for any grand strategy formation, as these interpretations give guidance on how other political entities should be treated, in case their interests collide or they structurally threaten the very existence of the state. In sum, grand strategy has to have a system-level orientation in order to define its ends and allocate appropriate means to achieve them.

Now, how can a general definition of a normative grand strategy cleavage look like? And, following Goertz, how is such a cleavage, as a multi-level and multi-dimensional concept constituted? More specifically, what are sufficient defining elements of the ‘normative grand strategy-cleavage’ (NGSC)? In the present case, the secondary or constitutive level of the basic cleavage concept is made up by two dimensions; Closely following Johnston here, these dimensions are modelled after two of his three “basic assumptions about the orderliness of the strategic environment, that is, about the role of war in human affairs (whether it is inevitable or an aberration), about the nature of the adversary and the threat it poses (zero-sum or variable sum)” (Johnston 1995, 46). “Yet just as international politics is not solely about waging war, strategy is not just the art of winning wars, but is a more complex and multilayered undertaking.” (Kitchen 2010, 120) Grand strategy is thus the level at which systemic and unit-level factors meet and “where matters of national security are mediated through public diplomacy” (Kitchen 2010, 121). According to Kitchen, again, the study of grand strategy is thus “the study of states’ attitudes to the international environment – of how they mobilize which elements of their power in pursuit of which causes in global politics. It is in this way that grand strategy may fulfil neoclassical realists’ requirement for a coherent analytical subject that integrates both the systemic realist elements and the domestic level factors that neoclassical realists have revived from classical insights” (Kitchen 2010, 121). However, this section is not dedicated to defining grand strategy once more¹⁰² but to present, in accordance with Goertz’s guidelines on concept building, necessary and sufficient conditions to put down the different ideological positions along the cleavage continuum. This procedure will begin with the two defining conditions of the cleavage on grand strategic thought; the first such condition is the ‘role of war’ assumption, the second one is the so-called ‘nature of threat’ assumption. Both assumptions put together are sufficient to

¹⁰² For a definition of grand strategy see: introduction section 7.

logically produce three ideological grand strategic positions, realist, institutionalist and idealist, which will be discussed later.

Figure12: The Normative Grand Strategy Cleavage



Source: Drawn by the Author

In order to clearly distinguish these deviating normative perspectives on grand strategy one has to look at the core themes that ultimately shape grand strategy formation. Hence taking a position on the role of conflict and war by distinguishing between an understanding of human conflict as natural or aberrant will determine the stance on what kind of grand strategy a state should pursue. But only to prefer a defensive or accomodationist strategic preference or to completely reject violent conflict is not sufficient to formulate a grand strategy (Luttwak 1987). To be able to do that threat perception must be taken into account as well. For example, if armed conflict is seen as something to be avoided at all cost, devising a grand strategy still requires an additional threat assessment. This means, that an actor can prefer a violent conduct of conflicts, at the same time he or she can still regard threats and adversaries in a varied-sum fashion. For further illustration, these two defining assumptions are discussed in more detail below, before the three grand strategic worldviews are deduced.

3.2.1 The 'Role of War' Assumption:

Drawing on Johnston’s (Johnston 1995) conceptualization, the role of war assumption is used as one of the two necessary but also sufficient conditions for delineating basic perspectives on grand strategy. For that aim the role of human conflict, similar to Johnston’s proceeding, is narrowed to the role of inter-state war and the use of force in external conflicts, with the only exception of including domestic security issues if some form of foreign involvement is indicated. Due to the inherent potential of conflicts turning violent, devising a grand strategy is consequently shaped by the policy-makers’ attitude towards the use of force. Now, what is meant by violent conflict or war? War, that is organized violence, is defined as the armed confrontation between two or more political collectives for certain political goals (Baylis 2007). The range of attitudes towards this social phenomenon, that is the significance attributed to the use of force in formulating a grand strategy, is crucial for decision-makers and the strategic establishment, as it is one of the drivers of grand strategic discourse and consequently one of

the constitutive dimensions to build such a basic-level concept like a normative grand strategy cleavage.

To operationalize this dimension, one has to proceed to the third-tier or the data level. At this level, to distinguish the different perspectives on the application of force, an indicator is formed. This is again done, similarly to Johnston's proposition, who suggests that war can be considered either as abnormal or as natural – hence one's take can only be yes or no in this regard or to put it in a binary mode: zero or one. Furthermore, as Goertz posited, the preferred way to define the indicator level is to apply the family resemblance principle (Goertz 2006). Therefore, besides the question if war is a normal social condition, one could ask, alternatively, if waging war is efficacious or inefficient? Or to put it again differently, should the exercise of power be limited, in other words, should physical violence be an accepted mean of conducting political conflicts or not? Raising these questions gives evidence of the various, but structurally similar ways of logically grasping the role of war and conflict in grand strategy formation.

Accordingly, in the realm of ideology, that is 'how the world should be', IR-theory has produced different paradigmatic answers, to this primary phenomenon. Realists have embraced it in terms of studying it as an ordinary social event – which can only be hedged, but never be completely avoided (Wohlforth 2010). Realists are not in favor of war, but they have also no illusions concerning the continuous presence of conflict in human affairs¹⁰³. Institutionalists and other liberals, but also Marxists in their majority accept the inevitability of war and conflict, albeit for different reasons (Powell 1991). However, for liberals the aim is not only to manage the mechanics of conflict but to overcome it. So, for them a better world is possible, notwithstanding the reality of conflict. But for them the reality of war, as only an eventuality, has and can be avoided and controlled. In contrast idealists consider war to be thoroughly immoral and abnormal. Human beings are naturally peaceful, only due to aberrant circumstances can push them into conflictual behavior. Furthermore, idealists argue that even if conflicts occur, violence can be averted through diplomacy, confidence building measures but also institutional arrangements (Grieco 1988). Eventually, with a changed mind-set and universalist, that is 'altruistic' state behavior a peaceful world can be created.

¹⁰³ On the extensive literature on the intra-realist debate on the cause of war (human nature or structural reasons) see: Van Evera (1999).

Thus, taking a favorable or repudiating stance respectively on the role of war in setting up a state's grand strategy elucidates the spectrum of grand strategic world views feeding into the central strategic paradigm of a strategic subculture.

3.2.2 The 'Nature of Threat' Assumption

The second constitutive dimension is called the 'nature of threats' assumption with its zero or varied sum indicator. It concerns itself with threat perception. That is, who or what can be considered a threat for India's, in this case, external security? Ogden writes, that "security threats and fears (such as of conflict, invasion, instability, and containment) ... these perspectives range from the ongoing positive aspiration to become a great power to the negative threat of conflict (most prominently via frequent and repeated clashes with Pakistan)" (Ogden 2014, 1,2). In the context of grand strategy, a threat can be defined as a phenomenon, which has the potential to weaken the strength and integrity of a state like India (Walt 1987). Threat can also be defined as "a situation in which one agent or group has either the capability or intention to inflict a negative consequence on another agent or group" (Davis 2000, 10). In the context of grand strategy, threats are primarily seen as state-based and they can take the form of a military, an economic or a cultural threat (Rousseau and Garcia-Retamero 2007, 745). Even terrorist groups are mostly, state-sponsored and have revisionist goals. Natural catastrophes, environmental threats, economic turmoil, migration, and other non-state-induced threats have to be taken into account by strategists, albeit in a less controversial way. Generally, "threats are probabilistic because they may or may not be carried out" (Rousseau and Garcia-Retamero 2007, 745). Dealing with threat as a concept "realists in international relations and realistic conflict theorists in social psychology argue that the perception of threat in intergroup conflict is a function of power asymmetries between groups" so Rousseau and Garcia-Retamero argue (Rousseau and Garcia-Retamero 2007, 744). Thus, threat was initially equated to military power (Waltz 1979, Grieco 1988), but scholars questioned this materialist understanding of threat by taking intention as a source of threat independent of military capabilities into account. This line of research developed "rationalist" models of deterrence and war, in which signaling and credibility represent the central puzzles (Schelling, 1960, 1966 and Fearon, 1995). Scholars moved easily from 'objective' measures of power to threat assessment, assuming equivalence between the two (Stein 2013, 1). So, threat perception became a core element of theories of war, deterrence and alliances, as well as conflict resolution, like Stephen Walt's 'balancing against threats' theory (Walt 1987) gives plain evidence of. During the same period, other researchers

of international relations, like Robert Jervis (Jervis 1976), trained in political psychology investigated concepts of threat “perception” and “misperception,” thereby examining the variance between what decision-makers identify as threats and what the indication of intentions and military capabilities show. While, social constructivists, like Wendt and Hopf (Wendt 1999 Hopf 2002) and social identity theorists (Tajfel and Turner 1979, 1986; Bar-Tal 1998), for whom threat perception is a core theme, argue that “a shared sense of identity can reduce perceptions of intergroup threat” (Rousseau and Garcia-Retamero 2007, 744). What this review of the ‘threat’ literature has not shown is the essential significance of threat assessments have for the formulation of grand strategy. The respective evaluations of threats provide the prerequisites for any ends and means formation. However, it is not only important, which kind of threat is identified, but how it is perceived. Besides, a fundamental dissent of what a threat constitutes – for example, if modernity should be considered a cultural threat with implications for the survival of the state or not – two foundational assessments of threat are thinkable.

This leads again to the data operationalization; at the indicator level, this differentiation is manifested between a zero-sum and varied-sum understanding of threats (Johnston 1995). Consequently, the various ideological perspectives of IR-theory take different stances on their evaluation of threats. Realists, for the most part, share a zero-sum perception of threat (Grieco 1988). That is any gain (absolute as well as relative) comes with a cost that others have to pay. All other major paradigms unequivocally advocate a varied-sum interpretation of threats. That is the belief in win-win situations or the acceptance of absolute gains (even if in relative terms other actors have profited more) as cooperation trade-offs¹⁰⁴ (Powell 1991). How, a threat is perceived is connected, just like the perception of war and the use of force, to a specific worldview. Thus, the following three normative perspectives are produced: realism, institutionalism and idealism. Now, before these two fundamental features of how to delineate ideological positions on grand strategy are put together, some questions regarding their selection and conceptualization have to be clarified.

Evidently, there is more than one way to assess a state’s strategic environment and as such even the concepts and idiom to catch the perceived reality differs substantially. Besides the obvious ideological differences there is also a divide in regard to the application of pre-modern or indigenous terminology. Despite the detection of vernacular and hybrid grand strategic labels the author prefers to employ modern international relations terminology. But why modern and not

¹⁰⁴ See the literature of on the so called ‘third debate’ and the critic on liberal institutionalist contributions on regime theory: Grieco (1988, 1990).

Indian designations? Mainly, because for pragmatist reasons the author abstains from introducing hybrid or indigenous paradigms like ‘Kautilyan Realism’ ‘Gandhianism’ or ‘Nehruvian Internationalism’ to mark the respective normative grand strategic outlook. Even though, Kautilyan thought, which can be equated with certain types of contemporary realist theory¹⁰⁵ or Ashokan thinking, which is the indigenous manifestation of idealism in terms of prioritizing non-violent policies and diplomacy, share an almost similar scope with their modern counterparts. Due to definitional clarity, however, it seems to be more appropriate, to stick to the established mainstream terminology of modern IR-theory. Therefore, realism, institutionalism and idealism will be the labels for the various grand strategic paradigms. At the same time, it has to be noted, that, despite, choosing modern IR schools, the author is by no means following so called ideational ‘presentism’ by renouncing the historically evolved nature of strategic thought in India.

Now, for the cleavage approach, all these IR-derived perspectives, are structured as a range of competing ideas on how to engage the world, according to their stance on violence and threat perception. Thus, one can speak of the socially constructed nature of grand strategic paradigms. Furthermore, in regard to the neoclassical realist subculture-cleavage model, the combination of the world ‘outside’ of the state with its structural character and the competitive interpretations thereof can be seen as a manifestation of a ‘soft’-constructivist approach¹⁰⁶. It is important to again note, here, that constructivism is, first of all, a method and not a normative perspective, like realism, liberalism or structuralism (Barkin 2003); it is compatible with all of these research programs and is therefore reconcilable with neoclassical realism’s overarching research agenda. For the purpose of clarity only three IR-paradigms have been selected. These three central IR-approaches are being the result of the grand strategic cleavage as will be detailed below. The realist, institutionalist and idealist grand strategic perspectives are deduced from the combination of the two defining assumptions. Logically, these three designations are possible; one can consider war as a normal part of the human condition and have a zero-sum understanding of threat. Such an attitude can be equated with realist thought (Schweller 2003). The second possible combination is to assume violent conflict as a given, but in contrast to realism, regard threats as varied-sum, as institutionalists would do (Keohane 1989). Finally, the use of force can be seen as aberrant and therefore also threats are assumed to be varied-sum, this would be

¹⁰⁵ However, there is no consensus among scholars. According to Liebig (2014a) Kautilyan thinking has similarities with offensive realism. See: Kaviraj (1997) on the issue of merging modernity with the vernacular.

¹⁰⁶ See chapter 1 on neoclassical realism and the author’s understanding of realist-constructivism (Barkin 2003) or a ‘soft’-constructivist approach to grand strategic pluralism.

the ideal-type description of an idealist stance (Latham 1997). Examples of the fourth possibility of rejecting war and organized violence and still perceiving zero-sum threats are not to be found in the literature and thus excluded from further elaboration.

3.2.3 The Three Grand Strategic Paradigms: Realism, Institutionalism and Idealism

a. Realism

Now, the three normative IR traditions are discussed. First of all, realism is defined, but before this is done an important caveat has to be stated. Realism is not nationalism (Rathbun 2008b). In contrast nationalism is marked by its intense level of egoism, which can turn into a belief of national superiority (Rathbun 2008b, 278). According to Rathbun, nationalists, other than realists, “are always voluntarists who believe in their ability to remake their environment ... [n]ationalists fall into a category of individuals that exhibit both intense fear and pride” (Rathbun 2008b, 278). Thereby he rejects the common practice to equate realist prescriptions – the ‘national interest’ and critic of state behaviour to be in line with nationalist notions of superiority. As Rathbun argues, sometimes realist advice can be congruent with ‘tempered’ forms of nationalism, but also with that of conservative liberals (Rathbun 2008b, 298). Of course, nationalists can share the pessimist view of realists, that war is occasionally an exigency of global politics and that there can only be winners or losers in international confrontations (Rathbun 2008b). But what distinguishes realists from nationalists despite their particularistic and pessimistic outlook is the concept of prudence¹⁰⁷. Prudence, however, is a concept most realists only implicitly acknowledge, as there has never been a single realist theory. Realism, despite being the bogeyman for most theory-building in IR, is characterized by its diversity. According to Haslam realism is “a spectrum of ideas ... rather than as a fixed point of focus with a sharp definition” (Haslam 2002, 249). C.A.J. Coady equates it to a religion, when he contends, that the realist tradition consists of “a combination of an often loosely related set of beliefs, a way of thinking and responding, a sometimes, desperate desire to preach to the uncomprehending heathen, and a pantheon of canonical exemplars or saints whose very diverse intellectual and practical lives are seen to embody the virtues of the religion” (Coady 2005, 122). The diversity of this great tradition has embodied itself in several sub-schools; there is classical realism, which received its first modern articulation in E.H. Carr and Hans Morgenthau’s foundational work, but goes back to canonical figures like Thucydides, Machiavelli and Hobbes. Another strand is so called neo- or structural realism developed by Kenneth Waltz

¹⁰⁷ For a discussion of prudence in realist thought see: Morgenthau (1978, 9), Thompson (1985, 13) and Donnelly 2000.

(Waltz 1979) during the high times of bipolarity and the take-over of traditional international relations by ‘scientific methods’, which became the ‘rubbing stone’ for most contemporary IR-debates. But also within the realist fold a further differentiation was triggered by Waltzian and to a lesser degree by Gilpinian realism (Gilpin 1981), which led to the sub-schools of offensive (Mearsheimer 2001) and defensive realism (Glaser 1997, Van Evera 1999, Taliaferro 2000). Finally, since the second half of the 1990s another distinct stream of theoretical reasoning has evolved, that of neoclassical realism (Rose 1998, Schweller 2003, Lobell, Ripsman and Taliaferro 2016). Neoclassical realism draws from both the legacy of the classical tradition as well as from neorealism’s insights but has furthermore incorporated some of the liberal and constructivist criticisms directed against Waltz’s approach. Beyond the mentioned sub-strands, realist thinking is characterized also by specific realist theories like the balance-of-power theory, the balance-of-threat theory (Walt 1985), the security dilemma theory (Herz 1950, Jervis 1986) and the offense-defense theory (Glaser 1997, Van Evera 1999), hegemonic-stability theory or power transition theory (Gilpin 1981). Into which category does Kautilyan thought fall is a difficult question, as in the *Arthashastra* one can find elements of all sub-schools of contemporary realist theory (Liebig 2014). After this *tour d’horizon* of the realist universe the formulation of common denominators is attempted.

According to Wohlforth (Wohlworth 2010) a definition of the ‘big tent’ of realism boils down to four central features; These are: groupism, as realism makes no assumptions on the nature of the polity (Barkin 2003), it only concerns itself with politics within and between groups. The second principle is egoism; realists claim that “individuals and groups tend to pursue self-interest narrowly defined” (Donnelly 2008). In addition, following Rathbun, realist thought shares a particularistic view of the world (Rathbun 2008b). The next characteristic is the principle of anarchy, which conceptualizes the absence of government regulating international relations and the consequences thereof. Finally, the fourth common feature is power politics. “Egoistic groups interacting in anarchy generate a politics of power and security” (Donnelly 2010, 150). In particular, the realist notion of power politics has drawn a lot of criticism. Realists are scolded for their, sometimes self-proclaimed, moral relativism (out of their pessimistic reading of human nature) and their fixation on anarchy, state survival and the resulting ‘objective’ *raison d’état* only mitigated by the dispassionate statesman guided by prudence. Yet another kind of critic comes from those, who reject realists’ claim to study ‘objective’ reality and identify realism as being an ideology (and therefore a social construction) as all other social theories. Wohlworth’s four fundamental characteristics of groupism, egoism, anarchy and especially power politics close the circle back to the two defining dimensions of grand strategy: the role of war

and threat perception, as both are intrinsically linked to the logic of power politics, the quintessence of realist theorizing.

b. Institutionalism

The second IR tradition that has a defining impact on grand strategy perspectives is institutionalism. Contemporary institutionalist theory, most of the time liberal or neo-liberal as an adjective is added, stems from the 1970s, when its theoretical engagement with the phenomenon of interdependence began. Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye can be considered as its leading theorists to date. With their work on “Power and Interdependence” in 1977 they introduced the concept of ‘complex interdependence’ into IR literature. A concept that implicitly took a middle ground between realism and idealism by, on the one hand, accepting the realist assumptions on the prevalence of conflict and war, but, on the other hand, emphasizing that cooperation and regulation is also a relevant part of the empirical reality of international relations. According to institutionalists regulation is achieved through regimes and institutions, which facilitate cooperation. The discovery of institutions seems to be a modern phenomenon, due to the predominance of the Westphalian nation-state model, hence it is likely that in pre-modern state-systems, like in that of pre-colonial South Asia, a variety of institutions were in place co-shaping the interactions of polities (Roy 2012). And post-independence India has from the beginning been confronted with an international institutional architecture, necessitating a clear positioning in regard to policy options towards them.

Furthermore, institutional thought is marked by its meta-theoretical assumptions of rational choice and its general positivist outlook. However, there are varieties in regard to the intensity of rationalist analyses (Goldstein and Keohane 1993, Keohane and Milner 1996) as, for example, also the first constructivists were normatively-speaking liberals – and maybe as a consequence mainstream constructivism re-entered the orbit of the rationalist research endeavor quite soon. The most important contribution for the present study has been the debate over relative gains versus absolute gains, which offers one of the best examples to illustrate a varied-sum understanding of why states cooperate in order to “maximize gains and minimize losses” (Donnelly 2010, 226). Other strands of institutionalist reasoning, which range from functionalism to the more recent (from the 1990s onwards), so-called new-liberal, governance approaches (Moravcik 2010) have articulated the insight that there is more scope for cooperation in international relations than realists concede. Additionally, what these institutionalist approaches have in common is their focus on the analysis of the system-level (Ruggie 1982, 1993; Ikenberry 2001).

