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Global South perspectives on a global ban on nuclear weapons: A comparative approach

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German Institute for Global and Area Studies
Leibniz-Institut für Globale und Regionale Studien

GIGA Research Programme:
Global Orders and Foreign Policies

Global South Perspectives on a Global Ban on Nuclear Weapons: A Comparative Approach

Leonardo Bandarra, Miriam Prys-Hansen, Jo-Ansie van Wyk,
Layla Dawood, Monica Herz, Nir Hassid,
Harsh V Pant, and Shounak Set

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Global South Perspectives on a Global Ban on Nuclear Weapons: A Comparative Approach

Abstract

Banning nuclear weapons is an aspiration at the core of most disarmament and non-proliferation initiatives. It gained new momentum with the "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons." The negotiation of that treaty, and its subsequent approval and entry into force, sheds light on the complexities and dissent surrounding diverse regional perspectives on the appropriate means and timing regarding the elimination of nuclear weapons and establishing a related global norm. Scholars from different academic backgrounds and epistemological standpoints jointly discuss these perspectives through lenses from Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and South Asia. We seek to discuss how regional issues may shape global non-proliferation and disarmament politics, with a focus on the nuclear-weapon-ban norm. This debate also reveals the broad trends and patterns organising and driving the current shifts in the global nuclear order, such as interrelations between regional and global institutions as well as domestic politics and decision-making.

Keywords: TPNW; nuclear-weapon ban; Comparative Area Studies; international norms; regions

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Global South Perspectives on a Global Ban on Nuclear Weapons: A Comparative Approach

Leonardo Bandarra, Miriam Prys-Hansen, Jo-Ansie van Wyk, Layla Dawood, Monica Herz, Nir Hassid, Harsh V Pant, and Shounak Set

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1 Introduction: Towards a Cross-Regional Research Approach to the Global Nuclear Order

Prohibiting nuclear weapons has been a global ambition since the early days of the United Nations (e.g. UN 1948, 1954). The effective and verifiable disarmament of atomic weapons is, for instance, at the core of the triple bargain which sustains the 1968 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), together with non-acquisition on the part of non-nuclear-weapon states and the peaceful uses of atomic technology. Policymakers, negotiators, activists, and scholars continue

to diverge, however, on the appropriate means to achieve that ambition. While some call for a step-by-step approach to gradually create the conditions for disarmament, others propose that a nuclear ban could push global disarmament. These positions vary significantly across world regions, also those in the Global South, which have traditionally been marginalised in the literature on nuclear politics.

Discussions on promoting a global norm banning nuclear weapons gained new momentum between 2013 and 2015, when a group of countries called the "Humanitarian Initiative" (HI) organised three conferences (in Oslo, Nayarit, and Vienna) to discuss the humanitarian, environmental, and health impacts of nuclear weapons. These conferences led to the so-called Austrian Pledge, which called on countries to fill the legal gap which enabled the continued existence of nuclear weapons. Following this pledge, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) approved Resolution 71/258 in 2016, thereby calling on states to negotiate a treaty banning atomic weapons. In 2017, 124 non-nuclear-weapon states convened in New York to draft the "Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons" (TPNW or Ban Treaty), which forbids the manufacture, possession, and acquisition of all nuclear explosive devices.

The 2017 conference was boycotted by over 50 countries, including all possessors of nuclear weapons. Since January 2021, the TPNW has been legally binding, and the first meeting of state parties was held in June 2022. The Treaty's supporters argue that it fills a normative gap which has allowed the continued existence of nuclear arms. Its critics find, instead, that it does not create any new instruments to ensure effective, verifiable, and permanent disarmament, and also point to inconsistencies in relation to the NPT. Both the support for and criticism of the TPNW bring to light not only the different approaches to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation but also, more broadly, the growing gaps between regional security architectures. We argue that the debate also exposes the broad trends and patterns organising and driving the shifts in the current global nuclear order, such as the interrelations between regional and global institutions as well as domestic politics and decision-making. We, a group of scholars with diverse academic backgrounds as well as epistemological standpoints, discuss these trends through the context-specific lenses of four world regions and their respective approaches to pursuing a global ban on nuclear weapons. These different perspectives from Africa, Latin America, the Middle East, and South Asia, seek to understand how regional issues may shape global non-proliferation and disarmament politics.[1]

