

Stanton Nuclear Security Fellows Seminar

PANEL 1: Three Specific Cases

1. Doreen Horschig, MIT SSP

Israeli Public Opinion on The Use of Nuclear Weapons: Lessons from Terror Management Theory

On what nuclear security issue are you working and why is it important? What is the big question that you are seeking to answer about that issue?

My project explores public opinion on the use of nuclear weapons in a preemptive strike. The non-use of nuclear weapons since 1945 remains a central topic of inquiry in political science. The early wave of scholarship suggests that this non-use can be explained by a norm-based prohibition; the nuclear taboo (Tannenwald, 2007) or tradition of non-use (Paul, 2010). This camp has argued that both political elites and the public have internalized anti-nuclear norms. Recent studies however cast doubt about the robustness of the nuclear taboo and more specifically non-use norm. This second wave asserts that the found aversion might not show the whole picture (Press, Sagan, & Valentino, 2013; Sagan & Valentino, 2017). This landmark research work generated a round of survey experiments on the use of nuclear weapons, broadly confirming the weakness of the norm against nuclear weapons (i.e., Koch & Wells, 2021; Post & Sechser, 2017). This has been complimented by an increase in studies of public opinion on nuclear use in different national samples (Egel & Hines, 2021; Onderco & Smetana, 2021; Smetana & Onderco, 2021; Sukin, 2020), including one that explores Israeli views (Dill et al. 2021). Despite this increase in scholarship, our understanding of individuals' opinions on nuclear use remains limited because of the numerous, complex factors impacting such attitudes. Exploring the (non-) support for the use of nuclear weapons across samples is important to understand when the nuclear taboo erodes and when it remains robust, directly informing foreign policymakers of whether the public can be relied upon to avoid atomic warfare or not.

To explore public opinion further, I ask when do people become more willing to endorse a preemptive nuclear strike against a foreign country? Using insights from international relations and social psychology, I propose a new explanation for the support of nuclear strikes that draws from terror management theory (TMT). The theory argues that an increased awareness of an individual's mortality leads to a search for aggressive defense mechanism to ensure survival. I test this theory on the use of nuclear weapons using original experimental survey data from Israel. My work joins the scholarly debate by offering this novel theoretical framework and suggests that people are more likely to support extreme forms of warfare (e.g., nuclear strikes) when reminded of their own mortality.

How are you going to answer your question? What methods will you use and what evidence or cases will you explore?

Methodologically, this work uses a survey experiment to explore the causal factors influencing why some individuals are more willing to subscribe to non-use norms than others. The random assignment of respondents into different groups enables conclusions about the causes of individual's attitude towards

nuclear weapons, accounting for the uncertainty associated with the different treatments (Imbens, 2010) and determination of the effect on a given outcome of a particular causal treatment (Kapiszewski et al., 2015). This provides insights into the internal rather than external validity by showing that the survey's manipulations —here a reminder of death—work. To test TMT, the subjects in the experimental group are reminded of their mortality through open-ended questions about their own death and then asked about their approval of a nuclear strike after reading a newspaper vignette with a realistic threat scenario.

My case, Israel, is a particularly suitable one for the analysis of public opinion on the use of force because respondents' daily lives are directly impacted by foreign policy, which suggests a well-informed public on issues of foreign policy. Israel is also a country where a nuclear Iran would present a life-and-death threat to Israel. Hence, a security threat in Israel is frequently linked to the perception of an existential threat. As Iranian nuclear proliferation efforts and Israeli-Iranian tensions continue to play an important role, the Israeli public's opinion on the use of force can quickly gain importance. The tense geopolitical situation, Israel's unacknowledged nuclear capability, and Iran's controversial nuclear developments make such questions about the use of nuclear weapons salient. Yet, Israeli public opinion has been understudied. My work makes an important contribution to the Israeli public opinion literature on the use of force by including Israeli Arabs, a widely neglected group in polls and surveys. The findings emphasize how divided Jews and Arabs are on the use of force, and specifically nuclear weapons. Excluding Arabs not only inflates public opinion supportive of the use of force but contributes to the alienation of an ethnic group from the state.

What is your answer to the question you are asking? That is, what is your argument or conclusion even if it is still tentative at this point?