But there also exists a great tradition of domestic and actors-centric approaches within the liberal family, which have made intra state institutions the centre of their research agenda. Generally, classical institutionalists have a worldview that can be described as a ‘pessimist-realist hybrid’ (Donnelly 2010) as they predominately approve the centrality of states as the main actors in global politics and that they pursue self-interest goals centered around security and material interests (Keohane 1989, 1-20, 101-31). Thus, they can be subsumed under the rubric of commercial and regulatory liberalism, more conservative forms of that ideology, in contrast to utilitarian, social liberal and constitutional types of liberalism. However, it can be said, that liberalism in general advocates the idea of “human progress, as possible but by no means inevitable and achievable only if human and social limitations are taken into account” (Donnelly 2010, 230). In sum, institutionalism’s normative approach is less particularistic than compared to realism’s (Grieco 1988) and as a theory it far more highlights the scope for human action and choice.

c. Idealism

Finally, the last of the three IR-paradigms is presented: idealism. Besides idealism there are synonyms like internationalism or utopianism or liberal internationalism (Doyle 1983). In the Indian context, many authors contend a closeness of idealism and internationalism to Nehru’s understanding of international affairs (Nehru 1963). But also, Gandhian political theory is seen as being in line with the major precepts of modern idealism (Power 1960), as it strongly advocates the idea of non-violence (Bajpai and Pant 2013a). Just like Thomas Hobbes, can be seen as the symbolic figure of realism (Wendt 1999) and Hugo Grotius and John Locke for institutionalists, it is Immanuel Kant, who quintessentially embodies the idealist thinker (Wight 1991, Wendt 1999, Menzel 2001). But also, Woodrow Wilson and the peace movement of the early 20th century figure prominently among the inspirers of the idealist tradition. For idealists, human nature is seen as inherently good and rational (as it would be expected of a descendant of the project of enlightenment and modernity) and therefore first and foremost capable of cooperation and compromise (Menzel 2001). Despite being somewhat difficult to trace in its pure form, idealism after the end of the second world war, manifested itself in various approaches like democratic peace theory, functionalism and other institutionalist approaches (Pfetsch 1994, 21 and Menzel 2001) intermingling with liberal and Marxist thinking by taking up and giving impulses for their respective agendas. What idealists have in common is their universalist utopian approach to global politics. Their thought is characterized by altruist and especially pacifist positions, with one of their fundamental aim of abolishing war, resulting in appeasement and

defensive and accommodationist grand strategic preferences. To overcome war and violent disputes idealists believe in the learning ability of humans. Thus, human progress is central to idealist thought as it envisions a world, in which peace, wealth for all, democracy (in all countries or in terms of world government), human rights and the protection of the environment is achieved. Idealists strive for a 'pareto-optimal' solution of conflicts, in the language of game theory, that is the just interaction result between players (political actors) and an example for a non-black and white perception of threats and international outcomes (Menzel 2001).

In sum, this section detailed the set-up of the so-called 'normative grand strategy' cleavage. This has been done by firstly, outlining the contours of grand strategy and then defining the grand strategy cleavage as such. Thirdly, this definition entailed two constituting dimensions: 'the role of war' assumption and 'the nature of threat' assumption as the necessary and sufficient building blocks devised to delineate general ideological perspectives on grand strategy. Combining, on the indicator level, the answers to these two dimensions produced three distinct normative positions on grand strategy, which are best grasped by three established normative research traditions, namely realism, institutionalism and idealism.

3.3 The Cultural Identity Cleavage (CIC) – The 'Inside' Dimension

Besides the 'outside' dimension, in terms of grand strategic approaches, there is an 'inside' part as well, which is concerned with competing notions of identity and the 'self', and that also informs the formation of a comprehensive strategic worldview. A political collective's perception of the 'self' (Nandy 1983) is a process of never-ending conflict and re-writing of memory and discourses. This politics of identity has explicit ramifications on a state's grand strategy formation, as it is concerned with the struggle of ideological forces to establish hegemony in various political arenas. And grand strategy is both a battle ground as well as an instrument of that very process of identity and nation-building (Abraham 2010). The concern of this section, by defining a so-called 'cultural identity cleavage', is to provide the second cross-cutting cleavage of the 'subculture-cleavage' model. It is cross-cutting because of the incongruence of the different visions of a state, in the present case that of India, with the earlier discussed normative grand strategic paradigms. This means, for example, that idealists in India might be divided between leftists, Gandhians and pacifist Nehruvians. This cleavage is also situated at the unit-level, in contrast to the grand strategy fault-lines, however, it is concerned with the domestic realm and its ideational constitution. The discussion of this element of the 'subculture-cleavage' model in this section is structured as follows: firstly, cultural identity as a concept is broadly

defined in the context of India. Secondly, a narrow definition based on two essential dimensions (the spatial and temporal) is provided, which in turn are connected to the empirical level by devising their respective indicators. Thirdly, the answers flowing from these two indicators are condensed to three paradigmatic positions on cultural identity. In a last step, these three culturalist worldviews, namely secularism, revivalism and pragmatism are detailed.

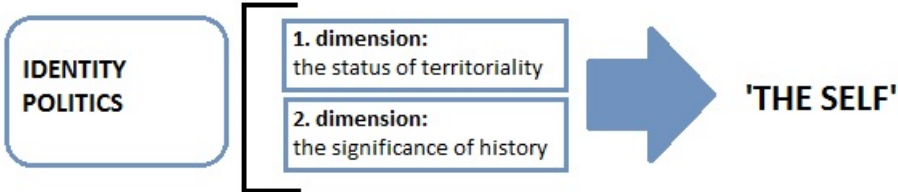
Now, why is this ideational cleavage called ‘cultural identity’? Because, cultural identity seems to be broad enough to catch the unique quality of Indian nationalism. This more comprehensive category, however, is not only suitable for India but for other emerging non-Western powers like China, Iran or Egypt as well. Basically, to all contemporary states to which the more common characterization of ‘national identity’ is a misleading one, due to their respective civilizational and thus cultural heritage, which goes far beyond the scope of mere nation-states in the Westphalian sense (Huntington 1996). The case of nationalism in India, as the focus of the thesis, is thoroughly grounded in the cultural and religious system of the subcontinent – Indian civilization or some would argue Hinduism got a state (Six 2006). Any conceptualization of nationalism is confronted with the tension between particularism and egoism necessary for community-building and universalist obligations. Universalism can be two-faced, as it is sometimes instrumentalized by elites to give meaning to a collective, like socialism was for the Soviet state system, or Islam for certain Muslim countries. In this regard, one can speak also of a clash between universalisms between the liberal West and other universalist ideologies with specific notions of world order. So, universalism is marked by its claim to encompass all of humanity. The other face of universalist thinking is less ideologically loaded, as it provides an analytical category for the observation of structural similarities of mankind beyond the state system. Concerns for global issues that are addressed in a cooperative manner, which in its more normative expression these kinds of universalist insights take the shape of so-called ‘post-national’ ideology – a worldview that can be highly relevant in discourses surrounding grand strategy (Beck 2005). In India, such attempts of breaking up national identity has a long tradition going back to the national movement of the early 20th century and has furthermore a well-developed transcendental and spiritualistic underpinning (Chakrabarty and Pandey 2009). Beyond this differentiation of inclusive and exclusive understandings of identity, nation-building and identity politics are concerned with the construction of a coherent political community (Rathbun 2008b). To have a stable and clearly circumscribed national and in the case of India cultural identity is a prerequisite to effectively act in the global arena.

The definition of cultural identity, in the context of grand strategy, gains further significance as it provides the ‘accepted’ horizon of which experiences of the past are allowed to be part of collective memory and a template from which lessons are drawn. The formation of India’s state identity and intrinsically linked to it, the country’s cultural identity, has been a delicate process (Clemens Six 2006). Coming close to the notion of Ogden’s ‘security identity’, which he bases on existing literature like Puri (1995), Hewitt (2001), Jaffrelot (2002) and Malik (2002), which hardly takes the impact of domestic political ideologies on foreign and security policy into account. Similarly, for him, the security identity of a state like India “is based solely upon past experience and precedent, producing long-term established guiding characteristics” (Ogden 2014, 11). The necessity for a state of the size of India to devise a grand strategy has further accentuated its relevance. Generally, the strategic establishment does not question the existence of India *per se*, however, the debate on what kind of India should act on the international stage is contested. The contours of that India are derived from its varied and deep cultural space, because India as state is, besides many other manifestations¹⁰⁸ a civilizational state! According to Samuel Huntington, in his foundational book “The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order” “[c]ivilization and culture both refer to the overall way of life of a people, and a civilization is a culture writ large. They both involve the “values, norms, institutions, and modes of thinking to which successive generations in a given society have attached importance.” A civilization is, for Braudel, a “space, a ‘cultural area,’” “a collection of cultural characteristics and phenomenon.” Wallerstein defines it as “a particular concatenation of worldview, customs, structures, and culture (both material culture and high culture) which forms some kind of historical whole and which coexists (if not always simultaneously) with other varieties of this phenomenon” (Huntington 1996, 41). Even though for Huntington civilizations are cultural and not political entities, which would “maintain order, establish justice, collect taxes, fight wars, negotiate treaties, or do any of the other things which governments do” (Huntington 1996, 44), there might be the extreme case when a civilization and a political entity coincide. As Lucian Pye has put it in the case of China, that it is ““a civilization pretending to be a state.” Japan is a civilization that *is* a state” (Huntington 1996, 44), the same is true in the case of contemporary India. In the subcontinent, at least since 1500 B.C. there has existed one uninterrupted civilization in many different shapes. This is commonly referred to as “Indian, Indic, or Hindu, with the latter term being preferred for the most recent civilization. In one form or another, Hinduism has been central to the culture of the Subcontinent since the

¹⁰⁸ Some of these categories of statehood are: the post-colonial, post-imperial or developmental state; see, for example: Kothari (2008), Mitra (2011), Chatterjee-Miller (2013).

second millennium B.C. “[M]ore than a religion or a social system; it is the core of Indian civilization.” It has continued in this role through modern times, even though India itself has a substantial Muslim community as well as several smaller cultural minorities” (Huntington 1996, 45). By defining India as a civilizational state cultural identity has to take into account both the time as well as spatial frame of the subcontinent as these two dimensions provide the basis for the formulation of distinct visions of ‘India’. The reason for limiting the definition to only two dimensions is, like with the grand strategy cleavage, to keep the concept simple and parsimonious. At the heart of such a definition of cultural identity is the underlying concept of nation-building and identity politics. Nation-building is the process of constructing a national identity (in the Indian context as mentioned above it is drawn from a cultural background that is civilizational in scope). Following Harris Mylonas, "legitimate authority in modern national states is connected to popular rule, to majorities. Nation-building is the process through which these majorities are constructed" (Mylonas 2012). That is where identity politics comes into play; in order to create legitimacy and get the consent of a majority, different identity narratives are competing with each other for hegemony. Now to grasp these conceptualizations of cultural identity in terms of competing ‘ideas of India’, the author proposes a definition based on two necessary and sufficient conditions of cultural identity – as “borders and memory make states” (Abraham 2014); thus, one such dimension is concerned with geo-political imaginations and the other one with the evaluation of history and the past. The first is called the ‘status of territoriality’ assumption and is constituted by spatial discourses, the second one, the ‘significance of history’ deals with time more specifically the past and India’s collective memory; both combined should produce different identity paradigms, of the “multiple ideological persuasions in India” (Ogden 2014, 12), relevant for the definition of the actor status in grand strategy development.

Figure13: The Cultural Identity Cleavage



Source: Drawn by the Author

3.3.1 The ‘Status of Territoriality’ Assumption

Thus, the cross-cutting ‘cultural identity cleavage’ is, firstly defined by, the ‘status of territoriality’ dimension. This dimension is taking into account the foundational geo-political images

shaping the individual subculture's self-perception of a state like India. Discursively demarcating space and therefore borders is essential both for state formation as well as nation-building and ultimately for the self-understanding of a state's grand strategy. Usually, a state's territory, is defined as an area of land, or sometimes sea, that is considered as belonging to or connected with a particular political entity. Depending on the significance given to that geo-political space, grand strategic goals are being deduced and ranked to suit a particular reading of the geo-political condition of the state. Thus, this assumption is concerned with the social construction of space as one of the founding, if sometimes neglected, principles of global politics and its analysis (Bredow 2000). These geo-political 'Leitbilder' (Albert, Reuber and Wolkersdorfer 2010) can be studied through the analytical prism of critical geopolitics. Critical geopolitics is a constructivist IR-approach, which has brought new insights into the enquiry of political geography by de-constructing the relationship between geography and power. As a constructivist approach, it has been influenced by the so-called 'spatial turn' (Ó Tuathail 2006) introducing like in the similar cases of the cultural and linguistic turns post-structuralist methodologies into the field of social or human geography. Granting importance to the questioning of the factuality of space by pointing to processes of its discursive construction is at the core of critical geopolitical research (Agnew and Corbridge 1995, Ó Tuathail 1996, Ó Tuathail and Dalby 1996, Dalby 2003). These scholars focus on the linguistic construction of geographical and territorial semantics and their representations. For them geo-political discourses are elements guiding the strategic behavior of actors (Albert, Reuber and Wolkersdorfer 2010). Critical geopolitical scholarship argues that so-called intellectuals of statecraft develop ideas about political geography; these ideas have an impact on their actual behavior and on their choices in politics; in addition, these ideas have an influence on how people conceive of notions of space and the political process. Due to the normative character of these geo-political representations, as a consequence these sometimes-opposing imaginations of what the outlines and importance of national territory are clash (Dalby 2003).

Like with the two dimensions defining the 'normative grand strategy cleavage' this assumption has to be operationalize. In order to devise an indicator for the paradigmatic assumptions on territoriality in terms of the family-resemblance approach one can ask if a state's territory is regarded as sacred or secular. Alternatively, one could inquire if dealing with territory is guided by rational or emotional calculations or if making concessions on a state's territorial integrity is acceptable under certain conditions or totally unacceptable. Defining a sacred understanding of territory includes the following features; one can speak of the sacredness of a territory, when a status of holiness in religious terms ('the holy land'), a strong emotional attachment in terms

of being an integral part of a nation's collective memory (like the 'Kosovo Field' for Serbia [O'Neill 2002]) is ascribed. But also, an emphasis on geo-economic autonomy or even autarky (for example, land and resource development should remain the exclusive domain of the state or of its citizens (Jesooop and Oosterlynk 2008)) can be subsumed under this category. Furthermore, a land becomes sacred when a notion of irreplaceability (giving up territory, even in the context of a border dispute settlement is categorically rejected) is established as a norm (Goddard 2006). While a secular conceptualization of political space, in contrast, is based on a functional, less emotional relationship towards a state's territory and its borders. Even though safeguarding territorial integrity is a core task of the state, even for 'territorial secularists', they regard it nonetheless as an issue that, under certain circumstances, may be accessible to rational calculations (a varied-sum approach) and negotiations. Therefore, border disputes and other geo-politically sensitive matters regarding the use of territory, like the exploitation of water resources (i.e. river dam projects), fishing rights or oil drilling and mining licenses are not considered to be sacrosanct (Bechev 2004, Elden 2010). What distinguishes the two possible approaches towards the status of territoriality is similar to the divide between idealists and realists on giving precedence to particularism or universalism (Rathbun 2008b).

In the Indian context, there is no lack of such images, metaphors and narratives accompanying the spatial constitution of the idea of India (Abraham 2014). There are geo-political imaginations, which are shared without much contestation like the notion of '*bharat mata*' or 'Mother India'. However, depending on the normative persuasion there are different sets of ideas on the 'geo-body' (Pickles 2004) of India. In post-independence India, Gandhians and Congress have proposed distinct geo-political visions of India, close to traditional and religious interpretations, which enjoyed a hegemonic status until the early 1980s until they were especially challenged by an emerging geo-political Hindutva idiom¹⁰⁹ (Corbridge 1999). The most famous delineation of India's geo-historical and political contours has been Pandit Nehru's 'The Discovery of India' (Nehru 1981). For 'geo-political secularists' in India territorial integrity and status have also been central features of foreign and defense policy (Zacher 2001). As the cases of Kashmir and the border conflicts with China and with India's smaller South Asian neighbors show, has the goal of keeping the state's post-colonial geo-political heritage intact, been pursued with only a limited degree of flexibility (Chatterjee-Miller 2013). However, the most polarization

¹⁰⁹ See, for example, Stuart Corbridge in Ferguson and Jones (1999) "Cartographies of Loathing and Desire: The Bharatiya Janata Party, the Bomb, and the Political Spaces of Hindu Nationalism" Yatra's undertaken by the BJP and their popularization of Hindu-nationalist concepts of the sacred character of India's territory.

has been caused by Hindu-nationalists with their contested concepts like ‘*akhand bharat*’ or ‘*hindusthan*’ – the ‘undivided land or India’ or the goddess ‘*bharat mata*’ and a tendency of anthropomorphizing the land (for example by giving it either a feminine guise or that of a proper goddess [Corbridge 1999 and Abraham 2010]), which, as a consequence is in need for protection to guarantee its purity. Hindutva thinkers have on the one hand envisioned a modern nation-state with clearly defined borders congruent with its Hindu inhabitants (Hindu, Hindi, Hindustan [Six 2006]) on the other hand they have focused on notions of both victimhood and sacredness (Corbridge 1999). This understanding of the sacred nature of the Indian subcontinent¹¹⁰ is at the same time accompanied by a more militant outlook; especially, the idea of creating buffer zones and spheres of influence¹¹¹ to safeguard the Hindu heartland has some following (Singh 1999). Thus, at the root of this variety of Indian geo-political thinking one can find a reading of the landscape in spiritual and religious terms, going back to the *Vedas* and the seizure of the land by Aryan tribes after 1200 B.C. (Eck 2010). Kautilya’s *Arthashastra* is yet another example of this conceptualization of the subcontinent as a coherent geo-political unit even before the Maurya empire’s creation in the third century B.C..

3.3.2 The ‘Significance of History’ Assumption

Secondly, the ‘significance of history’ assumption deals with the role that collective memory plays in establishing a strategic identity. The concept of collective memory as developed by Maurice Halbwachs (Halbwachs 1991) and the concept of cultural memory devised by Jan Assmann (Assmann 1992) will provide the analytical framework for this second constitutional element of the ‘cultural identity’ cleavage. Collective memory, as the common pool of knowledge and experience that constitutes the memory of every of collective is thus primarily concerned with the reading and construction of history (Halbwachs 1991). The philosopher and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs studied and advocated the concept in his book “*La Mémoire Collective*” (1950), however, the phrase “*la mémoire collective*” had been in use since the 19th century, but only due to Halbwachs foundational work it has become widespread among scholars writing on identity formation and political culture (Langenbacher and Shain 2010). And even for security studies and strategic culturalists the concept has been fruitful as the works of authors like Gray (1999b), Meyer (2004) and Lantis (2016) show. For qualitative strategic studies memory and the interpretation of history are important, because they represent both a source from, which

¹¹⁰ Cape Kumari to the Himalayas, on the sacred geography of India, see: Diana Eck (2010).

¹¹¹ This expression of power politics can, however, be observed with ‘territorial secularist’ as well. As offensive realist or balance of power approaches are not connected to sacred or secular understanding of territory.

identities are created and experiences from previous strategic choices are drawn (Buzan 1987). In the present case, the 'significance of history' assumption is related to questions of status and prestige, which are fueled by references to the 'glorious' past or lessons drawn from earlier successfully managed crisis-situations. But the concept does also cover a different approach to the past, namely a more negative view, which sees the past as traumatic and as a stimulus for change (Baylis 2007, Ogden 2014). Such a perspective on history is furthermore marked by two characteristics; firstly, by a teleological approach, that is by a clear and positive vision of the future (in contrast to the past) and, secondly, by an abstract understanding of history. History is seen, as being guided by general laws (like the Marxian dialectic of class struggle), which leave almost no space to a 'romantic' and hence nationalist view of the past and the country's memory. What counts is human progress of which national well-being can only be a part of (Menzel 2001, Rathbun 2008b). These two positions, the glorification of the state's or civilization's past (particularistic perspective) versus the relativization of 'national memories' or its selective cultivation in terms of broader values like progress, democracy or decolonization (universalist perspective) represent the continuum of ideological positions on the relevance of a state's collective memory (Langenbacher and Shain 2010).