In doing so, we provide a comprehensive, global analysis of the implications of a ban on nuclear weapons as pursued by the TPNW for the international nuclear order, as well as for existing regional conflicts. But we also go beyond the Treaty by providing a broad understand-

[1] Research on this Working Paper started with a virtual workshop hosted by the German Institute for Global and Area Studies (GIGA) on 2 December 2020. We thank the GIGA for its financial and organisational support. The recording of the event is available online at: https://www.giga-hamburg.de/en/event/debating-the-nuclear-weapons-ban-treaty-regional-perspectives.

ing of cross-regional similarities and differences painting a holistic yet context-sensitive picture of the ongoing multi-scalar processes which characterise the debate on the potential prohibition of nuclear weapons. For each of the case studies, we address the following three guiding questions: (1) *To what extent are contestations regarding the TPNW a reflection of international power competition?* (2) *Are these contestations more aptly characterised as "issue-specific" concerns, meaning reactions which are inherent to specific nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation politics?* (3) *To what extent do regional security structures affect the global nuclear order?*

In our joint research, we make use of a Comparative Area Studies (CAS) approach, which has gained traction in recent years but is still underrepresented in Security Studies – particularly in the nuclear-non-proliferation literature. CAS is defined as combining the expertise traditionally expected from Area Studies with the use of comparative methods, thereby explaining commonalities and differences across different world regions or areas. The approach seeks to "balance [the] attention to regional and local contextual attributes with the use of the comparative method" (Ahram, Köllner, and Sil 2018: 15).

Every section of this working paper was, therefore, written by an expert in a given world region. Professor Jo-Ansie van Wyk, from the University of South Africa, contributed the section "Africa's Nuclear Abolitionism, Prohibition, and the Global Nuclear Order: Trends and Prospects," exploring the different ideas surrounding nuclear non-proliferation established on the African continent. Professors Layla Dawood, from the University of the State of Rio de Janeiro, and Monica Herz, from the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, analysed the different trends in Latin America, with a focus on South America and the impact of domestic changes vis-à-vis ensuring non-proliferation commitments are upheld. Professor Nir Hassid from Tel Aviv University explored the intersections between the TPNW and the regional processes aiming at the creation of a "Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone" (WMDFZ) in the Middle East. Professor Harsh Pant together with Shounak Set, both from King's India Institute, cover South Asian perspectives on the viability of a nuclear-weapon ban. The last part addresses a Conclusion, drafted by Leonardo Bandarra and Miriam Prys-Hansen, in which we indicate five patterns emerging from the inductive comparison of all five cases via the aforementioned CAS approach.

2 Africa's Nuclear Abolitionism, Prohibition, and the Global Nuclear Order: Trends and Prospects[2]

The entry into force of the TPNW on 22 January 2021 has been of great significance to Africa.[3] The chairperson of the African Union (AU) referred to "the strong input" from African states in the negotiation and adoption of the TPNW (AU 2021). In the UN context, the Africa Group,

2 This section was written by Jo-Ansie van Wyk.

3 "Africa" refers here to the member states of the OAU and its successor, the AU.

with 55 members, is one of the largest regional blocs at the UN, with it supporting the UNGA resolutions which preceded the TPNW. Moreover, there is some normative congruence between the Ban Treaty and the continent's commitments to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation which preceded the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 1963. Further normative congruence is evident between aspects of the Ban Treaty and the "African Nuclear Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty" (or, "Pelindaba Treaty") which entered into force on 15 July 2009.