I suggest that a reminder of death has a significant effect on individuals' willingness to support nuclear attacks, suggesting internal validity of the manipulations in the survey. Reminders of death and a realistic conflict scenario make respondents more supportive of using extreme force. This finding does not necessarily hint to a discrepancy between the anti-nuclear norms in opinion polls and relatively high support in experimental surveys. This suggests that an aversion to nuclear use can erode when respondents face a severe threat. Hence, these findings corroborate previous experimental studies that challenge the robustness of the nuclear norm.

How does your work fit into the existing work on your subject?

- *What alternative arguments or explanations exist and why is your answer superior?*
- *How does your work add to or change our understanding of the issue you are studying?*
- *What do you see as your most important contribution?*

A recent review of the non-use scholarship categorized the nuclear taboo research in several waves (Smetana & Wunderlich, 2021). While the first constructivist wave focused on qualitative analyses of elite decision-making, the second wave used large-N quantitative methods, particularly survey experiments, to explore public attitudes. Both propose a logic that suggests the strategic merit of nuclear strikes is an isolated predictor of support, asserting that individuals make decisions of (dis-) approval based on perceived utility and rational, expected outcomes, including winning the war, saving one's own soldiers, and protecting lives and compatriots in the long-term. This, however, suggests an exclusively consequentialist logic on effects of military operations and ignores basic psychological instinct that can act as causal mechanisms to explain why people have supported the use of nuclear weapons.

A third wave, introduced by Smetana and Vranka (2020) and Rathbun and Stein (2020), consider for the first-time psychological factors in public opinion and non-use research. They recognize basic moral foundations that cause individuals to perceive the morality of certain actions differently, resulting in variation in support for the use of nuclear weapons. My project joins this third wave of research and provides novel information on the effects of a specific causal mechanism by estimating the average effects of one specific factor on the support for using nuclear weapons. I apply an interdisciplinary approach that introduces a theory that otherwise has only once been discussed in connection with the use of nuclear weapons (Hirschberger et al., 2015), Terror Management Theory (Greenberg et al., 1997). This theoretical framework suggests that humans are uniquely self-conscious about the inevitability of death but they push the thought of their inevitable death to the unconsciousness. An increased awareness of mortality, through a reminder of death, creates paralyzing existential terror. To avoid such terror, humans subscribe to order, permanence, and stability that creates a buffer (Greenberg et al., 1992) and mitigates the fear of death.

When people are reminded of their finite existence, a survival instinct is triggered. This existential fear becomes a motivator for both violence and reconciliation (Bar-Tal, 2007; Hirschberger & Pyszczynski, 2011). As a result, people are motivated to be aggressive, defend themselves and even annihilate others that challenge their stability buffer. When longing for survival, a nuclear strike can manage their fear most successfully—if an opponent either has no nuclear capability or a strike promises to destroy such (as in my survey’s scenario). To ensure survival, individuals violate their moral standards and resort to magnified aggression towards whatever it is that challenges their order.

Bridging these disciplines of international relations and social/evolutionary psychology is the most important contribution of my work. It can provide a better understanding of the psychological aspects of human beings that cause them to increase support of nuclear weapons. TMT can provide a viable alternative to consequentialist factors of the first and second scholarly wave that is based on basic affective instincts to explain support for a nuclear strike. My findings join the scholarship that challenges the durability of normative taboos and contests notions that human psychological nature has moved away from violence. Both rational factors, such as perceived utility, and psychological defenses can explain support for nuclear use. This work builds on the idea that there are several dynamics at play in explaining individuals’ support for a nuclear first strike. It is a combination of both consequentialist and psychological logics, suggesting numerous mechanisms for support of the use of nuclear weapons.

What policy implications flow from your work? What concrete recommendations can you offer to policymakers?

Overall, this research advances a current understanding of why nuclear weapons disarmament, elimination, and non-proliferation are challenging. If much of the electorate supports using nuclear weapons, a leader might be more incentivized to take aggressive military action. Foreign policy plays a crucial role for Israelis as they vote on foreign policy as much as they do on economic and religious policies (Tomz et al., 2020). Knowing that the public might support a hawkish leader is significant, especially in times when populist authoritarian leaders stoke up mass anxieties and uncertainties. It also shows that nuclear use might be more common than the pattern of non-use suggest.