At the indicator level, this finds expression in the differentiation between a conceptualization of history as being relevant and an asset to be tapped or as being largely abstract and sometimes even an obstacle to be overcome in a teleological sense by working for a brighter future. The options to choose from are either between a concrete versus an abstract comprehension of history and in consequence granting the past relevance or relegating national history into insignificance.

In the pre-modern Indian cultural space history has been an ambiguous concept or so many Indologists argue (Keay 2010). Following the Vedic tradition history due to its cyclical nature is not regarded as an important subject of study, except for the once drawn lessons from mythology and ancient kingdoms (Patel 2010). This is further underlined by the archeological evidence that fewer historical records, compared to ancient Mediterranean or Chinese civilizations, have survived through the centuries, however, since the 19th century the reaction to British colonialism has created a shift in the historical conscience. The nationalist movement in its anti-colonial struggle referred to the continuity of Indian pasts. Even the Nehruvian excitement for modernity and progress being based on socialist and liberal Western ideas rediscovered the glorious empires of the subcontinent like the Mauryas, the Guptas, and even the Mughals (Kulke and Rothermund 1998). More often Congress policy-makers have been pragmatists in

their dealing with the past, re-using it if necessary but also mixing the modern with the pre-modern, while sometimes, exclusively appealing to the rhetoric of progress and development (Rudolph and Rudolph 1967, Kothari 2009). Chatterjee-Miller has pointed to what she calls a ‘post-imperial ideology’ to deal with the colonial past (Chatterjee-Miller 2013). Besides their partly universalist and post-colonial approaches to the re-use of the past (Hegewald and Mitra 2008) also Hindu-nationalists, guided by their key thinkers like Savarkar and Golwalkar (Sagar 2013) and other nationalists (in a narrower sense) have mounted a revivalist challenge (Stephen Cohen refers to them as “revivalists” (Cohen 2001)), however the more widespread use of the term is ‘revivalism’). These revivalists or so-called nativists¹¹² are part of what Corbridge and Harriss refer to as ‘elite revolts’ against Nehruvian or Congress hegemony¹¹³ (Corbridge and Harriss 2000). What they have in common, besides a general veneration of Indian history, is the attempt to Hinduize collective memory and emphasize the masculine or martial aspects of India’s past. For them reading and cultivating Indian history as a foil for a strong ‘nation’-state is a highly relevant endeavor (Corbridge 1999, Sagar 2013). Both interpretations of India’s territorial shape as well as the reading of its past significantly influence the construction of the country’s competing grand strategic self-conceptions – as they are being delineated by the ‘cultural identity’ cleavage.

3.3.3 The Three Culturalist Paradigms: Secularism, Revitalism and Pragmatism

By combining the two dimensions (the ‘status of territoriality’ and the ‘significance of history’ assumptions) in terms of answers flowing from their indicators three broad paradigms are inductively aggregated. These three culturalist paradigms are termed secularist, revivalist and pragmatist. As will be detailed below the pragmatist category covers both kinds of variations, namely a sacred understanding of territory combined with a perception of history as not significantly relevant (in terms of sorrow, pride and glory [Agnew and Corbridge 1995]), plus a functional approach to territory in combination with a concern for national history. The three labels have been inductively derived from main themes of Indian identity politics. The first paradigmatic position to be discussed will be secularism, which gets its meaning in its moderation of revivalist claims, mainly brought forward by Hindu-nationalists.

¹¹² For a discussion of the term see the next section: 3.3.3 The Three Culturalist Paradigms: Secularism, Revitalism and Pragmatism.

¹¹³ For the concept see: chapter 2 of the thesis.

a. Secularism

To have a secularist viewpoint in terms of cultural identity is, hence, different to the usual definition of secularism as the principle of separation of the state from religious institutions (Bhargava 1998). It is different in two fundamental ways; first of all, it is limited to the realms of political geography and history as far as they are relevant for the demarcation of the ‘grand strategic self’ (the actor’s self-perception in respect to grand strategy). Secondly, secularism in the Indian context does not mean to discard cultural heritage but to guarantee diversity (Jaffrelot 1999). The Western conception of secularism entails three core features: the freedom of religion, equal citizenship rights for every citizen irrespective of the individual’s religious beliefs, as well as the separation of the state from religion (Smith 2011). In contrast to such an understanding, despite the 42nd Amendment of the Constitution of India passed by parliament in 1976, and the Preamble to the Constitution affirmed that India is a secular state, however, secularism does not denote a strict separation of the state from religion. It rather seeks equal handling of all religions within the country. Thus, religions in India continue to affirm their political power in questions of personal law. The valid variety of personal law differs if a citizen’s religion is either Islam, Christianity, or Hindu (Rajagopalan 2002 in Safran 2002). According to Sadanand Dhume, a critic of Indian secularist practice, state behavior is not so much oriented towards separation and ‘enlightenment’ but more concerned with religious appeasement (Dhume 2010). Ronald Iden writes: “Nehru's India was supposed to be committed to 'secularism'. The idea here in its weaker publicly reiterated form was that the government would not interfere in 'personal' religious matters and would create circumstances in which people of all religions could live in harmony. The idea in its stronger, unofficially stated form was that in order to modernise, India would have to set aside centuries of traditional religious ignorance and superstition and eventually eliminate Hinduism and Islam from people's lives altogether. After Independence, governments implemented secularism mostly by refusing to recognise the religious pasts of Indian nationalism, whether Hindu or Muslim, and at the same time (inconsistently) by retaining Muslim 'personal law'” (Iden 2000, xii).

In the context of the ‘subculture-cleavage’ model, secularist views on grand strategy are seen as being constituted by, firstly, a secular, that is, functional perception of the state’s territory and, secondly, by an abstract understanding of history. Such a secularist perspective on grand strategy has a less emotional understanding of the state, than its particularistic and romantic ‘revivalist’ counterpart (Trencsényi and Kopecek 2006, Rathbun 2008b). Similar to idealist and liberal conceptions the *raison d'état* is defined in rational terms and an emphasis is given on

co-existence and compromise, for example, through diplomacy. History is seen as a source of inspiration only in so far as values related to freedom struggles, constitutions or human rights are concerned. Exclusivist and supremacist narratives are avoided or outrightly rejected (Rathbun 2008b). Thus, their interpretation of national history becomes an expression of human striving for progress and liberation. But also, the nation's geo-political setting can be described in functional terms. As was mentioned earlier, geo-political secularists are regarded as more flexible in solving territorial disputes. 'Blood and soil' rhetoric, and concepts of ethnic purity or the non-negotiability of borders are alien to them. In India, such a perspective would be shared by Gandhians, non-militant Nehruvians and other factions of the Congress party and the left, but also by neo-liberal globalists with their de-emphasis on territoriality.

b. Revitalism

In sharp contrast to secularist views is the so-called 'sacred' understanding of cultural identity. This worldview can be described under several other labels, like 'revitalism' (Cohen 2001), the most well-known designation would be 'revivalism', but also 'nativism' is used to categorize modern nationalist projects (Rathbun 2008b). To speak of revitalism and revivalism in relation to Indian grand strategists seems more fitting, compared to other denotations like nationalism or nativism. Dindar, for example argues that "nativists... do not consider themselves as nativists. For them it is a negative term and they rather consider themselves as 'Patriots'" (Dindar 2010). Despite being a widely used technical term, nativism, in political science has become primarily connected to conflicts between native populations and their attempts to uphold their identities against immigrants (Castro 2004). While nationalism and closely related forms of national romanticism (Trencsényi and Kopecek 2006) are too unspecific to catch the peculiar character of Indian revitalism and its influence on certain strategic subcultures. Revivalism as applied to the Indian case grasps the deliberate attempt to reinstate and reconnect to India's pre-modern cultural resources (Six 2006).

For the purpose of the 'subculture-cleavage' model this revitalism can be described as a combination between the two assumptions defining cultural identity. Revivalists share a self-conception of the state that is based on, firstly, a 'sacred' perception of territory and, secondly, an appreciation of a historical narrative, that is very concrete in accentuating the uniqueness of the chain of 'national' events. Such a worldview is founded on distinction, in other words, the ethnic, cultural or religious context is employed to build a non-contingent national exclusivism (Trencsényi and Kopecek 2006). The discourse among revivalists in India is centered around the notion of a strong and masculine India (overcoming the trauma of both British colonialism

and Muslim subjugation (Corbridge 1999)¹¹⁴. Hindu-nationalists thereby take the West and Islam as essentialist conceptions, representing the modern state and monotheistic religion respectively as role-models. By emulating certain aspects of these ‘models’ helps to achieve security and prestige for India (Jaffrelot 1999). Building on a glorious Hindu past and defending the sacred motherland¹¹⁵ (Abraham 2010) has gathered the sustained support from other cultural nationalists (for example Shiv Sena) and is supported by religious groups and sects, like Yogi Adityanath and other fringe groups (for example, on Aryan exclusivity) (Corbridge 1999, Sagar 2013, Chatterjee-Miller and Sullivan de Estrada 2017).

c. Pragmatism

The third paradigm works as a reservoir for so-called pragmatist approaches to cultural identity. There has been a recent growth in publications on pragmatism in Indian foreign policy (Chatterjee-Miller and Sullivan de Estrada 2017). This conceptualization of a pragmatist stance comes close to the understanding developed for the ‘subculture-cleavage’ model. Pragmatism in terms of defining a ‘grand strategic self’ is being defined in the following way; pragmatists can share both a sacred devotion to their homeland, but still be skeptical about the relevance of history and national history in particular. In India, such ‘pragmatists’ can be found among Gandhians and Hindu traditionalists (Bajpai 2014). The other group of ‘pragmatists’ entails those, who share a truly pragmatist approach towards the geo-body of the nation, but are sensitive towards the historical narrative with its ramifications for the state’s standing and prestige. Examples would be advocates of an India that is not bound to the soil but is manifested in the lifestyle of common religious practices and memory. The Ramakrishna mission of Vivekananda with its mixing of universalism and distinct ‘Indianess’ is one such example (Hall 2017).

In sum, this section discussed the set-up of the ‘cultural identity’ cleavage. This has been done by firstly, outlining the contours of India’s cultural identity. Along these lines a definition of the cleavage has been provided. Thirdly, this conceptualization entailed two constituting dimensions: ‘the status of territoriality’ assumption and ‘the significance of history’ assumption as the necessary and sufficient building blocks devised to delineate ideological perspectives on the unit-level (or culturalist aspects) of grand strategy. Combining, on the indicator level, the

¹¹⁴ Hindu-nationalism should “Hinduise all politics and militarise all Hindudom” as stated by Savarkar, see: Corbridge in Ferguson and Jones (1999), 159-160. See also Sagar (2013) for other key features of Hindutva thought on international relations.

¹¹⁵ The depiction of India as female, the restoration and preservation of dignity and pride, see: Abraham (2010).

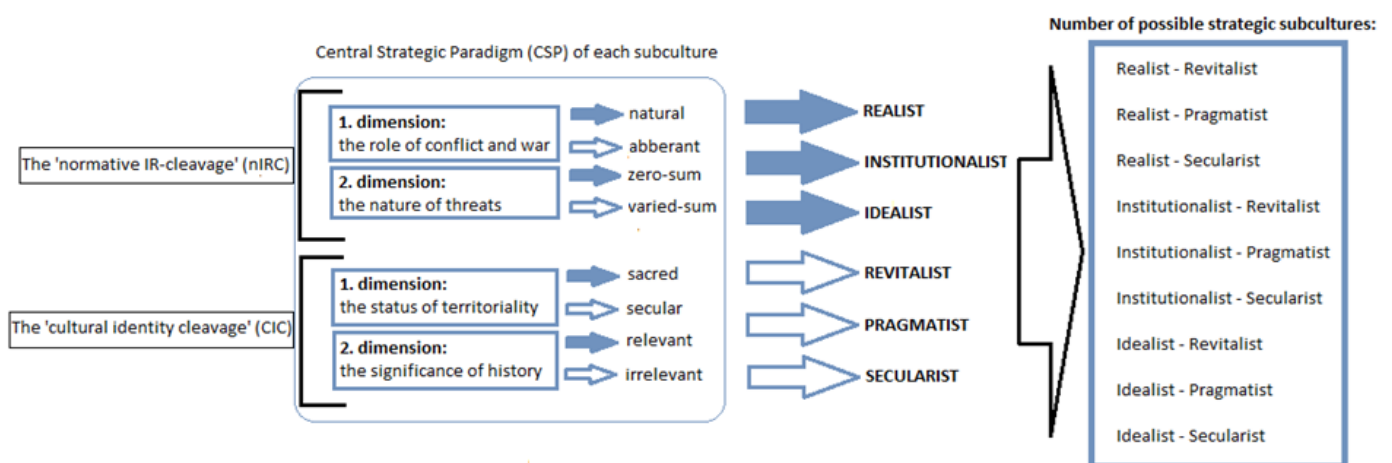
answers to these two dimensions produced three distinct normative positions on cultural identity, which are best grasped by three proposed normative traditions, namely secularism, revivalism and pragmatism.

3.4. Sketching the Subculture-Cleavage Model of Grand Strategic Thought

3.4.1. The Central Strategic Paradigms of the nine Strategic Subcultures

The purpose of this section is to finally bring the different elements of the ‘subculture-cleavage’ model together. That means combining the two ideational elite cleavages in order to delineate the central paradigms of each Indian strategic subculture – finally, merging the insights gained by the cleavage approach with the analytical vessel of strategic culture. Thus, in this section, firstly, the working of the model will be described. Secondly each of the nine subcultures will be sketched according to the four defining assumptions of each central paradigm.

Figure14: The Subculture Cleavage Model of Grand Strategic Thought (1)



Source: Drawn by the author

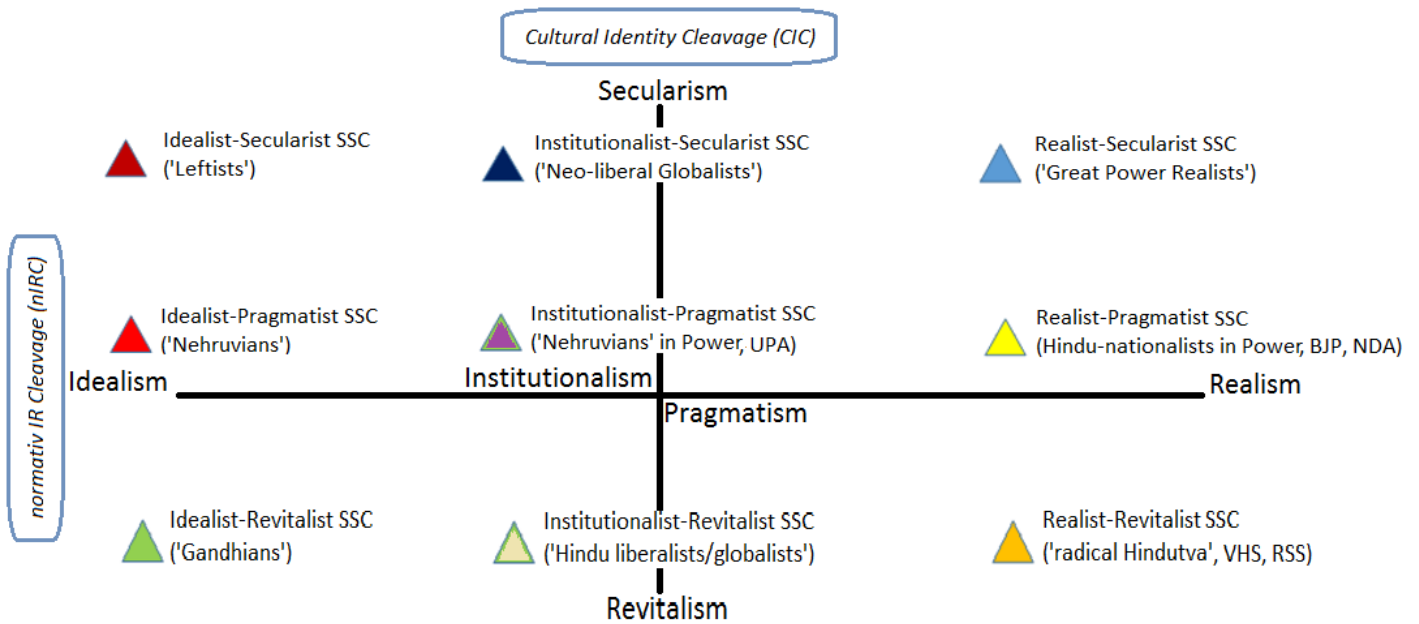
Figure 14 shows the ‘subculture-cleavage’ model with its two ‘structuring tools’, the ‘normative grand strategy’ cleavage and the ‘cultural identity’ cleavage. By bringing the two cleavages together a central strategic paradigm, that is the core interpretational frame of a strategic subculture is formed. Each central paradigm entails the four defining assumptions or dimensions of the cleavages. In the case of the grand strategy cleavages, which addresses the ‘outside or foreign’ dimension, the ‘role of war’ and the ‘nature of threat’ assumption put together produce three distinct IR related paradigms (realism, institutionalism and idealism). While the two dimensions of the identity cleavage, the ‘status of territoriality’ and the ‘significance of history’ assumptions combined, lead to the outcome of three culturalist paradigms (secularism, revivalism and pragmatism). Thus, taking a normative position on how a grand strategy should be

devised is being cross-cut by the question on the nature of the state (a state's identity). Accordingly, the identity cleavage modifies grand strategy formation by taking into account the implications of identity politics within the state. Being a revivalist or a secularist does change a realist outlook as it is based on a different understanding of a state like India. Popular hyphenated labels like 'Nehruvian-idealism' get a grounding in both the outward-looking idiom of IR as well as the domestic or vernacular sphere of nation-building. Consequently, if there is a 'normative system-level' cleavage (the 'outside' dimension) and a cross-cutting 'identity' cleavage (the 'domestic' dimension) the present model deduces nine 'ideal type' central strategic paradigms (CSP) in the Indian context. It is again important to note that these subcultures if employed as intervening ideational variables will primarily affect India's 'symbolic' strategic debates. Which of these subcultures prevails or which set of ideas from different subcultures combine to shape actual behavior is left to future research. According to Johnston, as "all states are collections of social groups where group cohesion is created by the deliberate construction of myths about the nature of the group" (Johnston 1995, 60), these central strategic paradigms have such a function in the realm of grand strategy – aggregating ideological strands into a broader framework that contributes to a predictable contention along semi-permanent lines of ideational conflict.

Hence, combining these two ideational cleavages leads to the following typology of Indian grand strategic thought of nine logically possible strategic subcultures. The nine subcultures go by the following labels; firstly, a realist-revivalist strategic subculture (in a more popular fashion one can speak of radical or ideological 'Hindutva'), secondly, a realist-pragmatist SSC ('Hindu nationalists' in a position of government responsibility and constraint), thirdly a realist-secularist SSC (more detached 'Great Power Realists'), fourthly an institutionalist-revivalist SSC ('Hindu liberals' or cosmopolitans, who are less defensive about their identity and engage in institutionalized cooperation in the global system), fifthly an institutionalist-pragmatist SSC ('Nehruvians' in power), sixthly an institutionalist-secularist SSC ('neo-liberal Globalists'), seventhly, an idealist-revivalist SSC ('Gandhians'), eighthly an idealist-pragmatist SSC ('Nehruvians' as the guardians of the ideological legacy), ninthly, an idealist-secularist SSC ('Leftists', as a synonym of a broad array of critical and secularist voices) have been aggregated with

the help for the ‘subculture-cleavage’ model. The following section will be dedicated to the review of these subcultures’ central paradigms.