France's 17 nuclear tests in the Algerian Sahara Desert between 1960 and 1966 were a major catalyst for Africa's position on nuclear weapons (IAEA 2005: 5). African responses to these tests vacillated between the "abolitionists," led by Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah, and the "proliferators," led by Kenyan scholar Ali Mazrui. Abolitionists maintained that global peace is dependent on the total ban of nuclear weapons, whereas the other side preferred the proliferation of the latter by promoting African states' right to and eventual acquisition of such devices.

The abolitionist position received international recognition in 1961, when the UNGA adopted three significant resolutions: first, on the banning of nuclear weapons tests (Resolution 1649 (XVI)); second, to consider Africa a "denuclearised zone" (Resolution 1652 (XVI)); and, third, on the prohibition of the use of nuclear and thermonuclear weapons (Resolution 1653 (XVI)) (UN 1961). By 1964, the abolitionists appeared to have finally gained the upper hand with the adoption of the General Resolution on Disarmament by the African Conference of Heads of State and Government in July 1963, barely two months after the establishment of the OAU. Within a year, the OAU adopted the Resolution on the Denuclearization of Africa (the "Cairo Declaration" of 1964), which endorsed the said 1961 UNGA resolutions.

The Cairo Declaration consolidated the continent's nuclear-weapon abolitionism and confirmed its commitment to an international treaty under UN auspices which required signatories "not to manufacture or acquire control of nuclear weapons" (OAU 1964). The Cairo Declaration was also a major African commitment to the regionalisation of nuclear abolitionism through the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone – or, the aforementioned Pelindaba Treaty. However, it would take another 45 years for the Pelindaba Treaty to enter into force, doing so finally in 2009. By mid-2022, 52 of the AU's 55 member states had signed this treaty on the African nuclear-weapon-free zone, but only 42 had actually ratified it (AU 2022). The 11 states not part of the Pelindaba Treaty are the Central African Republic, Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Liberia, São Tomé and Principe, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, and Uganda. Among them are some of the continent's most conflict-ridden states, all of which are experiencing some degree of state failure. Egypt's presence on this list is also remarkable. Despite its nuclear-weapon-ban credentials following the conclusion of the Cairo Declaration in 1964, the country is regardless a state party to neither the Pelindaba Treaty nor the TPNW. This is particularly puzzling as, within the context of the NPT, Egypt has actively voiced its frustration with the slow pace of progress on the WMDFZ in the Middle East, as well as with Israel's nuclear weapons and the United States' support thereof.

2.1 Abolition and prohibition: Africa and the Ban Treaty

African agency has been instrumental in the realisation of the TPNW. The early diplomatic process involved Egypt, South Africa, and Nigeria, three regional African powers. As this process gained traction with the 2010 HI, a global endeavour which, as noted, preceded the Ban Treaty, several African states supported that initiative and attended all three earlier-mentioned multilateral conferences on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons between 2013 and 2015 in Oslo, Nayarit, and Vienna. Whereas 34 African states participated in the first conference in 2013, this number had increased to 45 by the third and final one of 2015. At the time of the 2015 NPT Review Conference, all 55 African states were part of the joint statement on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons made by some 159 states.

These escalating numbers illustrate, for example, the power of normative socialisation – that is, African internalisation of, for example, the norm relating to the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons as well as of the prohibition norm later enshrined in the TPNW. Beyond a mere increase in the number of states supporting the proposed norms, this growing popularity also demonstrates norm expansion – or, in other words, an increase in the quality or scope of the proposed regulations. This position was upheld in Africa's support of and involvement in the UN process leading to Resolution 71/258 and the negotiation meeting which eventually drafted the TPNW in 2017. The Africa Group's support added to the critical mass – or "tipping point" (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998: 887–917) – required to pass the series of UNGA resolutions resulting in the Ban Treaty. In 2016, for example, 47 African states were among the 123 overall who supported Resolution L.41, which, inter alia, provided for a conference on the negotiation of a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons and ultimately requiring their total elimination. On 7 July 2017, the TPNW was adopted by the said conference, opening up for signatures two months later on 20 September.