The findings also imply that the US should continue its nuclear talks with Iran, and Israel should support these talks. There is little public opposition in Israel that would challenge an Israeli nuclear first strike. Unlike during the Cold War, when people took to the streets to protest the US-Soviet arms race, there is no visible pro-disarmament sentiment in Israel. Hence, the Israeli public cannot be relied upon to avoid atomic warfare. If Israel wants to prevent a nuclear conflict in the future, it would be in its national

security's interest to support the existing diplomatic frameworks. While opposing such serves political short-term electoral interest that caters to certain public and political bases, it raises the stakes with Iran.

What do you think is the weakest or most vulnerable aspect of your study and what sort of feedback would be most useful to you?

A vulnerable aspect of the work is that it does not study the length of effects (Gaines et al., 2007)—a typical issue in experimental studies. In other words, the treatment effect might not last longer than a few minutes or hours and has arguably little significance in the real world. It would be useful to receive feedback during the Stanton Nuclear Security Seminar on how I can account for the length of effects in experimental surveys? A second vulnerable aspect is that Israel can be an easy case for the effects of TMT as Israelis live under a constant threat and are more primed than other societies. While a convenience sample in the United States provided me with similar results, what other cases might be worth exploring to test the external validity of the study? Lastly, since respondents rarely face a theoretical, direct reminder of their death, how can a follow up study identify those conflict events that prompt people to think about their own death?

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2. Jamie Kwong, CEIP

The Public and Pyongyang: American Attitudes Towards North Korea's Nuclear Program

On what nuclear security issue are you working and why is it important?

My dissertation explores and explains how U.S. public opinion of North Korea's nuclear weapons program changed between 1990 and 2020. It contributes to scholarship on public opinion and foreign policy by analyzing how the public has engaged with one of the most intractable and salient nuclear issues of the modern age. My findings also help policymakers to anticipate public responses to future North Korean nuclear developments, such as new nuclear or missile tests, with important implications for when and how they should engage the public on the issue.

But why study public opinion in the first place? Conventional wisdom suggests that the public does not matter in foreign affairs.¹ A growing set of scholars, however, have challenged this assumption, demonstrating that the public can shape foreign policy.² While it is unlikely that public opinion of foreign policy issues would have significant electoral consequences,³ public attitudes can constrain decisionmakers, shaping their priorities and limiting their potential policy options.⁴ Ensuring policies have broad public support contributes to the sustainability of those policies and enables leaders to avoid significant political costs.⁵ Failing to secure this support can have serious repercussions. The Clinton administration, for example, struggled to sell Americans on the 1994 Agreed Framework with North Korea. The public rollout of the deal was overshadowed by a narrative that the administration was not tough enough and secured a weak deal.⁶ Without broad public support, the administration lacked a critical tool for combatting Republican opposition to the agreement. Consequently, the Republican-controlled Congress was emboldened to withhold and delay funds needed to implement the accord, preventing the administration from effectively upholding its commitments. This only reinforced the "weak deal" narrative and further reduced public support for the agreement, which, paired with its

¹ Gabriel A. Almond, *The American People and Foreign Policy*, New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1950; Walter Lippmann, *Essays in the Public Philosophy*, London: Transaction Publishers, 1955.

² Benjamin I. Page and Robert Y. Shapiro, "Effects of Public Opinion on Policy," *American Political Science Review* 77.1 (1983): 175-190; Joshua Kertzer and Thomas Zeitzoff, "A Bottom-Up Theory of Public Opinion About Foreign Policy," *American Journal of Political Science* 61.3 (2017): 543-558.

³ The public rarely ranks foreign policy issues as the "most important problem" facing the United States. "Most Important Problem," Gallup, 2021. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/1675/most-important-problem.aspx>

⁴ Ole R. Holsti, *Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004; Matthew A. Baum and Philip B.K. Potter, *War and Democratic Constraint: How the Public Influences Foreign Policy*, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2015.

⁵ Wilfred M. Chow, Enze Han, and Xiaojun Li, "Brexit Identities and British Public Opinion on China," *International Affairs*, 95.6 (2019): 1369-1387; Michael Tomz, Jessica L.P. Weeks and Keren Yarhi-Milo, "Public Opinion and Decisions About Military Force in Democracies," *International Organization*, 74.1 (2020): 119-143.

⁶ Joel S. Wit, Daniel B. Poneman, and Robert L. Gallucci, *Going Critical: The First North Korean Nuclear Crisis*, Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004.

designation of North Korea as part of an “axis of evil,” gave the Bush administration political cover to walk away from the accord.