Figure15: Typology of Indian Strategic Subcultures (1)



Source. Drawn by the author

3.4.2 The Idealist-Secularist Strategic Subculture – “Leftists”

The first central paradigm discussed will be that of the so-called ‘idealist-secularist’ subculture. This hyphenated term is established through the combination of the idealist IR-paradigm derived from the ‘normative grand strategy’ cleavage and the secularist school of thought being the outflow of the ‘cultural identity’ cleavage. Basically, a strategic subculture’s content is delineated by combining the answers that flow from the four indicators (two from each cleavage). As outlined above the ‘normative grand strategy’ cleavage provides two assumptions (one based on the considerations regarding the use of force, the other on the perception of threats) defining the kind of general grand strategic outlook. From these two indicators, three major ideological paradigms are deduced. Idealist thought, according to these two indicators, is characterized by a condemnation of the use of force and war in general and by an optimistic threat assessment. The cultural identity cleavage contributes two other assumptions (one on the relevance of history for the self-understanding of the collective and the other on the role of geopolitics for grand strategy formation) addressing the self-conception of the state. Again, the two indicators produce three paradigmatic approaches to nation-building and identity-formation – a secularist, a revivalist and a pragmatist approach. A secularist stance is marked by a functional

and rational approach to territory and a teleological understanding of history with a weak emphasis on its national or civilizational expression. Now, putting these two paradigmatic positions together creates an ideal type ‘idealist-secularist’ central strategic paradigm.

In the context of Indian foreign and security policy this amounts for a leftist or more specifically Marxist denomination. In its pure form, these secularists and ‘progressives’ represent a small group within India’s strategic establishment, however, as advocates for their cause they are vociferous (Subrahmanyam 2005). Even though they are not dominating academia or policy circles, the idealist-secularist subculture is a well-established tradition among public intellectuals assessing Indian state behavior. There are certain overlaps, with other subcultures like the Gandhian school, with their common agenda of tolerance, *ahimsa – non-violence* and harmony among nations, races and religions. Beyond that they are united by a critical stance towards any form of power politics and necessities of national security. For ‘idealist-secularists’ global disarmament (conventional as well as all kinds of weapons of mass destruction) (Chacko 2013), and solidarity in the anti-colonial, anti-racist and anti-capitalist struggle rank high in their priority. These so-called ‘leftists’ only stop short of questioning the very existence of India as an independent state, however, they are outspoken opponents of any nationalism, especially if it has any connotation with Hindu majority rule or is explicitly linked to Hindutva thought (Malavarappu 2014).

This subculture is one of the most emphatic supporters of peaceful solution to the Indo-Pakistani rivalry. In order to find a sustainable arrangement with Pakistan ‘idealist-secularists’ are willing to make substantial concessions on Kashmir (Ganguly 2009) and borders in general (Ollapally and Rajagopalan 2012). Another geo-political problem concerns the disputed border with China. Also on this front this strand of strategic thinking calls for compromise, as having friendly relations with China is among their primary goals. For them the West with its colonial legacy and since the Cold War foremost the United States exerts undesirable influence, which should be balanced by third world solidarity and the establishment of a more just world order (Bajpai 2007, Sagar 2014, Hall 2017, Chatterjee-Miller and Sullivan de Estrada 2017).

3.4.3 The Idealist-Revitalist Strategic Subculture – “Gandhians or the Indigenous Idealist School”

In contrast to the leftist subculture, which is marked by a secular understanding of India, the ‘idealist-revitalist’ tradition is rooted in Indian civilizational heritage. This strand of thinking,

basically, represents a culturalist variation of the previous idealist but more secularist subculture. Popular labels include ‘Gandhian thought’ (Bajpai 2014) or ‘Ashokian’¹¹⁶ tradition (Kim 2007), they all refer to its idealist orientation in the sense of modern IR theory, as well as to its eclectic nature. This quality is especially evident in the ‘Gandhian’ worldview (Mallavarapu 2014), that merged religion with modernity, thereby using India’s civilizational repertoire. Such an approach evolved among many Indian nationalists, due to their personal exposure to the complexities of the subcontinent (Chandra 1989). Gandhi and other nationalist thinkers, like Rabinandrath Tagore or Swami Vivekananda have been part of the broader stream of the so-called ‘Hindu renaissance’ since the second half of the 19th century (Delfs 2008). This line of tradition, which can be equated to indigenous idealism (other connotations include ‘Hindu cosmopolitanism’ (Hall 2017) or neo-Vedantic notions of India as the ‘teacher of the world’ in terms of establishing harmony and coexistence among nations and religions (Karnad 2015). Despite these similarities in terms of idealist thought like non-violence, disarmament and peaceful means of conflict resolution, this subculture is different from the ‘idealist-secularist’ strand in regard to, firstly, its rootedness in Indian culture even of its idealism and secondly, because of that, its deviating idea of India. As detailed in the previous section the composition of the two paradigmatic positions (idealism and revitalism) is based on the four defining assumptions (war, threat, territory and history) and on the answers to their four respective indicators. Thus, for ‘idealist-revitalists’ the difference lies not so much in their conceptualization of the role of conflict in human affairs and their rejection of existential antagonisms but in their tolerant but emphatic embrace of ‘*bharat*’ and the culturally defined geo-body of India as well as their appreciation of the deep history of the Indian civilizational canon (Abraham 2010). Hence, the Ashokian or Gandhian tradition represents both genuine continuity with the indigenous idealist tradition of political theory and statecraft and is at the same time marked by its eclectic re-use of that past and heritage according to the needs of adjusting to modernity.

3.4.4 The Idealist-Pragmatist Strategic Subculture – “Ideological Nehruvians”

The third subculture’s strategic paradigm to be presented is yet another variation of the broad idealist school of thought in Indian tradition. Again, it receives its specific arrangement through

¹¹⁶ Ashokian thought refers to the Mauryan emperor Ashoka (from ca. 268 to 232 BC), who refrained from the use of force coercive measures after expanding the empire in bloody campaigns (following Kautilya’s precepts). After the subjugation of the Kalingas he resorted to Buddhist faith. That is one of the reasons why there is also a so called ‘Buddhist’ tradition (Jayasuriya 2008) in Indian statecraft, which represents the idealist strand that is said to start with the Buddha and has besides the emperor Ashoka other iconic representatives like the Moghul Emperor Akbar or the Mahatma (Kim 2007).

the cross-cutting ‘cultural identity’ cleavage, which contributes the pragmatist cultural paradigm. This culturalist pragmatism is another manifestation of the contentions surrounding India’s ongoing process of nation-building. It is pragmatist because of its selective, one could even say, opportunistic approach to questions of cultural identity. Another fitting designation would be ‘hybrid’ as this stance is less inclined to neither fully embrace Western modernity nor to fully reject Hindu heritage. The most prominent example for this subculture is ‘ideological Nehruvianism’. Like Gandhian thought it can be ascribed to the towering figure of Pandit Nehru’s socialist ideas (Bajpai 2003 Mehta 2009a, Das 2010b). However, unlike, the actual policies pursued and implemented by Prime minister Nehru, in its pure form his thoughts and that of his disciples and successors bear the imprint of both idealism and an outspoken pragmatism in regard to modernity and tradition (Kennedy 2015). Nehruvian thought does not discard India’s pre-modern past, however, it is more selective compared to the Gandhian approach. Nehru’s ‘Discovery of India’ (Nehru 1981) is suggestive of this conscious recovery of civilizational depth without ignoring the forces of modernity. Indian secularism, as has been outlined in section 3.3.3 (Ganguly 2016), is a product of this reasoning. Religion is not rejected but is given a state-guaranteed framework of tolerance, at the same time the Nehruvian approach assures that modernization also gets its due space to evolve (Kennedy 2015). Finally, ‘idealist-pragmatists’ do take borders and territorial sovereignty serious (due to the trauma of colonialism and partition), but their understanding of territoriality oscillates between a strong nationalist stance and a more cosmopolitan view, which allows for practical solutions (i.e. water usage, dam projects) (Abraham 2010). The same is true for their appreciation of national history – there is pride in the greatness of Indian civilization, however this is matched by the vision of a modern, secular and plural India in a world of equal peoples and civilizations (Nehru 1981). Thus, among Indian idealists this subculture takes the middle ground. Its rhetoric and idiom can be considered to be among the most highly developed in the Indian discourse (Malhotra 2006). Its core features include internationalism, disarmament, peaceful coexistence, (*Panchacheela*)¹¹⁷, anti-colonialism and anti-racism, in respect to *ahimsa* (non-violence) its adherents took a more pragmatic approach, as Nehruvians or ‘idealist-pragmatists’ accept the use of

¹¹⁷ The Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, also known as Panchsheel or Panchasheela from Sanskrit, (panch: five and sheel: virtues) are a set of principles to govern inter-state relations. The term Panchasheela originates from the Buddhist conception, Pansil, of negative prohibitions and positive injunctions to be followed on the path of enlightenment. Their first formal codification in treaty form as principles of international relations was their inclusion in an agreement between India and China in 1954. They were enunciated in the preamble to the “Agreement between the Republic of India and the People’s Republic of China on trade and intercourse between Tibet region of China and India”, which was signed at Beijing on 29th of April 1954. The agreement stated the five principles as: 1. mutual

force as legitimate to achieve the above stated goals (Hall 2017, Basrur 2017). Despite a certain downfall in terms of popularity due to the elite revolts since the 1980s it has remained influential among sections of India's strategic establishment ever since.

3.4.5 The Institutional-Pragmatist Strategic Subculture – “Neo-Nehruvians in Power”

The 'institutionalist-pragmatist' subculture is basically a modification of the previous idealist and what Johnston calls 'symbolic' subcultures. Especially compared to the 'ideological' Nehruvian one. The adherents to this grand strategic tradition share the basic 'pragmatist' idea of India with the difference that their IR view can best be described as being close to institutionalism. Institutionalism, as was detailed in section 2 of this chapter, takes a center position in regard to the use of force between idealism and realism, as it accepts the reality of human conflict but puts an emphasis on cooperation and a non-zero-sum threat perception (Czempiel and Rosenau 1989). Therefore, actual Nehruvian foreign and security policy can hardly be understood in terms of idealism alone. Prime minister Nehru, undergirded by his internationalist ideas, but as Liebig (2014) has stated, also with a firm grounding in realist thinking, anchored India (to make up for its relative weakness) in multilateral global institutions like the United Nations (UN), or co-founded organizations like the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) or the G-77, which brought post-colonial developing states from the global south and 'neutral' countries not integrated in one of the two Cold War blocs together (Young and Kent 2001). Despite their critical view of the post-second world war world order, Nehruvians have at no point advocated a revolutionary revision of that order (Kennedy 2015), instead they have argued for peaceful and incremental change by diplomatic and social change. Furthermore, Nehruvians with government responsibility (premierships of Shastri, Indira and Rajiv Gandhi), have accepted violence and conflict¹¹⁸ beyond the limited normative goals of the ideologues, like anti-colonial solidarity (Gordon 1995). In sum, 'operational' Nehruvianism is characterized by a defensive grand strategic posture, which is nonetheless combined with the clear goal of keeping foreign powers out of South Asia (Aron 1973). This thought got its strongest manifestation in the 'Indira Doctrine', implicitly formulated by Prime minister Indira Gandhi after the successful partition of Pakistan in 1972 (Singh 2013). As a consequence, the more robust representatives of this subculture are also called 'militant Nehruvians' (Gordon 1995, Ganguly 1999) due to their

respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, 2. mutual non-aggression, 3. mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, 4. equality and mutual benefit, and 5. peaceful co-existence.
¹¹⁸ There are numerous examples of Congress governments using force to further their foreign policy agenda, like the invasion of Goa in 1961, the interventions in East Pakistan, the Seychelles, the Maldives or Sri Lanka (Achmed 2013).

ving for dominance in the sub-continent and of the wider Indian Ocean region. Striving to achieve such a sphere of influence for India is a sign for an almost an offensive realist approach (Karnad 2015), which got its conceptual manifestation in what is called the ‘Indira doctrine’, which aimed at transforming South Asia into India’s backyard (Singh 2013). Generally, one can speak of an idealist and multilateralist approach at the global stage and a realist one within South Asia. This dichotomy is further complicated by their ambiguous stance towards China (a stance, which has oscillated between post-colonial, anti-Western solidarity on the one side and great power competition on the other) and the US (as the primary capitalist and imperialist Western nation versus its perception as a strategic partner both for securing a liberal world order and hedging China’s rise (Singh 2017)). Interestingly, the heirs to Nehruvian thought, despite their internationalist rhetoric, have been relatively inflexible on borders (as a colonial legacy¹¹⁹). In addition, since the 1980s under the premiership of Indira Gandhi and her son’s Rajiv Gandhi their pragmatism led them to increasingly incorporate Hindu revivalism to, for example, describe Indian geopolitics or deliberately re-use metaphors and symbols from India’s Hindu past¹²⁰ (Karnad 2014).

3.4.6 The Institutional-secularist Strategic Subculture – “Neo-Liberal Globalists”

The institutionalist-secularist school of thought is commonly known as representing neo-liberal globalism in India (Bajpai 2003, Das 2010b and 2012). This subculture is regarded as the most pro-Western and status-quo oriented in India. According to Karnad (2015) it is also the least rooted in Indian tradition. Intellectually it reflects the adaption of the Indian state to the changed circumstances after the end of the Cold War (Gordon 2014)¹²¹. Some argue (Mohan 2003, Nau and Ollapally 2012) that neo-liberals have become the most influential among India’s grand strategic worldviews. The influence it exerts can be described as a hegesy¹²² on India’s grand strategy. Institutional-secularists are united by their call for the need for secularism, the need for solving border issues with India’s neighbors (rational approach to territoriality). On nationalism, they are more divided between those, who wish to build a strong India through its integration into the global economy (with its development and modernization boost) and those, who wish for India becoming an equal member of the global community (Bajpai, Krishnappa and

¹¹⁹ Like the McMahon line with China, or the division of Bengal (Miller and Sullivan de Estrada 2017).

¹²⁰ India’s missile programme with telling Sanskrit names like ‘Prithivi’ or ‘Agni’, which Prime minister Rajiv Gandhi promoted (Mitra 2011).

¹²¹ For the core features of neo-liberal thought see: Bajpai (2003).

¹²² For a definition of hegesy see: Markovits and Reich (1999). A hegesy is a weaker form of hegemony and is marked by a de facto dominance of the hegemon even though he/she is reluctant in fully embracing the newly gained position.

Basit 2014)). Even though neoliberals are aware of India's growing military clout due to economic growth, they favor peaceful conflict resolutions without being idealists in the Gandhian or Nehruvian sense. For them the Kashmir issue and the long-standing confrontation with Pakistan and even China should come to an end through cooperation (institutionalized confidence building measures and economic interdependence (Baru 2013). This subculture is also among the advocates of deeper regional cooperation be it in the form of SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) or the other minor initiatives like the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) or the Bangladesh–China–India–Myanmar Forum for Regional Cooperation (BCIM).

3.4.7 The Institutional-Revivalist Strategic Subculture – “Hindu Globalism or Cosmopolitanism”

This subculture is, like the idealist-secularist and the idealist-revivalist subculture another of example for, what Bloomfield calls “waiting in the wings”, (Bloomfield 2012) that is the acceptance of holding a minority worldview but nevertheless waiting and working for a change in the ideational balance of power. A key thinker of this grand strategic sub-school is, for example, Swami Vivekananda (Hall 2017). His thinking is marked by so-called ‘Hindu cosmopolitanism’ of which Rabindranath Tagore is yet another example (Six 2006, Sagar 2009 and 2014). Just like Prime minister Modi, who has besides his Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) linkage also a past with the Ramakrishna mission, which, since becoming Prime minister in 2014, he has increasingly tried to embrace for his policy aims (Hall 2017).

Hindu globalists are close to both Indian nationalism and Hindu revivalism. This subculture provides a relatively broad umbrella. In terms of revivalism they share in a belief of the superiority of Indian civilization, but this pride comes not so much from a glorious war fighting past, but from India's ability to accommodate diversity and provide a role-model for co-existence (Sagar 2014). Also, their veneration of ‘Mother India’ has no supremacist connotations, for them their cultural heritage facilitates cooperation among states, nations, religions and ultimately civilizations (Mallavarapu 2014). In the ‘Hindu globalist’ view India's rise is inevitable, even if it takes longer in material terms, spiritually and ideologically India has always been a superpower. Sonia Gandhi, for example, states that she was “somewhat uneasy with the very word ‘superpower’: for too many of us, it evokes images of hegemony, of aggression, of power politics, of military might, of division and conflict. But that is not what India has been all about through the centuries and it certainly is not what I would like to see India become ... Why should

we think of ourselves as a ‘Global Superpower’? Why not, instead work towards becoming a global force for Peace, Progress and Prosperity?” Sonia Gandhi in Chacko (2013, 1).

3.4.8 *The Realist-Secularist Strategic Subculture – “Great Power Realists or the Classical Tradition”*

The Realist-Secularist subculture has certainly many overlaps with other realism-inspired subcultures, but the number of lasting followers among the strategic establishment is likely to be small (Narang and Staniland 2012). ‘Great power realists’ as this strand of grand strategic thought is also termed can be regarded as the least ideological subculture, as adherents are to be found across all party-affiliations. Even though, the caveat has to be stated, that realism is nothing but another ideology (Barkin 2003, Rathbun 2008b). Following general realist precepts, prudence as the guiding virtue of statesmanship is one of their key-concepts (Mitra and Liebig 2016). This subculture, like its idealist counterpart, constitutes one of India’s longest and most influential traditions. It is, eventually, the blueprint for many decisions-makers over the centuries and its intellectual and literary manifestations are manifold. Prominent examples of such classical theoretical works, comparable to Chinese and Western canons, include Kautilya’s *Arthashastra*, Kamandaki’s *Nitisara*, and many more, entailing besides the classical Hindu tradition of statecraft also Indo-Persian and Moghul texts from the period of Muslim political dominance in India (Vivekanandan 2011). However, what the term ‘great power realism’ as coined by Ollapally and Rajagopalan really means, remains vague, even if one uses contemporary labels of realist thought. Offensive realist strategies and closely-linked interpretations of Kautilya’s *Arthashastra*¹²³, with his notion of a *vishigishu* (*the would-be world conqueror*) subjugating weaker states to become a strong hegemon, are matched by more cautious and defensive grand strategy propositions (Pardesi 2005). Public intellectuals and practitioners like Raja Mohan, Shivshankar Menon or Jaswant Singh are all outspoken advocates of a realist turn in Indian foreign and security policy and that India to achieve great power status should pursue a ‘pragmatist’, the cipher for realism, grand strategy (Chatterjee-Miller and Sullivan de Estrada 2017). In terms of the two assumptions of the cultural identity cleavage, for ‘realist-secularists’ nationalism is a mere tool to create political unity and as a consequence a strong state. While geopolitics, like power politics is at the heart of their strategic paradigm, it lacks any culturalist rigor. Territorial sovereignty is important and mastering space are key components of great

¹²³ Even though Liebig points to the limitation of the Kautilyan offensive realist approach to the India’s cultural space. Beyond that Kautilya has no expansive scheme vis-à-vis other civilizational great powers (Pardesi 2005).

power politics, however, taking strategic choices to secure or further the country's "sacred geography" (Eck 2010) is not on their agenda. Despite its recent rise to more prominence this subculture represents one of the longest traditions of statecraft, which has always been closest to operational policy and the workings of the state security apparatus (Liebig 2014).