Yet, surprisingly, by 20 May 2022 of the 55 African states who had signed the treaty, 16 had still not ratified it (UNODA 2022). This calls into question some African states' legal – and not just normative – commitment to the treaty. This might be a condition based on local factors: many African states are in various stages of fragility and even collapse. Besides affecting their effectiveness in foreign policy decision-making and their overall ability to put significant resources towards the ratification and implementation of any international agreement, this also impacts the robustness of domestic governance and other political processes – including the rule of law, government stability, and economic development. Internationally, some African countries who did not sign the TPNW are major partners of China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the US – all nuclear-weapon states. The latter states operate a number of military bases on the continent – for instance in Chad, Djibouti, and Kenya, non-signatory states. These bases are a matter of grave concern for the African Union Peace and Security Council (AU PSC 2019a), and may have affected certain countries' support for a nuclear ban as defined by the TPNW.

There are explanations but no justifications for the number of non-ratifying TPNW state parties in Africa. In fact, in light of "the risk that non-state actors may acquire, develop, traffic in or use nuclear weapons and their means of delivery" (AU PSC 2019b), the importance of bringing African states into the expanded ban regime becomes obvious.

2.2 *Emerging trends and prospects in Africa*

Complete global nuclear disarmament remains elusive; continued African advocacy, normative and legal commitments, as well as diplomacy are all required. Africa's lacklustre ratification of the TPNW has ongoing consequences for unresolved disarmament and non-proliferation concerns which are of global significance – such as ones about WMDs' impact on nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, a region which has been defined as including the African members of the League of Arab States. Overlapping regional memberships, African–Arab political solidarity, and cultural (including religious) commonalities could override commitments to the Pelindaba Treaty and the TPNW. Egypt's dual identity as an African and Middle Eastern power is an important consideration in this calculus. The AU and the Arab League could commence with efforts to address these concerns. Here, the attempts made in Latin America to accommodate Argentina and Brazil's differences are instructive. These considerations show how the multiple scales of nuclear disarmament interact. Hence, progress on the WMDFZ in the Middle East has not only cross-regional but also global implications.

African states have lauded the Ban Treaty but regard it as a "reinforcing" – and thus not the only – mechanism for global disarmament and non-proliferation (AFCONE 2020). For the AU, the NPT remains a cornerstone of global efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons. It stresses that balanced and unconditional attempts should be made to implement the Treaty's pillars of disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, and peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology, noting with deep concern that progress towards nuclear disarmament remains incommensurate with the spirit of the NPT (AU PSC 2019b). Africa thus collectively remains committed to *all* major multilateral agreements on nuclear disarmament preceding the Ban Treaty and does not regard the latter as the panacea for global disarmament. The continent seemingly regards the Ban Treaty as one of many instruments with which to achieve global nuclear disarmament. However, the question remains as to whether African states have the operational and diplomatic capacity to meet all these diplomatic obligations.

3 Latin America, Disarmament, and Nuclear Non-Proliferation[4]

Latin America is a region where banning nuclear weapons has been a consistent policy since the 1960s. More widely, multilateralism has been seen by national elites as a form of protection from the asymmetry of power which marks the international standing of the region. A rule-

4 This section was written by Layla Dawood and Monica Herz.

based system and the lawful and peaceful resolution of controversies are seen to preserve the sovereignty of countries lacking significant power resources.

The adherence to arms-control treaties and related organisations is widespread, and the respecting of the NPT, the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention is universal. In the 1990s, after a long period of competition between Argentina and Brazil for the mastering of nuclear technology and resulting international suspicion about the real purposes of their respective nuclear programmes, the two countries decided to adhere to the NPT. Latin American countries have also been strong supporters of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which Argentina and Brazil ratified in 1998. Moreover, nuclear deterrence – the most potent counter to the logic of nuclear disarmament – is not part of the regional discussion on security.