Altogether, better understanding how public opinion of Pyongyang’s nuclear ambitions has and will continue to evolve can help U.S. policymakers better advance their policy objectives vis-à-vis North Korea.

What is the big question that you are seeking to answer about that issue?

How and why have U.S. public attitudes towards North Korea’s nuclear program changed over time?

How are you going to answer your question?

The U.S. public has expressed different—and often conflicting—attitudes towards North Korea’s nuclear program over time. Characterizing and explaining these attitudes in a meaningful and comprehensive way required building an original data set. I used the Roper Center’s iPoll database to collect public opinion poll questions that measured U.S. attitudes towards North Korea from 1990-2020 and used content analysis to sort and code the questions according to the primary attitude(s) measured. The resulting data set comprises over 1,200 questions across 500 surveys, which I use to conduct both longitudinal and case study analysis.

First, I undertake longitudinal analysis to characterize public attitudes over time. Because public polling is problematically episodic and even questions that measure the same attitude use different phrasing, I use a well-established algorithm to fill in gaps in the data set and construct a continuous time series.⁷ The algorithm measures the relationship between all questions that gauge a particular attitude then weights each question based on how it conforms to this metric in order to account for differences in phrasing. It uses these findings to identify the underlying attitude, which allows for the calculation of missing data. I utilize these results to identify long-term trends—and exceptions—in various public attitudes towards North Korea. Second, I undertake case study analysis of public responses to three of North Korea’s nuclear tests that were well polled to facilitate a deeper examination of what actually shapes those responses. As part of this analysis, I use an additional data set of over 500 news articles to analyze media coverage of each test and consider how the media environment may have impacted these attitudes. I used the constructed week sampling method to build this data set,⁸ gathering a

⁷ Originally developed by Stimson to assess the “public mood,” the dyad ratios algorithm has been most effectively used to analyze public attitudes on specific issue areas. James Stimson, *Public Opinion in America: Moods, Cycles, and Swings*, London: Routledge, 2018; Robert J. Brulle, Jason Carmichael, and J. Craig Jenkins, “Shifting Public Opinion on Climate Change: An Empirical Assessment of Factors Influencing Concern Over Climate Change in the U.S., 2002–2010,” *Climatic Change* 114.2 (2012): 169-188.

⁸ Joe Bob Hester and Elizabeth Dougall, “The Efficiency of Constructed Week Sampling for Content Analysis of Online News,” *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 84.4 (2007): 811-824.

representative sample of news coverage about North Korea from four of the most widely-circulated, online U.S. outlets.⁹

What is your answer to the question you are asking?

U.S. public attitudes toward North Korea have varied significantly over time. These differences are especially pronounced around periods of North Korean nuclear testing. Threat perception, an attitude that indicates how the public assesses the dangers posed by and severity of Pyongyang's program, provides a particularly illustrative example. As would be expected, threat perception increased after North Korea conducted its first test in 2006. Surprisingly, however, it *decreased* after the 2013 test—even though that test was substantially more successful. So what exactly explains this difference in attitude?

My PhD research examines multiple factors and concludes that media coverage of each test is crucial to explaining these contrasting responses. In the month after the 2006 test, media coverage of North Korea increased more than threefold from the previous month and more than fivefold from average coverage during the previous year. As a result, 78% of the public followed the test “very” or “fairly” closely, which prompted threat perception levels to increase.¹⁰ Contrastingly, media coverage increased just slightly after the 2013 test—only 1.6 times as much as the previous month. Moreover, there was only half as much coverage of North Korea than in the following month, which saw a different North Korean provocation. This relative lack of salience meant only 41% of the public followed the test “very” or “fairly” closely.¹¹ With a majority of the public unaware of—or at least uninterested in—the test, threat perception decreased. Differences in the media's treatment and the resulting salience of the two tests thus played an important role in shaping public attitudes towards North Korea.

How does your work fit into the existing work on your subject?

The Sagan-Valentino studies initiated an important effort to explore the ways in which the public engages with nuclear security issues.¹² My dissertation contributes to this literature in two ways. First, much previous scholarship explores public opinion by way of surveys about isolated,

⁹ The *New York Times*, CNN, Fox News, and Politico are among the most popular news sources in the United States and collectively represent legacy, cable, and “digital-native” news outlets. Nami Sumida, Hadeel Saab, and Amy Shim, “Methodology: State of the News Media,” Pew Research Center, July 2019.