3.4.9 The Realist-Pragmatist Strategic Subculture – "Hindu-Nationalists in Power – BJP Pragmatism"

The next strand of strategic reasoning that is delineated with the help of the two ideational elite cleavages is the so-called 'realist-pragmatist' subculture. More popular transcriptions would be 'Hindu-nationalists in power' or the BJP's 'pragmatism'. This pragmatism or 'softening' of BJP positions resulted from the party's attempt to appease or simply accommodate the ideational pressures coming from its allies within the NDA (National Democratic Alliance) coalition and from the responsibilities of ruling in general (Ogden 2014). In terms of labeling, the same realist-pragmatist worldview can also be applied to 'militant Nehruvians'. However, the emphasis, here, clearly lies on hard power maximizing realists, who see the world through a zero-sum perspective with a tilt towards particularism (Rathbun 2008) and ideas of nationalist supremacy. Nonetheless though, both dimensions, the International Relations and the culturalist paradigm, are set in contrast to ideological positions, especially the BJP's Hindutva ideology. Both Sawarkar's and Gowalkar's thoughts on international affairs, even though they say comparatively little on the topic in their works (Sagar 2013), suggest at least two grand strategic variations. One is concerned with building the mental and material capabilities to 'militarize Hindudom' (Corbridge in Ferguson and Jones 1999), while the other one is lacking martial overtones and is instead advocating 'world government' and harmony through the emulation of the Hindu model of governance and statecraft (Sagar 2014, Hall 2017). Another proponent of this realist-pragmatist tradition could be Subhas Chandra Bose, who led the Congress party in the inter war years and organized the Indian National Army, which fought the British on the side of Japanese, thereby breaking with the Gandhian principles of a non-violent anti-colonial struggle (Daniel 2014). Additionally, due to the necessities of coalition politics and the resistance of the 'deep state' that is institutionalized ideas among the bureaucracy there is a much continuity with its predecessors (Blarel 2017). This common feature of pragmatically adopting to the realities of governing, which effects on the Hindu-nationalist ideological position could be seen already with the Janata government between 1977 and 1980 in power (Ogden 2014). This process of ideological delusion and compromise continued during the first two NDA governments between 1998 and 2004 and is likely to go on even under the Modi administration in

power since May 2014 (Ogden 2014, Chatterjee-Miller and Sullivan de Estradas 2017). Thus, Hindu-nationalists in power had to incorporate other endogenous resources like re-interpreting Nehru or propagating more Hindu-cosmopolitanist sources like Swami Vivekananda (Hall 2017) thereby de-emphasizing more hardline positions like that of K. Advani, who organized a *yatra*¹²⁴ during the 1980s for the construction of a Ram-temple in Ayodhya (Corbridge 1999) or Yogi Adityanath with their militant views on Muslims, but also the West (manifested in the repeated discriminations of the Christian minority) (Kakar and Kakar 2006).

3.4.10 The Realist-Revitalist Strategic Subculture – “Hindutva and the RSS”

The final school of thought being deduced from the ‘subculture-cleavage’ model is the so-called ‘realist-revitalist’ tradition of strategic thought. Popularly it is equated with Hindu-nationalist ideology and especially with its militant wing the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and other radical outlets of the Sangh Parivar, the family of RSS organizations, like the Bajrang Dal (Hanuman’s Army), the Dharm Jagaran Samiti (Organization for conversion of non-Hindus to Hinduism) or the Central Hindu Military Education Society, to motivate more Hindus to enroll in the defense organizations to name but a few of these organizations. As has been outlined by Jaffrelot (1999), Corbridge (1999), Sagar (2014), Ogden (2014), in their works on the Hindu-nationalist worldview on organized violence, security and threat perception; in Hindutva thought war is considered to be a natural feature of human affairs and security is built on deterrence and a zero-sum threat perception. The recipe to overcome the trauma of colonialism and Muslim rule and its by-product of an ‘Hindu inferiority complex’ (Jaffrelot 1999) and a non-martial, “effeminate” (Corbridge 1999) mind-set is seen in strengthening the ‘masculine’ qualities of the nation to gain security and strategic autonomy. In terms of cultural identity ‘realist-revitalists’ argue for an exclusivist understanding of India as a civilizational-state¹²⁵, a state, which is seen as under threat by both Western cultural hegemony and a Muslim renaissance (Kakar 2001). For them India’s long and rich history, especially, the period between the Aryan invasion, the Vedic times and later the great empires of the Mauryas and Guptas, as well as the Hindu state system in general is a source of pride and inspiration (Pardesi 2005). Itty Abraham points to the anthropomorphization of India (Abraham 2014) by attributing to the geo-body of the nation a feminine and potentially divine quality. Abraham writes: “Among the many sites of contestation between Indian nationalist forces and the British colonial state was the spatial-

¹²⁴ *Yatra* (Sanskrit for: 'journey' or 'procession'), in Hinduism and other Indian religions, *yatra* means a pilgrimage to holy places.

¹²⁵ Hinduize India, or the notion of a Hindu nation is the result of the adaptation of modern nationalism to the heterogenous setting of racial, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity (Six 2006).

visual field. Possibly the most vivid example of such contestation emerged through a representation of the national body in the form of a sari-clad woman that would become sacralized as *Bharat Mata* (Mother India)” (Abraham 2014, 30). Generally, political geography in terms of sacralization (Eck 2010) and the importance of territorial integrity plays a decisive part in the grand strategic self-perception of this subculture. Examples for core metaphors are geographical imaginations of ‘*akhand bharat*’, the undivided land, or India’s depiction as a goddess, in terms of ‘Mother India’. In order to secure India’s integrity and enhance its status an assertive stance is being favored. In particular policies against Pakistan and China should be tough and rest on military strength (Bajpai 2003).

3.5 Summary of Chapter 3 ‘India’s Grand Strategic Cleavages’

Chapter 3 was dedicated to the application of cleavage theory to the field of security studies and grand strategy in the footsteps of Rosenau and Holsti. An area upon which only a small group of scholars had ever used such an approach, but which due to its emphasis on the semi-permanent or slow-to change nature of its constituting lines of conflict seems to be well suited for the as deeply rooted strategic traditions or subcultures introduced in chapter 2. Thus, the result of this merging of cleavage theory with international relations paradigms has been the formulation of two semi-permanent ideational elite cleavages. After the definition, in terms of a heuristic instrument, of the ‘normative grand strategy’ cleavage (the outside dimension) with its two basic assumptions on the ‘role of war’ and the ‘nature of threat’, the cross-cutting ‘cultural identity’ cleavage (the inside dimension) with its two assumptions regarding the ‘status of territoriality’ and the ‘significance of history’ has also been discussed. By combining these two ‘structuring instruments’ the working of the ‘subculture-cleavage model of grand strategic thought’ had been detailed. According to the proposed model nine strategic subcultures have been delineated by merging a paradigmatic position on grand strategy (realism, institutionalism and idealism) with one on cultural identity (secularism, pragmatism and revivalism). The resulting worldviews make up the ‘central strategic paradigms’ of each strategic subculture, which are, in turn, supposed to compete in the interpretation, assessment and ultimately formulation of Indian grand strategy among the nation’s interpretation elite. In the fourth and final chapter, these nine subcultures will be, if possible, traced in the discursive contentions surrounding India’s Israel policy after the end of the Cold War, as an ideologically highly volatile niche example on India’s grand strategic orientation towards the West Asian region.

4. The Subculture-Cleavage Model – A Case Study: India’s Israel Policy

“They (the Arabs) have declared that “Zionism had been an accomplice of British imperialism”. [...] The old scheme of partition is likely to fall through and a larger Arab federation with a Jewish autonomous enclave is in the air.” (Jawaharlal Nehru ‘Glimpses of World History’, (1934) 1962, 790, 804)

“India’s [pre-1998] Israel policy became captive to domestic policy and therefore an un stated veto.” (L. K. Advani, quoted in Indian Express 2000)

4.1 The Illustrative Case: The Debate on India’s Israel Policy

a. An Overview

This chapter is dedicated to the deployment of the ‘subculture-cleavage’ model. In order to detect the expected range of strategic subcultures in a specific policy debate, the case of India’s Israel policy has been taken up. Hence, the chapter’s focus will be on India’s choices regarding its relations with the Jewish state, with a special emphasis given on the period after 1992. These choices are embedded in the larger dispute over the general orientation of India’s approach to West Asia of which Israel is an important part. This is where the model seeks to contribute and as a consequence the case study will deal with the competing Indian perceptions of Israel and the resulting policy prescriptions, that are grounded in the respective grand strategic traditions (strategic subcultures).

4.1.1 *Why the Case of India-Israel Relations?*

But, why has the case of Indo-Israeli relations been chosen? Israel is a small and fairly new state, which only during the last two decades became a more important factor in New Delhi’s foreign and security policy calculations (Kumaraswamy 2010). Additionally, India has, to date, never formulated any policy statement towards Israel or had ever publicly integrated the country into its wider great power schemes (Blarel 2014). Usually debates on grand strategy circulate around major strategic aims like state survival, autonomy or revisions of the existing order and rarely include the shaping of relations with smaller states. According to Nicolas Blarel, however, “relations or non-relations with Israel must not be interpreted as a strategic end in itself but as an indirect way for India to achieve [its] grand strategic objectives” (Blarel 2014, 455). This indirect way, however, does not diminish the relevance of applying the subcultures’ central

strategic paradigms to Indo-Israeli relations in terms of strategic subcultures. To the contrary, the combination of such a grand strategic outlook with the inherent ideological polarization makes them broad enough frames for the discussions on India's Israel relationship. Moreover, do the subcultures paradigmatic positions apply to all questions of Indian foreign and security policy, be it in terms of India's conflicts and relations with other states or India's positioning in the global financial architecture or climate change regime. More specifically, case selection¹²⁶ has been guided by four inter-related considerations. Firstly, India's policy debate in regard to Israel is grand strategically relevant in yet another way; due to its interconnectedness with India's relations with the United States and the broader Muslim world. And in contrast to India-China or India-Pakistan relations (with their accompanying discourses) the Indo-Israeli relationship has yet to be as thoroughly researched as these other policies. Thus, the conflict concerning the nature of India's relationship to this small West Asian¹²⁷ country, evidently, represents a niche among the many other grand strategy and security related policies India is pursuing. Secondly, however, the so-called 'Israel effect' on public opinion, as a synonym for contemporary anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism (Weil 1985), turns any debate in basically any country of the contemporary world into a showcase of ideological polarization¹²⁸. However, a caveat has to be stated, namely, that foreign and security policy related discourses, in general, are still in a nascent state in India (Ollapally and Rajagopalan 2012, Chatterjee-Miller 2016), therefore explicit whitepapers or policy statements are hard to find or non-existent. Thirdly, this ideological momentum is, nonetheless, further accentuated by the low existential salience (and dependence on Israel) of any strategic choices made by India in respect to Israel. Thus, due to the marginal structural pressure on India to choose among several strategic options, as state survival is not endangered, the central paradigms of the various strategic subcultures are more likely to become distinguishable (Nau and Ollapally 2012). Fourthly, there have been significant strategic advantages for India since independence to foster cooperation (even if hidden from the public eye) with Israel (Kumaraswamy 2002, 23). Lastly, if the nine strategic subcultures predicted

¹²⁶ On case selection in qualitative research see for example: Creswell (2007). On one case studies and sampling in qualitative research see: Coyne (1997).

¹²⁷ Prime minister Nehru deliberately used an Asiacentric terminology in order to reject Eurocentric terms like 'Near East' or 'Middle East', therefore he referred to this region as 'West Asia' (Blarel 2014, 450).

¹²⁸ Ideological polarization pertains to the variance of political perspectives to ideological extremes. Ideological polarization can relate to deviation within public opinion or to such a variation within a specific group, like a state's strategic community (Baldassarri and Gelman 2008, *Partisans without Constraint: Political Polarization and Trends in American Public Opinion*". *American Journal of Sociology*. 114 (2), 408–446).

by the ‘subculture-cleavage’ model can be detected in this relatively minor case of Indian security policy, then it is more likely that the delineation might also work in other circumstances.

a. The Structure of the Chapter

Now how is this chapter structured? After a chronological account of the animated relationship from the creation of both countries in the mid-1940s (Kozicki 1958, Misra 1966, Ahmad 1992) until the establishment of full diplomatic relations in 1992, the analytical focus will rest upon the period between 1992, the beginning of full diplomatic relations, and 2014, the year of the Modi government’s taking of office. In order to trace the nine anticipated subcultures, methodologically, the emphasis will be on the media as well as scholarly debate surrounding India’s perception of and approach to the Jewish state. Empirically, this inquiry will be based on the qualitative analysis of newspaper editorials and other news statements between 1992 and 2014 and the yet manageable corpus of secondary literature on Indo-Israeli relations. Regarding the selection of newspapers, the author tried to take major ideological perspectives into account. These orientations entail the following papers; firstly, *the Hindu* (which can be described as center-left or left-liberal, secondly, the *Times of India*, which is said to lean towards the more conservative faction of Congress, thirdly, the *Indian Express* (a traditionally pro-Congress establishment paper, that has shifted towards a pro BJP or pro-Modi orientation). This qualitative data has been collected to catch as much of the establishment voices and their ideological spectrum of Indian politics as possible in the limited frame of a dissertation project. The other pillar of data collection has been the budding body of literature, which mainly looks at actual policy choices and their possible motivations, mixing, in their analysis, the material interests of governments with their underlying normative considerations (Aaron 2003, Inbar 2004, Pant 2004, Nair 2004, Naaz 2005, Kumaraswamy 2010). However, taken together, both sources provide substantial material to apply the ‘subculture-cleavage’ model to Indo-Israeli relations. Therefore, this media and secondary literature analysis sets out to provide the basis for, firstly, the delineation of perceptions of Israel among Indian grand strategic traditions. Secondly, the insights gained from that analysis will then be used to address the strategic role that Israel plays for the respective subculture. Basically, answering the questions of why and how to engage the country according to the four constitutive assumptions of the two ideational elite cleavages. The purpose of these proceedings is to, in the end, evaluate the usefulness of the ‘subculture-cleavage’ model in terms of finding evidence for its nine strategic subcultures.

4.2 India’s Israel Policy until the Premiership of Narendra Modi

Now, this section of chapter 4 will detail the origins as well as the further development of the Indo-Israeli relationship before the two states finally assumed full diplomatic ties in January 1992. This shift in the Indo-Israeli relationship in 1992 can be regarded as yet another example of “India’s movement away from Nehruvian concepts of nonalignment and international moralism toward a hardheaded realism that proclaimed India’s far-ranging strategic aspirations” (Blank 2003, 145).

Israel is a small, one could even say tiny, state in the Middle east or to use the Indian terminology West Asia. It is literally at the limits of India’s traditional geopolitical horizon (the distance between New Delhi and Jerusalem is nearly 4000km), which can be equated in its Western stretch to the gateway of Suez (connecting the Eastern Mediterranean to the Red Sea) and to the Western-most hub of the classical ‘spice route’, with Egypt and the Levant at its centre (Keay 2010). In terms of population and land mass the two countries are hardly comparable¹²⁹, however their political and cultural standing is not properly reflected by these measures. Also for India, Israel despite its relative smallness is a heavyweight on different playing fields. India is the largest purchaser of Israeli military gear and Israel is the second-largest defense provider to India behind the Russian federation (Atwal 2008, 215). Between 1999 and 2009, the defense material trade between the two countries augmented to about \$9 billion. In 2014, bilateral trade, excluding military sales, Israel increased from \$200 million in 1992 to around \$4.5 billion in 2014 (Ogden 2014). In 2007 Israel proposed a free trade agreement between the two economies, an idea Prime minister Manmohan Singh finally accepted in 2010. Since then the two states are in negotiations on a far-reaching free trade agreement, concentrating on fields such as information technology, biotechnology, and agriculture (Kumaraswamy 2015). Furthermore, the relationship is facilitated due to a remarkable phenomenon. Following a 2009 poll research conducted on behalf of Israel’s foreign ministry, the highest level of sympathy globally towards Israel has been measured in India, with 58% of Indian participants uttering sympathy and a positive attitude towards the state of Israel (Eichner 2009). However, it took more than four decades till the official ‘normalization’ of their relationship. As India was the last major non-Arab and non-Muslim country to set up comprehensive diplomatic relations in January 1992 (Blarel 2014, 449, Kumaraswamy 1995). This gap of 42 years between the recognition of Israel

¹²⁹ Population size: Israel’s 8,5 million compared to India’s 1,324 billion (2016), Territorial size: Israel’s 22.072 km² versus India’s 3.287.469 km², the same disproportion is true in terms of GDP: Israel’s \$318,7 billion versus India’s \$2.264 billion (2016); source: data.WorldBank.org. country profiles. Viewed through these numbers it seems to be the relationship between a dwarf and a giant.

by India and the implementation of comprehensive diplomatic ties will be discussed in the first part of the history of Indo-Israeli relations.

4.2.1 The Origins of India's Israel Policy

On September 17th, 1950, after intense deliberations Prime minister Nehru formally recognized the newly founded state of Israel, while relegating the decision to pursue full diplomatic relations to a later stage. Nehru stated that "we would have [recognized Israel] long ago, because Israel is a fact. We refrained because of our desire not to offend the sentiments of our friends in the Arab countries" (Kumaraswamy 1995, 31). The roots of India's friendship with Arab countries in the region goes back the first half of the twentieth century as India's freedom movement's first foreign policy initiatives were linked to West Asia. The Indian National Congress (INC) actively supported the so-called 'Khalifat movement' after the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire after 1918 trying to forge some sort of unity and solidarity between Hindus and Muslims. Hence, India's domestic calculations had a first effect on its West Asian policy, as accommodating the Hindu-Muslim divide and managing a certain kind of secularism fed into India's national interest. In the same vein, Indian leaders fostered relations with Arab nationalists fighting British imperialism. Nehru, for example, met Arab leaders in various anti-colonial forums such as the 1927 Brussels conference of Oppressed Nationalities (Heptulla 1992). Both Nehru and Gandhi on the one hand, expressed their sympathy for Jewish suffering, on the other hand, however, they explicitly rejected any attempt to create a Jewish national home (Blarel 2014, 457) due to their fear of Jewish religious nationalism becoming a role-model for the Muslim League to follow. Thus, in 1938 the Indian National Congress gave its full support for the creation of an independent Palestinian state (Grover 1992).

Generally, Indian nationalists were not supportive of the Zionist movement due to its religious basis, which was diverging from India's professed secular nationalism. Mahatma Gandhi, as an example for this Indian ambiguity, believed that the Jews had a good case and a prior claim for Israel, (Gandhi 2013 (1946, Harijan)) but, nonetheless, opposed the foundation of Israel on communal or mandated terms (Panter-Brick 2009). Initially, the Indian National Congress, was critical about the Jewish state, primarily, because of the perception that Israel was a state built on religion and in that regard similar to the idea of Pakistan. Even before partition, with the rise of the Muslim League, calls for a Jewish state were being conceived as an another 'child of British imperialism' (Nehru 1962, 792). Nehru's solution was therefore a single Palestinian state based on federal principles to integrate the Jewish minority. By granting only the status of autonomy to the Jewish population any notion of a 'two-nation' theory was averted (Blarel

2014, 457). In addition, the Jewish national movement was regarded as being sustained by imperialist European powers to establish a neo-colonial state in Arab lands (Kozicki 1958, Gordon 1975, Nanda 1976). Nehru in his famous work “Glimpses of World History” formulates this thought of Israel being an agent of foreign powers in the following way: “responsible Zionist leaders had constantly urged what an advantage a strong Jewish National Home would be to the English in guarding the road to India, just because it was a counteracting force to Arab national aspirations” (Nehru 1962, 800). Thus, India opted against the ‘Partitioning of Palestine’ plan of 1947 (UN Bibliographic Information System. November 29, 1947) and opposed the admission of the state of Israel into the United Nations in 1949 (UN Bibliographic Information System. May 5, 1949).

4.2.2 New Delhi’s Israel policy after Independence - the Nehru Years

The two-year debate between May 1948 and September 1950 among Nehru and his foreign policy bureaucrats resulted in a ‘limited relationship policy’ that preferred to monitor the evolving situation (Blarel 2014). From the 1950s to the early 1990s this ‘Nehruvian’ stance towards the Israeli state remained intact – preserving the informal nature of the relationship. Both domestic and foreign considerations alike shaped this stagnating approach. However, according to Blarel, contrary to popular perceptions not morality and post-colonial solidarity but pragmatism and prudence (the operational face of grand strategy (Johnston 1995)) were the decisive principles guiding India’s policy choices. “Any action that we take must be guided not only by idealistic considerations but also a realistic appraisal of the situation. Our general policy in the past has been favourable to the Arabs, at the same time not hostile to the Jews. That policy continues. For the present, we have said that we are not recognising Israel. But this is not an irrevocable decision and the matter will no doubt be considered afresh view of subsequent developments” (Nehru 1985 letters to state ministers, 127-28) Nehru’s aim was to take a balanced position towards the region, accommodating both Western powers as well as Arab allies and consequently enhancing India’s strategic autonomy as a central feature of grand strategy (Blarel 2014, 473).