¹⁰ Asked of a U.S. national adult sample with an oversample of respondents from competitive districts (n=2,006). Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, *Pew Research Center Poll: October 2006 Survey on Electoral Competition, Question 34, USPSRA.102606.R19B*, Princeton Survey Research Associates International, Ithaca: Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, iPOLL, 2006.

¹¹ Asked of a U.S. national adult sample (n=1,003). Pew Research Center for the People & the Press, *Pew Research Center Poll: February 2013, Omnibus Week 2--Opinion of Leaders/Pope, Question 12, USPSRA.022013.R01E*, Princeton Survey Research Associates International, Ithaca: Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, iPOLL, 2013.

¹² Daryl G. Press, Scott D. Sagan, and Benjamin A. Valentino, “Atomic Aversion: Experimental Evidence on Taboos, Traditions, and the Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons,” *American Political Science Review* 107.1 (2013): 188-206; Scott D. Sagan and Benjamin A. Valentino, “Revisiting Hiroshima in Iran: What Americans Really Think about Using Nuclear Weapons and Killing Noncombatants,” *International Security* 42.1 (2017): 41-79.

hypothetical scenarios, including U.S.-North Korea crises.¹³ By undertaking a longitudinal analysis of public attitudes towards North Korea, my work provides critical context for this scenario-based research. Identifying long-term trends in public opinion by way of polling data helps to determine whether observed responses to a specific scenario fit a pattern or constitute an exception to underlying trends. Second, my work helps to enhance our understanding of public engagement with nuclear issues. The threat perception findings indicate, for example, that we cannot assume the public has an awareness or interest in nuclear issues and that this lack of attention impacts public attitudes towards those issues. This analysis proves distinct from scenario-based research that necessarily requires respondents to read about and engage with the issue and often includes a set of attention check questions to exclude respondents that do not sufficiently do so.

What policy implications flow from your work? What concrete recommendations can you offer?

The variance in public opinion over time suggests that public attitudes towards Pyongyang's nuclear program are pliable. As such, policymakers should develop effective messaging strategies about their North Korea policy or risk ceding the narrative to political competitors. My research will help them to do so, with important implications for the Biden administration as it continues to craft its North Korea policy.

My work will be particularly relevant in two scenarios: if North Korea restarts its provocative testing campaign or if Washington enters negotiations and reaches a deal with Pyongyang. My analysis indicates that in the first instance, public attitudes will shift dramatically, although the nature of those shifts will depend on factors such as the salience of the test in the news media. In the second instance, the public will support the general notion of diplomacy but will probably be skeptical of the specifics of any deal, especially because Washington must inevitably accept trade-offs. In either instance, to secure public support for its policy response, the Biden administration should seek to dominate media coverage of the issue with messaging from high-level officials to explain how the policy protects against reckless North Korean actions (rightly or wrongly, the public perceives Kim Jong Un as irrational), and how it advances more proximate and relatable concerns and interests (such as domestic security or budgetary issues).

What do you think is the weakest or most vulnerable aspect of your study and what sort of feedback would be most useful to you?

I need to better understand how government officials have perceived and responded to public opinion. I have started to conduct interviews to that end, which is one reason why I sought a Stanton Fellowship in Washington, D.C.

¹³ Alida R. Haworth, Scott D. Sagan, and Benjamin A. Valentino, "What do Americans Really Think About Conflict with Nuclear North Korea? The Answer is Both Reassuring and Disturbing," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 75.4 (2019): 179-186.

3. J. Luis Rodriguez, CISAC

Latin American Participation in the Crafting of the Nuclear Order

- On what nuclear security issue are you working and why is it important?

My research studies how secondary powers contribute to crafting nuclear arms control agreements. To understand this phenomenon, I focus on how Latin America attempted to delegitimize the threat and use of nuclear force through international law and organizations during the 1960s. I focus primarily on Brazilian and Mexican preferences regarding nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and peaceful uses of atomic energy. Paying attention to these countries helps scholars and policymakers understand nuclear preferences beyond great powers. This is important in a moment when the nuclear order faces an uncertain future, academics and practitioners contest the order's past, and international society pursues nuclear disarmament alternatives.

- What is the big question that you are seeking to answer about that issue?

Drawing from the Latin American experiences, I address three interrelated questions:

- a) What was the role of non-nuclear weapon states in the negotiations drafting nuclear arms controls?
- b) Why did they accept treaties institutionalizing nuclear clubs excluding them?
- c) What did they get in return for participating in these negotiations?

- How are you going to answer your question? What methods will you use and what evidence or cases will you explore?

I plan to gather and analyze data using qualitative methods. My emphasis will be on understanding the approaches and actions of Brazil and Mexico, the only two Latin American countries invited to the Eighteen Nation Committee on Disarmament (ENCD), during the multilateral nuclear negotiations from 1958 to 1968. Thus, methods aimed at uncovering historical processes and relations are better suited for my analysis.

I have collected archival materials in Brazil and Mexico related to Latin American and international nuclear arms controls negotiations. I have visited the Diplomatic Archives of the Contemporary Brazilian History Research and Documentation Center in Rio de Janeiro, administered by the Getulio Vargas Foundation, and the Diplomatic Archive Genaro Estrada in Mexico City, administered by the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I have gathered materials related to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, also known as the Tlatelolco Treaty, and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) from August 1958 to June 1968. I plan to visit the national archives of the United States

and the United Kingdom to trace how these nuclear powers received and reacted to the Brazilian and Mexican actions in the Tlatelolco and NPT negotiations.

I plan to do a comparative historical analysis using process tracing. I will identify the policymakers that participated in the negotiations, establish the claims they made during the multilateral debates, and study how they reacted to other delegations' actions. I will also examine how the characteristics of the forums where the multilateral debates took place shaped negotiations. My goal is to construct historical sequences tracking the interactions of Brazilian and Mexican policymakers during the negotiations.

- What is your answer to the question you are asking? That is, what is your argument or conclusion even if it is still tentative at this point?

The Brazilian and Mexican actions during nuclear arms control negotiations in the 1960s exemplify the strategies of secondary powers in crafting the nuclear order. Brazilians and Mexicans valued the limits on the use of force that nuclear weapons disrupted. Thus, they supported creating limits on the threat and use of nuclear weapons. Mexican and Brazilian diplomats crafted a nuclear-weapon-free zone (NWFZ) as a response to nuclear dangers in Latin America, and they attempted to reproduce in the NPT the agreements they reached in Tlatelolco. I argue that Brazilians, in contrast with Mexicans, denounced the NPT as discriminatory because, unlike Tlatelolco, the NPT constrained their abilities to conduct peaceful nuclear explosions, which they considered fundamental to turn Brazil into a great power.

In response to the instability that the advent of nuclear weapons created in the international order, Brazilian and Mexican authorities participated in designing political arrangements to guarantee security from nuclear weapons. They spearheaded the constitution of the first regional NWFZ in Latin America with the Tlatelolco Treaty. This arrangement limited the threat and use of nuclear force, guaranteed the exchange of nuclear technology from nuclear powers to Latin American countries, and created loopholes favoring governments that questioned nuclear oligopolies.

Brazil and Mexico used their membership in the ENCD to transpose the commitments forged in Tlatelolco into the NPT. Both countries successfully asked for limits on the threat and use of nuclear weapons, nuclear powers' disarmament obligations, and access to peaceful nuclear technology—elements established in the introductory section, Article VI, and Article IV of the NPT, respectively. Brazilians attempted to secure their access to peaceful nuclear explosions, which they saw as a tool to decrease industrializing costs and achieve great-power status. When they faced nuclear powers' opposition, Brazilians rejected the NPT as discriminatory and neo-colonial.

- How does your work fit into the existing work on your subject?

International Relations literature tends to see Latin America as a secondary player in crafting the nuclear order. International organization analysts generally see the countries in the region as rule takers in the nuclear domain. International security scholars usually portray them as less necessary in designing coordinated solutions to potential nuclear problems. The accounts that pay attention to Latin America portray Brazil as a revisionist country (Debs and Monteiro 2017) and Mexico as an actor with a minimal role (Serrano 1992). Specialists in Latin American politics have delved into the history of specific countries with the nuclear order, but few have done a sustained inquiry of the region's impact on limits on the use of nuclear force and the international order (Long 2018). In my research, I promote a dialogue between International Relations theory and Latin American studies to understand the region's role in constructing and developing the nuclear order.

- What alternative arguments or explanations exist and why is your answer superior?