L.K. Advani, a key ideologue and politician of the BJP, pointed to the domestic dimension of India’s Israel policy, when he stated that, “India’s [pre-1998] Israel policy became captive to domestic policy and therefore an unstated veto” (Advani in the Indian Express 2000). From the time of independence onwards the Congress constantly feared by reproaching Israel to lose the ‘Muslim vote’ on the different levels of Indian politics. For Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad, as a leading supporter and adviser for Prime minister Nehru, relations with Israel had substantial

implications for India's internal order and territorial integrity. Reassuring Muslims in India after Partition, by refraining from any normal relationship with the Jewish state, was according to Michael Brecher, an advice given by Maulana Azad to Nehru (Brecher 1963). Yet, another calculation shaped initial Indo-Israeli relations - the question of the future status of Kashmir. The Kashmir issue was brought to the UN's attention, after the Pakistani orchestrated invasion had been repelled, also with the hope of the Congress government to garner support from Arab states in return for India's non-recognition of Israel (Ganguly 1997). The hope for Arab friendship by delaying Israel's recognition even though the state had already become a *fait accompli* and rallying support in the Kashmir territorial issue from them was soon dashed. After this negative experience of Arab reliability in terms of diplomatic support against Pakistan and later on (in the framework of non-alignment and post-colonial cooperation) potentially even against China, Nehru balanced India's approach towards Israel. Already in 1947 Nehru had stated that Israel's recognition could not be 'indefinitely deferred' and had invited a delegation to the first Asian Relations Conference in Delhi. Given a first hint that India's position could change. Through this balancing Nehru and his confidants like Krishna Menon could preserve India's foreign policy autonomy. Nehru put it that his policy choice "was adopted after a careful consideration of the balance of factors. It is not a matter of high principle but it is based on how we could best serve and be helpful in that area [...] After careful thought, we felt that while recognizing Israel as an entity, we need not at this stage exchange diplomatic personnel" (Nehru 196). The first diplomatic mission allowed to enter the country was the consulate in Bombay granted to Israel in 1952. Such generosity was followed by an invitation to the Bandung conference in 1955, based on an Indian initiative. However, after a short period of rapprochement, the Suez crisis in 1956 deteriorated the relationship again (Rajan 1964) as did the close personal relationship between Nehru and Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser, especially in the framework of the non-aligned movement after 1961. A pattern that was to be repeated in order to keep all options open.

Finally, two other fundamental factors influenced Nehruvian policy with Israel; the first was dependence on the United States to implement India's first five-year plan (Mishra 1982). The second and more stable influence was the desire to counter Pakistan's influence with Arab and Muslim states, for which India's supportive stance of the Palestine Liberation Organization

(PLO) via the Non-Aligned Movement (of which the Egyptian president Nasser was a founding member)¹³⁰ was a strong sign thereof.

4.2.3 *From Lal Bahadur Shastri to Rajiv Gandhi*

His successors from the mid-1960s to the late 1980s stuck to Nehru's interpretation of the relationship with Israel. An interpretation that remained intact despite major setbacks and frustrations. The nature of the relationship with the Arab states received a deeply-ingrained one-way character. As India's active support of the Arab cause in their conflicts with Israel neither in 1956 (Suez Crisis), nor in 1967 (Six-Day War) or in 1973 (Yom-Kippur War) led to any palpable and positive results for India, whether in peace time nor in situations of crisis like in 1962 (Indo-China Border War), 1965 (the Second Indo-Pakistan war) nor 1971 (the creation of Bangladesh) could India count on some sort of support from Arab states (Rubinoff 1995). As a consequence, already after the Indo-China war in 1962 and the 1965-armed confrontation with Pakistan, this lack of benefits from a staunchly pro-Arab policy was progressively disapproved by opposition parties like the Jana Sangh or the Swatantra party but also from within the Congress. However, to no effect as Prime minister Indira Gandhi even enhanced support of the Arab states (Blarel 2014, 462) a year after coming to power in 1967. The main reasons for this unchanged-attitude were to be found, firstly, in the large number of Indian citizens working in the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf, who were aiding India sustain its foreign-exchange reserves¹³¹ (Pant 2011). Hence good relations with these powerful Arab states were essential to secure a steady flow of foreign remittances. The second factor was oil politics, as around 70 per cent of India's crude oil demand was satisfied by Gulf energy exports (Dietl 2000) preserving the flow of oil from Arab states, in particular after the 1973 oil shock, was therefore paramount. Thus, India's domestic demand for energy was an important factor for the non-normalization of ties with Israel. But all of India's diplomatic efforts to enroll support and cooperation were in vain when in 1969 at the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) in Rabat the Indian delegation was banned from participating due to simple Pakistani pressure (Singh 2006). Such humiliating experiences, at least, led to the continuation and even deepening of secret links in place since Nehru's times. This included, for example, India's support, through the Research

¹³⁰ This position of support was both based on principle (anti-imperialism, third-worldism) and pragmatism due to fears of being isolated among non-aligned states at the expense of Pakistan (Rubinoff 1995). Therefore, Nehru's decisions give an impression of the idealist-pragmatist subculture, 'Nehruvians or Congress in power'.

¹³¹ The number of Indian migrants, entailing unskilled workers as well as technicians, working in West Asia has increased since the 1970s, from roughly 125.000 in 1975 to over 3,5 million in 2008. See: Prakash Jain, 'Indian Diaspora in West Asia', in Abhyankar, ed. West Asia and the region.

and Analysis Wing (RAW), its intelligence agency, that was founded in September 1968 of the Mossad. The RAW's then head Rameshwar Nath Kao, was directed to do so by Prime minister Indira Gandhi to foster relations with Israel's intelligence apparatus (Blarel 2014). This was in line with the long-standing tradition of Israel to provide India with critical information during its many wars (Muni and Mohan 2004).

The Janata government between 1977-1980, with Atal Bihari Vajpayee as its foreign minister, had the ambition to further correct the Indo-Arab relationship (Dixit 2003) of unreciprocated benefits and goodwill (Dietl 2000). A prominent example of this improvement was the secret invitation of Israel's defense minister Moshe Dayan by Prime minister Morarji Desai in 1977 (Mudiam 1994, 190).

This incremental thaw in relations was further accentuated by Prime minister Rajiv Gandhi approval of secret operations conducted by Israeli intelligence on Indian territory (Ogden 2014). He also met Israeli Prime minister Shimon Perez at the sidelines of a UN conference in New York in 1985 and other leading American-Jewish lobbyists in 1988 (Kumaraswamy 2002, 23). Other meetings followed between Israeli foreign ministry officials, American lobbyists and Narasimha Rao. Thus, Rao as Rajiv Gandhi's foreign minister played a pivotal role in both normalizing relations with Israel and the United States, which as he recognized, led partly via Jerusalem (Kumaraswamy 1992).

4.2.4 The Premiership of Narasimha Rao – the Game-changer of 1992

When Narasimha Rao came to power on June 21st, 1991 as the head of a transitional administration circumstances allowed for a major shift and even break with Nehruvian tradition. Due to the perception of heading a weak government, Rao was not constrained by the Congress's ideological baggage and was also not forced to take the so called 'Muslim vote' much into consideration, giving him more leeway in pushing for a reformed relationship with the Jewish state. In November 1991, the normalization of relations was debated in the upper house, the Rajya Sabha, of the Indian Parliament. During this session members of opposition parties like the BJP, the Janata Party and Samajwadi Janata party called for the, in their perception, long over-due step by the Indian government (Blarel 2015). Primarily, because of mutual strategic interests and security threats, which for the first time were openly acknowledged, a strategic partnership was forged.

Three main factors, each located on a different level of analysis, were conducive for this new-found cooperation; The first, the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, was located at the

system-level. In the backwater of the end of the Soviet state and economic system India fell into a deep economic (a balance of payment) crisis (Mukherji 2014). A crisis, which India set out to overcome by enrolling the help of the United States and other Western powers including the international institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (Mukherji 2014). The breakdown of India's staunchest ally required a thorough reassessment of India's grand strategic outlook in general and of its West Asia policy in particular. This need for readjustments was further aggravated by the sudden irrelevance of non-alignment, due to the end of bipolarity. Especially India's defense capabilities heavily depended on Soviet supplies as around 70% of Indian equipment was of Soviet origin and much of that inventory was at the verge of being outdated (Ogden 2014). So, the end of the Soviet Empire and its own tense neighborhood forced India to find a competent substitute. Israel's military-industrial complex, as one of only a few other defense industries in the world, which command the whole spectrum of state-of-the-art technologies, seemed suitable for the task. Before Rao's turn, Congress politicians and foreign service bureaucrats had perceived the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians as zero-sum and had as a consequence blocked any effort for cooperation with Israel, that could be viewed as a deviation from its Arab-Muslim preference. However, to signal India's interest in a different relationship with Israel Prime minister Rao revoked the UN resolution 3379, which compared Zionism to Racism in 1991 (Gargan 1992). This move was immediately met by criticism from members of the Congress and the left, who saw it as unfaithfulness to India's traditional support of the Palestinians (Dixit 1996).

Secondly, this rapprochement was further facilitated by the changes at the regional level that was triggered by the Kuwait crisis of 1990/1991, which had far reaching consequences on the relations between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) on the one hand and Israel and other Arab states on the other. This renewed attempt for a settlement of the protracted conflict found its culmination in the Madrid conference in October 1991 and gave much more flexibility even to India's position on the state of Israel.

Thirdly, at the national level, the Kashmir uprising in the late 1980s significantly deteriorated India's relations with West Asia. Amid the escalation of the insurgency Pakistan was finally successful in pulling India's so far unfailing friends within the OIC, like the United Arab Emirates (UAE) or Iran on its side. This negative response by states, which had backed India's counter-insurgency in Kashmir made Prime minister Rao to change India's policy of unconditional support that had continued until the late 1980s. The lack of reciprocity in Indo-Arab as

well as Indo-Muslim relations made it necessary for India to show these states that India's support was not unconditional anymore¹³². Establishing full diplomatic relations with Israel and enhancing cooperation was an important element in that shift. A shift, which was made easier by unrequested Israeli support in respect to the insurgency in Kashmir (Blarel 2014).

Thus, immediately after the launch of full diplomatic relations India and Israel intensified their collaboration in military and intelligence ventures. Foreign minister Dixit's visit in March 1993 saw the first purchases of weapons by India, the implementation of these arms deals, however, were not effectuated until the late 1990s. Also in 1993, during an official visit to India by Israeli foreign minister Shimon Peres, India and Israel signed an agreement on science and technology, to facilitate collaboration between the two countries. The areas of cooperation involved information technology, bio-, electro-optical and laser technology. Moreover, a joint committee to observe the partnership between the two states was constituted and set to meet every two years. In 1994, a \$3 million joint science and technology fund was created to aid research and development cooperation between the two nations (Times of India 2015).

After the end of Narasimha Rao's premiership on May 16th, 1996 the succeeding coalition governments continued the changed Israel policy. In 1997 Indo-Israeli arms trade took shape, when Ezer Weizman became the first Israeli President to visit India. He convened with Indian President Shankar Dayal Sharma, Vice President K R Narayanan and Prime minister H D Deve Gowda. Weizman brokered the first armaments deal between the two countries, which included the delivery of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), an upgrade of India's fleet of MIG-21 fighter aircrafts, as well as laser guided bombs and the Barak-1 Surface to Air Missile (SAM) for air defense (Dixit 1996, 310).

4.2.5 The First Two NDA-Administrations 1998-2004

The first two National Democratic Alliance (NDA) coalition governments under the leadership of Prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee paved the way for an even more intense relationship between India and Israel. The BJP, as the hegemonic party of the NDA, wished to expand India's strategic reach beyond the limits of South Asia and India's extended neighborhood (Ogden 2014, 140). In particular, the strategic cooperation with Israel was seen as natural, it had "no hang up" (Ogden 2014, 141), due to the several commonalties Hindu-nationalists perceived India's nation-building project to have in common with Israel's (Ogden 2014, 141). Already in

¹³² The fruits of India's changed stance on West Asian countries could be seen during the Kargil crisis in 1999, when the OIC did not openly support Pakistan and Saudi Arabia even played a mediating role to end the confrontation (Dixit 1996, 309-312).

1999 Brajesh Mishra, India's then national security adviser travelled to Israel followed by L.K. Advani and Jaswant Singh in June and July 2000. Finally, in 2000, L.K Advani was the first Indian minister to visit the state of Israel. His visit set up a joint anti-terror commission (Pradhan 2004, 23), which reflected the common threat perception in regard to Islamic terrorism¹³³. Another rational behind India's changed position on Israel has been the utility of having new partners that help raise a country's image and attract greater levels of trade. Therefore, already in the early 1990s, BJP leaders promised an unambiguous relationship, which would rest upon cooperation in counter-terrorism and intelligence collaboration. A perspective that had its foundations in the tentative, however, long-standing contacts between members of the Sangh Parivar and Israeli officials (Blarel 2014, 476). Finally, in 2003, Ariel Sharon became the first Israeli Prime minister to travel to India. Sharon's official stay was heavily criticized by leftists (rediff 2003) and Muslim circles (rediff 2015). Hundreds of sympathizers of India's many pro-Muslim and communist parties gathered in New Delhi. Approximately 100 Muslims were detained (rediff 2015). Students of Aligarh Muslim University called for India to sever end relations with Israel and increase ties with the Palestinians. In turn, the Hindi-language daily Navbharat Times declared Prime minister Sharon "an important friend of India", while the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) strongly criticized the protest against Sharon, giving evidence of heightened ideological polarization due to the changes set in place by the Hindu-nationalist led government.

The visit's results included six agreements in areas ranging from the environment, to education, drug trade, visa regulations for officials on both sides, as well as health and cultural cooperation. Furthermore, both sides institutionalized meetings between their defense ministers every six months (Ogden 2014, 142). After the watershed visit of Prime minister Sharon, Israel delivered arms to India both during the Kargil crisis in 1999 and Operation Parakram in 2001 (Pant 2004, 65) and, due to, better Indo-US relations India was able to acquire the Israeli Phalcon airborne warning and control system (AWACS), which marks a "pivotal moment" in Indo-Israel relations (Riedel 2008). However, due to India's balanced approach towards the region, especially towards Iran, Sharon even threatened to end the beginning technology transfer if India would continue to engage Iran (Blarel 2014, 473). Muni and Mohan, nonetheless, see India's position as a break, as it went "beyond the past comprehensive alignment with the Arab world in its

¹³³ Another sign of the Indo-Israeli entente: in 2002, Israeli submarines are said to have test fired cruise missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads in the Indian Ocean, off the coast of Sri Lanka setting up a support infrastructure in the Indian Ocean with the assistance of India's Navy (The Guardian, October 2003).

disputes with Israel to a long overdue evenhanded approach to the region” (Muni and Mohan 2004, 328). Thus, the BJP-led government introduced an explicit pro-Israel tilt, which was nonetheless accompanied by a balanced approach towards West Asia (specifically, towards states like Syria, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and especially Iran). That was in sharp contrast to the Congress dominated pre-1998 period, which saw from the 1950s onwards a more pro-Arab and pro-Muslim and only during the late 1980s and early 1990s a more balanced approach. As one of the side effects of the deepening relationship, in 1998 Israel did not condemn the Indian nuclear tests in Pokhran-II (Blarel 2015).

After the NDA coalition was ousted and the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) returned to power, there were fears of a fall back in the relationship to the times before 1992. However, except for some Marxist and Muslim factions, no other political forces in India wished for a cut in Indo-Israeli relations. In line with the Idealist-pragmatist strategic subculture, that is ‘Congress in power’, The UPA ministry upheld only rhetorically its more distanced approach towards the Jewish state (Blarel 2015, 470). The tenor of Prime minister Manmohan Singh’s government on Israel had been that nothing is set in stone as the only policy guiding principle is adhocism and pragmatism (Datta-Ray 2014). Only if it serves India’s interests Israel will be selectively engaged.

However, the general level of interaction remained as high as under the NDA government. Examples of prominent exchanges and visits include; in early 2006 Indian ministers Sharad Pawar, Kapil Sibal and Kamal Nath (rediff 2006). Already in October 2006, then, Gujarat chief minister, Narendra Modi stayed in Israel. In 2008, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) sent the Israeli military satellite TecSAR into space. Furthermore, in November 2008, Indian military officials travelled to Israel to discuss the possibility to jointly develop weapon systems, agree on further sales of Israeli equipment to the Indian military, and counter-terrorism operations. Such in-depth exchanges were seen as yet another significant expansion of the Indian-Israeli strategic partnership. In December 2009, Lt. Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi, Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Forces, made a visit to India to strengthen the defense cooperation between the two nations. He promised every assistance to India in quelling terrorism and in the wake of his visit till the end of Manmohan Singh’s time in office in 2014 several new arms deals were negotiated. In the face of criticism of India’s broad range of collaborations with Israel Indian reactions were confined to mere announcements to dissuade tensions like Indian foreign minister S.M. Krishna’s statement on "India's unwavering support for the Palestinian cause", which did not prevent him of making another two-day trip to Israel in 2012.

4.2.6 Prime Minister Narendra Modi – A New Chapter after 2014

The election of former Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi to the post of India's Prime minister further solidified the relationship. One of the first significant gestures the new NDA government set was, in November 2014, the visit of home minister Rajnath Singh to Israel to study the Israel's border security provisions (The Hindu 2014). Thereby, deviating from convention, Singh was the first Indian minister to visit Israel without also meeting Palestinian officials during the same tour. The Indian media described this change of habit as the "de-hyphenation" of India's relations with the two states (Indian Express 2014). During the 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict Indian external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj asserted that "there is absolutely no change in India's policy towards Palestine, which is that we fully support the Palestinian cause while maintaining good relations with Israel" (Ogden 2014, 141). Even though at a later stage India in a symbolic gesture joined the other BRICS countries in voting at the United Nations Human Rights Council for an investigation of the supposed human rights violation in Gaza, which caused a mixed reaction among Indian media-commentators and analysts (rediff 2014). When the UNHRC inquiry, claiming that Israel had been involved in war crimes, was put for vote, India refrained from voting. Prime minister Modi, instantly after taking office, emphasized the shared strategic interests like combatting radical Islam and the importance of mutual exchanges on issues ranging from the management of territorial disputes to the general security environment in West and South Asia. Examples for the implementation of India's favorable stance included in October 2015, as the Pioneer reported, preparations to hold the first joint military exercise between the two states (Pioneer 2015). Also, in the same year a high-level Israeli mission with the Israeli Agriculture minister, Yair Shamir, attended the Vibrant Gujarat summit (Times of India 2017).

4.2.7 The Content of the Indo-Israeli Policy

These impressions of actual policy content leads to a short survey of the different fields in which India and Israel are collaboratively engaged in. The major area of cooperation is by far the defense industry. Israel has become India's second largest armament provider (Atwal 2008, 215). Both in terms of technological prowess and reliability, especially during the post-1998 sanctions time, has Israel developed into a strategic partner. Interestingly, India has predominantly purchased defensive equipment, that entails weapons platforms, like AWACSs, UAVs or air-defense systems (Barak-8 SAM quoted from Blarel 2014, 469) Furthermore, the Israeli defense industry represents a role-model for India. Joint ventures and an active technology

transfer remain highly attractive for India to build its own necessary infrastructure in the mid-term (Blarel 2015).

Closely connected to defense and security is the field of science and technology. This sector is mostly symbolized by the booming IT and software sector in the economy of both countries (Blank 2005). Cooperation has thrived in the following research areas like the development of advanced materials, biotechnology and human genome research, or a project to clean the Ganga and to meet India's general water needs. To further this sort of high-end applied research India and Israel have signed a memorandum of understanding to boost investment in industrial research and development (Riedel 2008). Yet another special segment within the broader science and technology field is occupied by space exploration. In 2002, India and Israel agreed to enhance space cooperation between the two states (Ogden 2014). In 2003, the Israel Space Agency, or (ISA), officially, stated interest in cooperating with the Indian Space Research Organisation, or (ISRO), in employing satellites in order to enhance land and natural resources management. Israel additionally articulated interest in partaking in a planned mission conducted by ISRO to send an unmanned spaceship to the moon. In 2005, Israel launched TecSAR, the country's first synthetic aperture radar imaging satellite, on India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) because of Israeli apprehensions about the reliability and technical limitations of its own Shavit space launch vehicle, economic concerns, but also because of Israel's wish to intensify strategic collaboration with India (The Hindu 2015). In 2008, TecSAR was placed into orbit by India's PSLV (Haaretz 2008). One of TecSAR's chief tasks has been to observe Iran's military activities (Haaretz 2008). In 2009, India again propelled RISAT-2, a synthetic aperture radar imaging satellite (Wall Street Journal 2014) into space. RISAT-2 was built by the Israel Aerospace Industries, or IAI, in partnership with ISRO (Haaretz 2009). The launch of the RISAT-2 satellite served to increase India's terrestrial observation capabilities, which would advance disaster management, and improve the nation's surveillance and defense abilities (Asia Times 2009). In the aftermath of the 2008 Mumbai attacks the procurement and subsequent start of the RISAT-2 satellite program was prioritized, to improve India's future reconnaissance capacity (ISRO, Government of India 2009).