Mainstream international-order accounts focus on macro-level structures and great powers' actions, offering incomplete interpretations to study secondary powers in the nuclear order. International-order analysts expect great powers with nuclear capabilities to lead the designing of solutions to nuclear problems, with secondary powers, like Brazil and Mexico, having a minimal role in this quest. They would expect Brazil, a country with rising material capabilities in the 1960s, to attempt to revise the nascent nuclear order. In contrast, they would expect Mexico, a middle power, to cooperate with great powers and silently accept their nuclear plans.

My answer challenges current interpretations about the role of secondary powers in the nuclear order. These countries were not irrelevant. When international society shared common primary goals—guaranteeing the survival and security of states from nuclear war—, Brazilian and Mexican policymakers actively designed regional and international nuclear limits and crafted institutions to enforce them. My answer also questions existing accounts about revisionism. The Brazilian government questioned nuclear powers' attempt to form a nuclear oligopoly while the Mexican government accepted the distribution of nuclear power. Despite this difference, both countries supported multilateral and collective nuclear arms controls. Thus, the Brazilian and Mexican cases exemplify that not all dissatisfaction means revisionism and not all acquiescence means passivity.

- How does your work add to or change our understanding of the issue you are studying?

Scholarship on the origins of the nuclear order portrays the NPT as a 'grand bargain' that nuclear powers presented to the rest of international society. Some accounts depict the NPT as a compromise among advocates of disarmament, non-proliferation, and peaceful uses of atomic

energy. My work, in contrast, traces how the United States and the Soviet Union promoted nuclear arms controls and non-proliferation as solutions to avert nuclear war *and* as tools to exclude non-nuclear powers from privileges allocated to nuclear powers (Bull 1976). Further, I explore how Brazil and Mexico, examples of secondary powers, were necessary to craft acceptable patterns of behavior in international politics securing states from nuclear war, limiting the use of nuclear force, and questioning nuclear powers' privileges.

- What do you see as your most important contribution?

Authors theorizing about the nuclear order centering only on status-quo and revisionist actors are like music composers writing an opera only for tenors and sopranos. They write revisionist acts about the drama of countries challenging the distribution of nuclear power and the international order. Building the nuclear order, though, is a tale that forces authors to pay attention to other voice types and vocal ranges—it is a choral composition and not an epic duo. My work tunes our interpretations about the origins of the nuclear order by zooming into the voices of secondary powers, tracing their preferences and strategies during the negotiations codifying controls. By doing this, my research expands the understanding of who *orders* international politics and who *revises* the international order.

- What policy implications flow from your work? What concrete recommendations can you offer to policymakers?

The first implication of my work is to pay closer attention to the preferences and actions of secondary powers in the nuclear order. As part of my research, I will trace the arguments that developing countries used to advocate for nuclear disarmament in the NPT and compare them with current efforts to promote disarmament through the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Developing countries have set precedents on how to construct arrangements to guarantee security from nuclear weapons, successfully influenced the actions of nuclear powers, and ensured their access to certain nuclear technologies to promote development. Downplaying the importance of developing countries during the crafting of the nuclear order in the 1960s hinders our attempts to build effective and consensual responses to nuclear threats today.

The second implication of my work is to avoid unidimensional understandings of acquiescence and revisionism in the nuclear order. It is common to conflate desires to alter the distribution of nuclear power with attempts to modify the nuclear order. Countries aiming to improve their positions in nuclear pecking orders might attempt to modify the distribution of power in their favor to join nuclear-power clubs without altering the club's privileges (Cooley, Nexon, and Ward 2019). Understanding this nuance can help policymakers react more effectively to the nuclear actions of secondary powers and prevent conflicts.

- What do you think is the weakest or most vulnerable aspect of your study and what sort of feedback would be most useful to you?

I need advice on how to map out the complex network of interactions in the nuclear negotiations. My main challenge will be to access Soviet primary sources or balance the primary sources I have collected with secondary sources about the Soviet side of this story. Nuclear powers limited the Latin American strategies during the negotiations that crafted the nuclear order. The archival sources I have collected in Brazil and Mexico trace the reactions of the United States and the Soviet Union to the negotiating strategies of these Latin American countries. To complement and triangulate this information, I need to access primary sources about the reactions of nuclear powers. This is important because the negotiations were more complicated than a two-sided account with Brazil and Mexico on one side and nuclear powers on the other. For example, Brazilian diplomats accused their Mexican counterparts of being surrogates of the United States in the Tlatelolco and the NPT negotiations without offering much evidence.

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