Finally, Indo-Israeli partnership has manifested itself in agriculture. Most importantly, in 2008, both nations signed the so-called Agriculture Cooperation Agreement. This agreement facilitated already existing links between Israel and Indian states and had spill-over effects to biotechnology and other life sciences, in which the two countries are cooperating (Blarel 2015). After 25 years of normal relations a strategic partnership has evolved. Despite the deepening of

the relationship the future trajectory remains contested. Due to the predominantly beneficial results for India the relations are even more stable after the takeover of the Modi government in 2014, however, do the different ideological traditions still aim at shaping the relationship one way or the other. How the various strategic subcultures perceive Israel and how they formulate policy alternatives based on their assessment will be discussed in the next section.

4.3 The Qualitative Evaluation of the Indian Media Discourse on Indo-Israeli Relations Post-1992

The subsequent qualitative analysis of the media and scholarly debate on Indo-Israeli relations will have the following structure. Firstly, a selection of editorials, commentaries and other news entries predominately from the three leading English-language newspapers in India, the Hindu, Indian Express and the Times of India (the number of coded articles is around 30) and other global news sources ranging from the Asia Times to the BBC to Haaretz (bringing the number of newspaper-related articles up to 55) provides the basis for the delineation of discourse positions. Like in the case of India's strategic culture debate the texts have been coded with the help of the MAXQDA software to get a systematic data collection. In this process, the key analytical assumptions of the model loaded with both a pro or a contra Israel perspective have been identified and are incorporated in the text. In addition, scholarly literature will also be taken into account to add to the sometimes vague and repetitive statements of political journalism. As described in the methodology section, fetching positions on Israel and attaching the various strategic worldviews to them has been done according to the filter provided by the 'subculture-cleavage' model. This filter or analytical framework consists of the four foundational assumptions of the model; The first two, used to define the 'cultural identity' cleavage, are employed to grasp the similarities in both countries state and nation-building projects, in the section on how Israel is perceived by India's strategic interpretation elite. Especially, more ideology-bound topics like the notion of a 'homeland' for Hindus and Jews (sacredness of territory) and the relation between state and religion and civilizational heritage are taken into account. Therefore, cultural identity is applied in a 'twofold' way, following the assumptions on history and territoriality. While the other cleavage dimensions are used to trace policy preferences. These preferences are thus structured according to different notions of the use of force (be it military cooperation, diplomatic support or like the counter-positions would advocate "non-violent" diplomatic tools like sanctions, or isolating Israel (through the Durban declaration or prosecuting human rights violations)) and the dimension of shared threat perception, that will take issues

like the shared threat of Islamic terrorism, but also shared economic opportunities, especially in the IT and defense sector (Blarel 2014) into consideration. If suitable, explicit policy preferences have also been incorporated like calls for the exclusive support of Palestine or to curb cooperation (not even full recognition) to a minimum.

Hence, in the following two sections the various ideological perspectives on Indo-Israeli relations are being depicted. Starting with the perception of Israel in India's strategic circles, which has implications on how policy should be formulated. From there the two inductively deduced policy propositions are detailed and the strategic subcultures are aggregated accordingly. In the final section, the question will be raised if the nine strategic subcultures have, at least, to varying degrees been detected, thereby confirming or mitigating the proposed model.

4.4 Indian Grand Strategic Perceptions of Israel

How is Israel perceived by India's interpretation elite and strategic establishment is the central question of this section? In terms of the 'subculture-cleavage' model the lens of cultural identity seems to be most fitting. That is, Indian strategists filter their perceptions of Israel for similarities and dissonances (Rosch et. al. 1976) in order to reduce them to stereotypical narratives and designations. In line with the constitutive assumptions of the cultural identity cleavage, which deals with the 'self', but can in principal be applied to every other 'self' categorization, the friendly or hostile attitude towards Israel is being interpreted along historical and territorial frames (Goffman 1963). As for Israel, history and geography matter in a peculiar, however for Indians familiar way, that manifest itself in the claim of cultural continuity and therefore a historical entitlement to the 'holy land'. On the questions if Israel shares some commonalities with India and deserves the understanding and support of India, the Indian interpretation elite is divided into roughly two camps. Consequently, depending on a more positive or adverse stance towards the Jewish state India's grand strategic worldviews formulate differing preferences on how to engage Israel and devise a policy. The more pro-Israel position is, again following the two basic, the 'status of territoriality' and the 'significance of history' assumptions, marked by the recognition of some structural similarities between the two nation-building projects.

4.4.1 The Indian Strategic Subcultures with a Pro-Israeli Stance

The degree of a positive attitude towards Israel is not evenly distributed among the nine strategic subcultures. Revivalists who build on the uninterrupted continuity of Indian civilization tend

to have a more favorable perception than representatives of the pragmatist or secularist subcultures. Especially, for revivalists one of the most striking commonalities is the shared concept of religious nationalism as the bedrock of both nation-building projects (Gordon 1975, Ogden 2015). The broad stream of Hindu religion and civilization like Judaism worked as the primary reference point for the construction of a national identity both for modernists (and even secularists) as well as cultural traditionalists. In Israel, this has been true for Zionists as well as conservatives (apart from some ultra-orthodox Jewish communities and sects, who reject the modern state of Israel) and in the case of India both the national movement and the extensive *Hindutva* family all embraced culture and thereby religion to be the foundation of the modern Jewish and Indian state (Chakrabarty and Pandey 2009). For revivalists these similarities between India's and Israel's state-formation provide inspiration on building an even more culturalist state and respectively grand strategic identity (Chaulia 2002, Kumaraswamy 2004). Under the slogan "*Yehudi Hindu Bhai Bhai*", which paraphrases Nehru's famous "*Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai*", epitomizing Indo-China friendship of the 1950s (Kumaraswamy 1995), several newspaper commentators, politicians and public intellectuals (all participating in the debates on India's foreign relations) propagate the 'natural' and advantageous character of a partnership with Israel due to the additional strategic advantage India gains from cooperation. This support and even admiration on the side of revivalists goes back to the days of independence Hindu Mahasabha leader Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, who advocated the foundation of Israel on moral as well as political grounds, and opposed the anti-Israel votes of the Indian government at the United Nations (Savarkar and Joshi 1967). Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) leader Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar venerated Jewish nationalism and considered Palestine to be the natural homeland of the Jewish people, as creating nationhood in terms of a clearly defined ethnic or religious group seeking to reclaim their sacred territory reflected his own perception of a future Hindustan (Savarkar and Joshi 1967). In the Indian Express commentators like Abhyankar, Airy, Bagchi, Baruah, Gupta or Pandit, who are considered to be close to either the BJP or Hindu nationalism in general have in their editorials or news comments several times pointed to that similarity of cultural continuity between the two nations.

In accordance with the indicator of the 'significance of history' assumption subcultures which concede importance to history like realist-revivalists or institutionalist-revivalists are also in favor of a closer relationship with Israel. Time and again the following observations are stated; both countries have been victims of subjugation and discrimination and for both the founding of the modern state and sovereignty represents liberation (Chatterjee-Miller 2013). Furthermore, Kumaraswamy highlights the remarkable fact that India is one of the rare countries were

no pogroms or other forms of discrimination and prosecution were directed against the Jewish minority (Kumaraswamy 1995). Besides, a restored statehood and independence in the mid-20th century, both states representing a distinct culture or religious tradition are confronted by the same threat of Islamic resurgence (Huntington 1996). Authors and public intellectuals alike have argued for cooperation against this common challenge and have pointed to the benefits for India in profiting from Israel's fairly uncomplicated forms of support in intelligence or counter-terrorism and insurgency fighting, be it in terms of ammunition deliveries in the 1962 war or assisting in counter-insurgency training or in anti-terror operations like liberating a hijacked airplane (Abhyankar 2012, Bagchi 2012).

Yet another shared feature in line with the second basic assumption of the cultural identity cleavage the 'status of territoriality' is the sacred understanding of territory. For revivalists as well as some pragmatists India and Israel share a holy geography, the homeland of Jews and Hindus respectively (Abhyankar 2012). *Erez Israel* and *Bharat* are more than simple national territories as they epitomize the whole of the community. Concessions on such a spiritually-loaded geo-body are hard to make, as the protracted conflicts surrounding the delimitation of both countries' borders and as in the case of Israel the questioning of its very existence shows (Nair 2004).

For commentators like Airy, Bagchi, Baruah, Gupta or Kundu this common experience of an identity, which is grounded in pre-modern and quasi-religious notions of statehood, provides a strong bond between the two political and cultural-religious entities. Especially, Israel's decades-long experience with counter-insurgency and anti-terrorism operations is interesting for India's internal security. Cooperation in this area, as was shown in the chronology section has been well-established since the early days of independence (Blarel 2015) and increased significantly after the normalization of diplomatic relations in 1992. Arguably, supporters of a strategic partnership and friendship with Israel wish for an even deeper cooperation as they see Israeli know-how and material support as a guarantee to further improve India's capabilities. Additionally, the transfer of Israeli military technology and equipment plays an equally important part. Israel is regarded as a competent and fairly unproblematic (in contrast to Western suppliers) provider of defense materials, that is also capable of upgrading outdated or former Soviet armament (Atwal 2008). Thus, cultivating a strategic partnership that is grounded in a deep cultural understanding and respect, due to structural similarities in both state- and nation-building projects has the potential to become one of the pillars of India's global posture (Abhyankar 2012). In sum, similar conceptions of cultural and religious continuity (uninterrupted

over the last, at minimum 2500 years) combined with a burdensome and traumatic history as well as an almost sacred perception of their homeland (Heptulla 1992, Naaz 2005) represent these similarities that facilitate understanding and cooperation for revivalists. What this appreciation for the Zionist state with both its admiration for Israel's autonomy and strength as pre-conditions for true sovereignty and the common threat perception meant for the formulation of grand strategic preferences will be detailed in the section on the subcultures' suggestions of engaging Israel. In sum, the following strategic subcultures or 'Weltanschauungen' with a fairly pro-Israeli attitude could be identified. The transitions between them are, however, blurred as the allocation to a specific subculture was based upon the fairly broad filters of the cultural identity cleavage. With the caveat, that both the newspaper sources as well as the secondary literature that was sighted has been limited, the subsequent ideological traditions according to the 'subculture-cleavage' model have been detected; an idealist-revivalist, institutionalist-revivalist, realist-revivalist, realist-pragmatist and realist-secularist strategic subculture. A sort of middle ground is taken by the institutionalist subcultures, with neo-liberals and pragmatists having a clearly more pro-Israel bias and can therefore be also subsumed under the strategic partnership category.

4.4.2 The Indian Strategic Subcultures with an Israel-sceptical Approach

The Israelophob group within India's interpretation elite of the country's foreign and security policy is as diverse as that of the advocates of an Indo-Israeli alliance. The major differences can again be grasped by employing the cultural identity cleavage as most of the criticism and rejection of Israel is sparked by a different reading of history and an opposing interpretation of the meaning of territory. Traditionally, there are several ideological strands in Indian politics which have at least a skeptical approach towards the Jewish state and even though they have lost much of their policy-guiding influence since the 1990s there are still some vociferous voices among India's public intellectuals, who argue for a critical stance on Israel like Baruah, Noorani, or Natwar. Predominantly, these advocates belong to left-leaning as well as to the classically 'anti-imperialist' spectrum of subcultures. For them Israel represents one of the most loathsome examples of neo-imperialist, neo-colonial and exploitative capitalist forces in the post-colonial era (Cohen 1975, Heptulla 1992). Viewed from this anti-imperialist, or 'Global South' perspective and these Indian pundits heavily draw on their socialist and internationalist Nehruvian and Gandhian legacy, Israel's struggle for survival seems to be quintessentially exclusivist and racist equating it to the Apartheid regime of South Africa (Kurmaraswamy 2004). Even though most of them acknowledge the suffering of the Jewish people in the diaspora the

establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine is an unrightfully construction for them (Hep-tulla 1992). Historical claims for a national home are rejected as Zionism is seen as an agent of Western powers to secure a foothold in West Asia. Cultural continuity and religious claims on the land of Israel are only conceded to the Palestinians, as the rightful inhabitants of the land. Eventually, history is only in so far relevant as it concerns the last 100 years or so, when the Zionist project of state-building took shape (Nehru 1986). The ‘status of territoriality’ assumption is mostly represented by the demand of giving up territory, which is considered to be occupied. Such a concession by the Israeli side is regarded as a possible solution in a peace-process, that should lead to a considerably diminished role for Israeli statehood. Due to an understanding of territory as not being sacred (secular according to the ‘subculture-cleavage’ model) territorial exchanges and the drawing of borders are conceived of as less problematic. Consequently, subcultures contend that, India should stick to its policy of solely supporting the Palestinian cause and India should return to acting as a leading power for the oppressed people like Prime minister Nehru and Gandhi had. As will be outlined in the next section for leftists and other anti-Israeli opinion-leaders there is neither a common threat to face, as even Israel itself is perceived as a potential threat for world peace nor is there any advantage in cooperating with a ‘rogue’ state oppressing the Palestinian people. If India should at all formulate grand strategic preferences for the West Asian region these should be directed against and not in favor of Israel (Kurmaraswamy 2004).

Again, there is some overlap between subcultures that can be subsumed under the Israel-sceptical grouping as the degree of opposition vary considerably. Following the ‘subculture-cleavage’ model’s ‘cultural identity’ cleavage strategic worldviews, which have a ‘secular’ understanding of territoriality and are less concerned with the actual salience of history and culture, should take such a critical approach towards deeper Indo-Israeli relations post-1992; the Idealist-secularist, idealist-pragmatist, idealist-revitalist subcultures, with their more popular designations are leftists, Gandhians and ideological Nehruvians, group into this category.

4.5 Indian Grand Strategic Preferences on how to engage Israel

Now, in this section Indian strategic preferences towards Israel are being outlined. Again, like in the previous discussion on how India’s strategic community perceives Israel, this part will draw from the ‘subculture-cleavage’ model’s constitutive dimensions with the only difference that this time the ‘normative grand strategy’ cleavage will provide the analytical framework to

trace positions on the engagement ('how India should act') of Israel. Depending on the perception of the state of Israel, as detailed above, competing objectives are formulated by the various normative traditions. However, similarly to the case of perception, perspectives can be grouped in two broad camps mirroring closeness or distance in terms of cultural identity; thus, there is again a pro-Israeli coalition that is in favor of building a closer relationship and the opposing side that refrains from any cultivation of Indo-Israeli relations.

The 'normative grand strategy' cleavage consists of the 'role of conflict' and the 'nature of threat dimension. The role of conflict assumption deals *inter alia* with the use of force and other means of power at a state's disposal. It is therefore highly relevant in systematizing what instruments of powers (with their respective strategies) India's grand strategic schools wish to employ to achieve their policy goals. Closely linked to these templates for behavior are the assessments of the particular strategic environment with its specific threats to Indian interests. Eventually, these two dimensions help to define, what India's interests vis-à-vis Israel (risks and opportunities) are and consequently what aspect of Indian power it does concern (military, diplomatic, economic). Hence, the next sub-section is dedicated to the spectrum of 'how India's Israel policy should look like' for proponents of '*Yehudi Hindu bhai bhai*'.

4.5.1 Pro-Israel Grand Strategic Preferences

Six subcultures, institutionalist-revivalists, realist-revivalists, as well as realist-pragmatists, institutionalist-pragmatists as well as institutionalist-secularist and realist-secularists share a positive attitude towards deeper Indo-Israeli cooperation. While idealist-revivalists, even though they take a middle ground, as they in the Gandhian tradition express understanding both for the Israeli as well as Palestinian cause, tend to be biased more in favor of the Palestinians. For revivalist subcultures their preference for Israel is rooted their closeness and similarity in terms of cultural identity and their shared threat perception. While for pragmatists a partnership with Israel signifies a maybe only temporary support for India's emergence and as a side effect does a more balanced approach to West Asia serve India's interests. Supporters, who have articulated pro-Israeli positions include Dasgupta, Abhyankar or Kurumaswamy; these public intellectuals have been advocating a robust relationship with the Jewish state based on the common regime type of democracy and the aforementioned cultural parallels and a mutual menace. But an enhanced partnership, pundits like Dasgupta argue, brings also a rise in status with major Western states, most of all with the United States, for India. Additionally, an alliance has some advantages (especially for India's internal balancing) and some external ramifications like the mentioned new-found equilibrium with the Arab states due to India's Israel bias post 1992. So,

for these factions of India's interpretation elite Israel has and will help India to increase its military and intelligence capabilities. Consequently, reciprocally supporting of certain Israeli policies, especially if they have model character for India, like counter-insurgency strategies (Abhyankar 2012). In sum, grand strategic traditions, which either propagate a stronger state response to security threats (a quicker resort to the use of force) like realist-revivalists and realist-pragmatists or have a clearly delimited notion of the collective self, like revivalists of all sorts. Finally, also pragmatists and especially institutionalists, who share a neo-liberal outlook and favor globalization see the benefits for India seeking good relations with Israel. Examples are the support for a free-trade agreement between the two parties or the conduct of joint military exercises (Pant 2004). Thus, since the 1990s a comparatively broad advocacy alliance has evolved in India that is favorably commenting the two countries partnership potential (Blarel 2015).

4.5.2 Contra-Israel Grand Strategic Preferences

After this survey of the proponents of Indo-Israeli friendship, the counter position is depicted. Contrary to the optimistic view that better relations with Israel are profitable for India, followers of a skeptical or critical approach contend that it is harmful for the country. In terms of strategic subcultures, the idealist line of tradition (with its various culturalist manifestations) are united, in this at least, more reserved stance on India's normalization of relations with Israel. Examples of this vociferous camp of critical voices are again Airy, Bagchi, Baruah, Gupta or Kundu to name but a few. For them any rapprochement means negative consequences for India's standing and reputation both in the 'third' as well as in the Muslim world, the *Ummah*. The risks for India's status and the domestic repercussions in terms of Muslim frustration clearly outweigh the benefits that Israel could offer (Nair 2004). As was outlined earlier, for these schools of thought Israel poses a real threat to peace and prosperity. Some commentators have Zionism equated with racism, as the UN's Durban Declaration of 1991 did (Naaz 2005) and from which Prime minister Rao withdrew. However, usually leftist and internationalism-inspired editorials ask for an end of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and a lift of any restrictions imposed on Palestinians living under Israeli rule (for example, Gupta, Hindustan Times 2001). Beyond these general claims idealists and leftists are demanding the return of the 'Palestine First' approach of Congress governments between the 1950s and 1992. However, there have been no explicit calls for reversing the recognition of the state of Israel so far. Nonetheless the idea of using India's power capabilities to, for example, sanctioning Israel for not following certain policy prescriptions have been proposed (The Hindu 2004, 27 April). On the question

whether India should seek the help of Israel for its hard power enhancement, these schools of grand strategic thought contend, that on ethical terms such cooperation should be rejected, as it would also be helping Israel to sustain its economy (The Hindu 2004, 27 April). In sum, the counter-position is marked by a general reluctance regarding the application of force or the improvement of India's capacities, in particular if that results from Israeli backing. Secondly, the congruence of interests between India and Israel, based on a shared assessment of the strategic environment in West Asia and beyond, is doubted (Suroor 2011). Thus, so far the analysis of the selected newspaper articles suggests that the anti-Israel coalition in Indian politics and especially in its foreign and security policy discourse entails the idealist-secularist, the idealist-pragmatist, the idealist-revitalist subcultures, while the institutionalist-pragmatists, a more popular label would be Nehruvians or Congress in power, seem to have changed to a neutral and indeed pragmatic position by not out-rightly condemning the more balanced relationship.

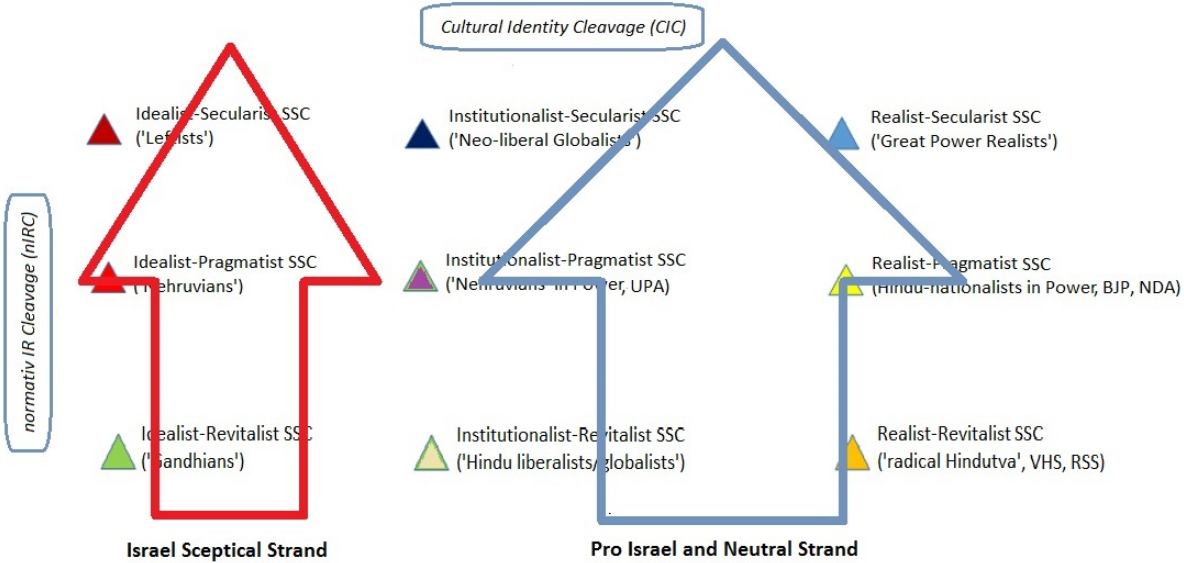
4.6 Summary of Chapter 4 'The Strategic Subcultures engaged in India's Israel Policy'

Finally, after this survey of the ideological confrontation since the early 1990s surrounding India's relations with Israel, a short resume will be drawn. The task of this chapter has eventually been to show, which strategic subcultures as delineated by the 'subculture-cleavage' model have been found in the debate manifested by editorials, comments and scholarly literature. Due to the rough polarization in three broad camps the fine-tuned subcultures could hardly be precisely determined. However, the four foundational assumptions of the two ideational elite cleavages proved as effective filters to structure discourse positions. In that regard, all expected subcultures could be distinguished, even though the more radical, that includes both the idealist-secularist tradition as well as the realist- and idealist- revitalist schools, were argumentatively more visible.

Additionally, it has to be stated that also party affiliations and government office (responsibility) made a difference as the institutionalist-pragmatist (Congress and Nehruvian perspectives) and the realist-pragmatist subculture (with the template of the BJP in office) showed. Another finding has been, that a positive perception through the lens of cultural identity (that is a culturally narrowly defined outlook like that of Hindu-nationalists for example) as well as an outlook of pragmatism ('great-power realists') lead to a more pro-Israel stance in foreign policy. This combination, eventually, means that a congruence of ideological and material interests has led to this upsurge in Indo-Israeli relations during the past 25 years. Figure 16 below presents a rough summary of the aggregated discourse structure following the 'subculture-cleavage

model of grand strategic thought'. The Idealism-inspired traditions show more affinity towards an Israel-skeptical approach. The idealist-revitalist subculture, however, takes a middle ground as was stated in regard to Gandhi's interpretation of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. The pro-Israel discourse stance seems to resonate more with the other six strategic subcultures, however, the degree of pragmatism (in terms of the immediate gains of the relationship for India) or outright neutrality is hard to distinguish. In general, the advocates for the continuation and even deepening of Indo-Israeli relations in the short to mid-term seem to prevail.

Figure16: Discourse Structure of India's Israel Policy



Source. Drawn by the author

5. Conclusion: The Subculture-Cleavage Model: A Heuristic Tool to Grasp Strategic Pluralism?

“Strategic culture can place severe constraints on the ability of elites to undertake strategic adjustment to systemic changes.” (Ripsman, Taliaferro and Lobell 2016, 69)

“[...] the insights of neoclassical realism fit well with a process of grand strategy formation that is plural, constrained by systemic imperatives and yet determined by ideational factors at unit level. (Kitchen 2010, 132)

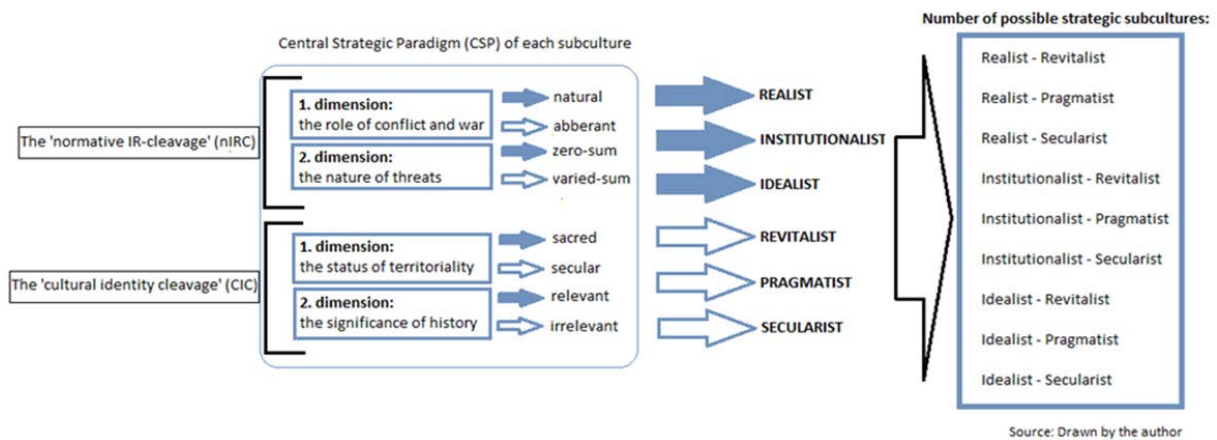
5.1 The Findings of the Thesis

5.1.1 The ‘Subculture-Cleavage’ Model’s Relevance

This thesis set out to better understand India’s ideational strategic pluralism within a culturalist approach in international relations as the goal of this dissertation project. The aim of tracing how Indians think about grand strategy has been addressed by developing an analytical instrument that is capable of delineating the various traditions of grand strategic thought in contemporary India. This heuristic tool, the ‘subculture-cleavage’ model of grand strategic thought, thus provides an analytical framework with which different subcultures, as the constituting elements of ideational strategic pluralism, can be outlined. The model suggests the delineation of nine such strategic subcultures, which compete for the formulation, assessment, and legitimization of Indian grand strategy in a distinct idiom. Being employable as ideational intervening variables in security policy decision-making – these subcultures are sets of deeply-rooted strategic ideas held by factions of the nation’s interpretation elite. At the heart of the model the two concepts of strategic culture and social cleavage theory adopted to International Relations’ specific conditions are combined in order to allow for the systematic delimitation of strategic worldviews. The analysis of India’s meta-debates on grand strategy has revealed two patterns that have been conceptualized as the two ‘structuring tools’ within the framework of the ‘subculture-cleavage’ model. These two semi-permanent ideational elite cleavages (the ‘normative grand strategy’ cleavage and the ‘cultural identity’ cleavage) structure the discursive landscape along, potentially, nine strategic subcultures. These subcultures, in the end, are applicable as intervening ideational variables within the larger context of neoclassical realism’s study of grand strategy or for example Mitra’s ‘tool box regarding domestic and international

constraints on foreign policy’ (Mitra 2011) to any discourse on Indian foreign and security policies.

Figure 17. The Subculture Cleavage Model of Grand Strategic Thought (2)



The particular importance of the ‘subculture-cleavage’ model lies in its ability to better grasp the various deeply-entrenched strands of India’s ideological scene of grand strategy formation. This relevance is further emphasized by India’s status as a rising economic as well as political power in the existing liberal world order. Thus the ‘subculture-cleavage’ model, firstly, seeks to better identify the different grand strategic worldviews, that might shape and legitimate the nation’s future trajectory. Secondly, on a smaller scale, besides India’s grand strategy, the ‘subculture-cleavage’ model helps to better grasp the country’s many foreign and security policy debates, as they are equally influenced by the same matrix of paradigmatic positions concerning the ‘self’ and how to act towards ‘others’. As the case study of India’s Israel policy tried to illustrate most of the predicted subcultures are also involved in the interpretation of comparatively minor policies, as the ideological contention is raging on all levels of India’s engagement with the outside world.

5.1.2 The Contribution to International Relations Theory

Hence, due to its broad applicability, the ‘subculture-cleavage’ model provides intervening ideational variables for grand strategy formation and other foreign and security policy discourses. With this scope, the model falls under the category of foreign policy analysis as well as the subfield of strategic studies to which its variables can add some refinement. Thus, these intervening variables in terms of strategic subcultures have been developed in order to hone existing conceptualizations of strategic culture, in particular, within the research agenda of neoclassical realism (Ripsman, Taliaferro and Lobell 2016).

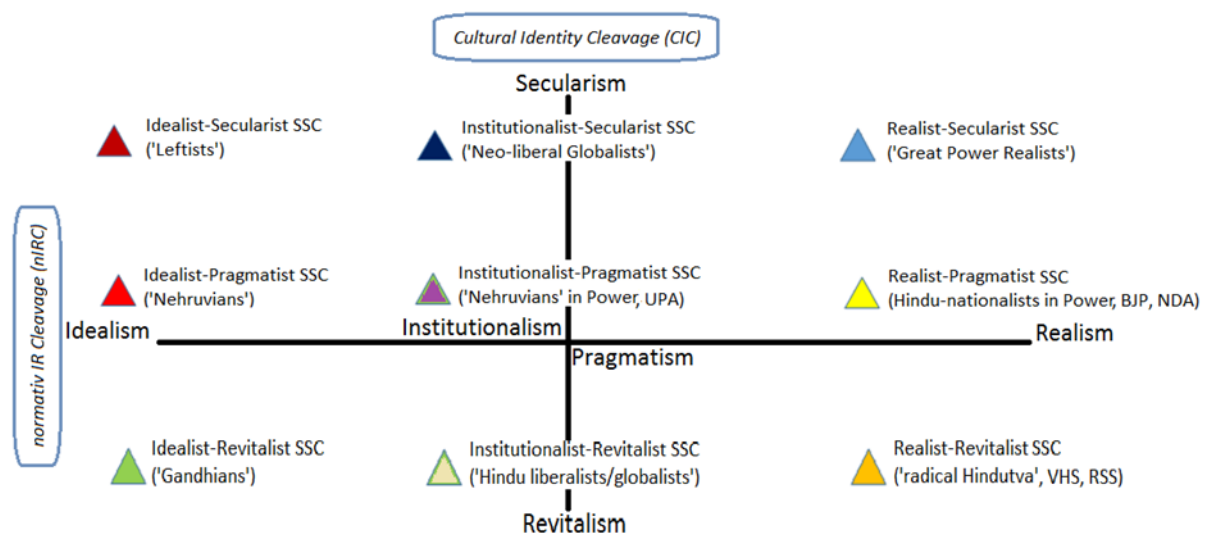
Due to the acceptance of the pivotal role the structure of the state system plays in shaping grand strategy and security policy, this project falls within neoclassical realism as it grants strategic

culture only the status of intervening variables. Furthermore, due to their cultural quality, the delineated subcultures are characterized by their long *durée* (Johnston 1995). As continuity in historical change (Liebig 2017) is one of the central characteristics of culture, this temporal stability gives subcultures an almost structural character and transforms them into stable building blocks of identity construction (Kitchen 2010, Bloomfield 2012). This combination of structural forces and agency (by the interpretation elite) locates the research within what can be called ‘soft-constructivism’ – an ontological approach that takes a middle ground between positivist and post-structuralist accounts of international relations (Price and Reus-Smit 1998, Barkin 2003). Furthermore, the implementation of the research project was guided by a humanistic, that is a qualitative and interpretive methodology (Hollis and Smith 1990, Wight 1991). This approach allowed for inductive typology-building utilizing the two diverse concepts of strategic culture and cleavage theory.

5.1.3 Results of the Study – a Tour d’Horizon

Thus, this unique heuristic tool provides a systematic insight into the ideological traditions, that can be found within India’s strategic establishment and interpretation elite in terms of its strategic subcultures. These identified subcultures in terms of India’s strategic pluralism, all try to effect policymakers to varying degrees (Bloomfield 2012) and are engaged in a constant battle over supremacy.

Figure 18. Typology of Indian Strategic Subcultures (2)



Source. Drawn by the author

In sum, a strong idealist tradition has been found, which manifests itself in various strands and can be grouped under four of the nine strategic subcultures (Leftists, Gandhians, Ideological Nehruvians, and Nehruvians in Power) and represent, at least on the discursive level, a strong

voice for a more peaceful India (Chacko 2013). This almost stereotypical perception of an idealist bias or the 'Nehruvian consensus' (Corbridge and Harriss 2000) in Indian security (India's 'strategic exceptionalism') has, however, lost some of its popularity compared to neoliberalism and a tempered and more pragmatic Hindu-Nationalism (revitalism) (Bajpai 2014). But, despite its relative decline idealist and internationalist subcultures still perform a crucial function within the foreign and security policy apparatus. This function ensures continuity with the founding principles of the modern Indian state and gives India's emergence a benevolent appeal (Chatterjee-Miller 2016). In this regard also identity politics matter, as the widespread use of domestic and culturalist labels shows and which have been theorized in terms of the 'cultural identity' cleavage. Identity formation as an incessant process is marked by the clash of partly irreconcilable ideas of India, particularly on its past and its territorial extent, but also about the role of collective violence and the use of force (power projection) in general. These central attitudes towards grand strategy have therefore fundamental implications for basically all foreign and security policy theaters. However, as the case study on India's Israel policy showed even a high-level of ideological polarization is no guarantee for the detectable presence of all nine strategic subcultures in the interpretation of India's policy choices to an equal degree. The differentiation between a pro-Israel and a more critical camp (with a small, fairly 'neutral' group occupying the middle ground) proved to be more practical in terms of data analysis. Nonetheless though seems the introduction of a more fine-grained and complex set of subcultures promising in catching the nuances of India's national security debates.

Another, outcome of the present study has been, that indigenous traditions like Kautilyan thought or an Akbarian understanding of grand strategy to name just two of the many labels are broader than modern concepts of, for example, realism, or institutionalism as they partly overlap with these contemporary concepts of international relations theory. Therefore, the author gave precedence to the use of mainstream terminology in the 'subculture-cleavage' model. Nonetheless, though do the more popular labels add to a livelier and nuanced understanding of Indian strategic worldviews, if they are grounded in contemporary conceptualizations. The time frame under scrutiny between 1992 and 2014 saw a still nascent debate, that was, however, growing and seems likely to do so in tandem with India's accelerated economic and strategic rise. In sum, for the author, India in terms of grand strategy formation is an ordinary country. It is a 'normal' state, albeit, with richer and more complex ideational resources and idioms, that is confronted with the same pressures of globalization, development and inter-state as well as inter-cultural rivalry. Therefore, any attempt of understanding India's ideological contentions on the use of force or the standing of the country in the global hierarchy should abstain from

essentialist and monolithic templates. The symbolic discourse, as opposed to the ‘operational’ side of actual policy-making, becomes more assertive and is thus taking more ground to assess, formulate and legitimize grand strategic trajectories. Like in any other country India’s strategic community is home to a small revisionist minority and other partly deeply-entrenched worldviews on militarization (the realist-revivalist subculture) or universal disarmament (the idealist-revivalist tradition). The effectivity of these strategic schools on the actual operationalization of grand strategy remains difficult to assess due to its mostly hidden character within the so-called ‘bureaucratic black box’ of foreign and security policy decision-making. What makes India distinct, however, is the country’s varied and deeply-rooted cultural heritage as well as India’s many different incarnations as a modern state, be it as a civilizational state, a post-colonial state, a post-imperial state, or as a developmental state (Rudolph and Rudolph 1967, Mitra 2011).

5.2 The Future Research Agenda: Applying the ‘Subculture-Cleavage’ Model

As was stated in the thesis’s objectives, this research project was not about; firstly, the ‘reality on the ground’ in terms of actual behaviour (decision-making) or social structures (institutions) – instead it was primarily about ideas. It was, however, also not about determining the impact of ideas on behaviour. Furthermore, this study was also not about the reconstruction of an already implemented grand strategic preference or about the painstaking process of compromise between the antagonistic outlooks represented by the nine strategic subcultures. Finally, it was also not about establishing, which strategic subculture exerts dominance or has achieved a hegemonic position in the discourse.

Exactly these omissions present the starting points for a future research agenda: an agenda that takes the influence of the nine strategic subcultures into account. Among the many potential research questions, the question of how does change from one dominant subculture to another comes about enjoys priority for the author, as besides the typology of strategic worldviews, a model of change is essential in making strategic subcultures into a fruitful concept to be operationalizable as intervening variables. Closely connected is also the question of the actual composition of the hegemonic coalitions of subcultures – the amalgamation of their respective content. For Harry Eckstein cultures, in general, are not quasi-crystalline ideational formations that remain fixed across time. They do change – either in an evolutionary or an entropic mode (Liebig 2017). There are several models of ideational change like that of Eckstein (Eckstein 1988) or that proposed by Chatterjee-Miller and Sullivan de Estrada (2017). The two scholars have

put forward “the concept of procedural pragmatism and argue that foreign policy pragmatism is a process of engaging with all and any ideas that are contextually and politically expedient to achieving a given policy end” (Chatterjee-Miller and Sullivan de Estrada 2017, 28). “Such a reading of pragmatism is therefore procedural in that it focuses on the process of bringing about policy innovation, rather than substantive, in that it denies or embraces a particular content” (Chatterjee-Miller and Sullivan de Estrada 2017, 28). In essence, the two authors are rejecting the notion of ideological purity and replacing it instead with the idea of a pragmatic mixing of normative perspectives in order to achieve hegemony. Thus, this model of change exactly addresses the question of the relative weight of the nine deduced subcultures in their attempt to assess, legitimate and ultimately formulate in the realm of a nation’s interpretation elite policy and grand strategy. Of course, every strategic subculture inherently aims at influencing the implementation of policies in the bureaucratic realm and not only ruling the discourse on interpretative supremacy. But, also Bloomfield’s proposition of minority subcultures that are permanently ‘waiting in the wings’ to one day set the agenda for policy or grand strategy formation (Bloomfield 2012), even though their time might never come, offers a promising perspective for a fruitful application of the ‘subculture cleavage’ model of grand strategic thought, especially in the context of India’s rise to great power status.

A second possible future application of the model, especially in combination with the abovementioned models of change, would be, following a culturalist understanding of foreign and security policy-making, to establish the evolution of Indian foreign policy according to the hegemonic phases of certain strategic subcultures, thereby challenging previous identity-based explanations like Engelmeier’s (2009).

A third focus of future research has to take up the more central relations of India with their respective grand strategic relevance, for example, with states like Pakistan, China or the United States. But also applying the strategic subculture approach to historical cases like Jawaharlal Nehru’s China policy or the reconstruction of strategic policies like non-alignment or the formation of implicit doctrines like the ‘Indira’ or the ‘Gujral’ doctrine provides a fertile ground for further research. Finally, looking at the actual impact of these sets of grand strategic ideas on issues ranging from India’s nuclear posture to the evolving multipolar financial architecture, to name but a few of the many highly relevant arenas of India’s intensifying engagement with the world, will help to empirically sharpen the strategic subculture approach by making the ‘subculture-cleavage model of grand strategic thought’ a foundational element of strategic culture research in international relations.

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