In 1967, the Latin American countries concluded the "Treaty of Tlatelolco," which was the first to ban nuclear weapons in a populated area – an inspiration for the creation of other nuclear-free zones, and a relevant antecedent to the treaty banning nuclear weapons. The Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL) is responsible for overseeing compliance with the treaty and has been active regionally and globally in the promotion of disarmament and non-proliferation goals. Through its yearly participation in the First Committee's General Debate at the United Nations (Disarmament and International Security), it has been a strong advocate for the TPNW.

Latin American countries have adhered to almost all the institutions of the nuclear-non-proliferation regime. The region has particularly contributed to the disarmament aspects thereof. Mexico and Brazil were founders of the New Agenda Coalition. Nevertheless, three countries – Argentina, Brazil, and Venezuela – have not signed the Additional Protocol, which expands the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) safeguarding activities. In particular, Argentina and Brazil have objected to the discriminatory nature of the treaty and fear that the document would hamper the complete development of an independent nuclear programme, which the two countries consider important for transforming the region's non-nuclear countries into industrialised, modern societies. The claim that the peaceful use of nuclear technology is an internationally established right and should therefore not be threatened by unilateral or multilateral initiatives has always been at the centre of the public debate in the region and has often generated tensions with the institutions which make up the non-proliferation regime.

We argue here that, in spite of the traditional support for non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament initiatives, at this point in the history of regional nuclear governance three processes hinder Latin America's contribution to a related regime based on the future banning of nuclear weapons. First, the region is in a state of regional-governance recession, as epitomised by the end of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR). Additionally, relations between Argentina and Brazil, a crucial basis for the crafting of institutions in this field regionally, are at an all-time low. Finally, the rise of a far-right government in Brazil has led to the

adoption of different foreign policy guidelines, with the country now distancing itself from its previous international commitments.

3.1 Latin American regionalism today

Latin American history has been marked by different projects of regional integration and cooperation, often associated with diverse development and global-insertion perspectives. Nevertheless, regional multilateralism has been in a state of decline for the last few years. While cooperation was intensified after Néstor Kirchner (2003–2007) and Lula da Silva (2003–2010) came to power and both Argentina and Brazil chose to prioritise regional cooperation over hemispheric integration arrangements, history has now turned a corner. Cooperation has become difficult with the rise of right-wing governments in the Southern Cone, a process which started with the election of Mauricio Macri in Argentina in 2015.

In April 2018, the governments of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay, and Peru jointly decided to suspend their participation in and withdraw from UNASUR due to a long-standing crisis in the organisation. Soon after, Chile and Colombia proposed the creation of a new organisation in its place, the Forum for the Progress of South America (PROSUR) – which left aside the robust ideas about cooperation which had characterised UNASUR's brief history. The present-day situation of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), created in 2010, is also an expression of the dwindling of regional projects. The Brazilian government decided to leave the organisation in 2020, in line with a policy of defining Cuba and Venezuela as enemies and multilateralism as irrelevant. The current lack of agency on the part of the region has led to an absence of debate and coordination regarding nuclear governance and the TPNW.

The regional organisations created for broad-based cooperation, coordination, and governance have been important venues of support for nuclear-governance mechanisms and for a ban on WMDs. The "UNASUR Constitutive Treaty" of 2008 specifically mentioned the promotion of nuclear disarmament, and in line with this perspective the organisation's representatives supported a nuclear ban.[5] Since its inauguration, CELAC has been a forum where support for nuclear disarmament has been regularly voiced. The 2017 "Declaration of Punta Cana," for instance, supported nuclear disarmament in line with earlier definitions of Latin America as a "zone of peace."[6] Support for these mechanisms in the region was energised in regional forums for many years, and the latter's decline has had a clear impact on norm-building and norm support in this part of the world. Moreover, the current lack of agency on the part of the region has impacted its contribution to global norm-building.

5 For more information, see: https://enaun.cancilleria.gob.ar/en/structured-debate-nuclear-weapons-statement-argentine-behalf-union-south-american-nations-unasur.

6 To access the declaration, see: http://antigo.itamaraty.gov.br/images/ed_integracao/docs_CELAC/DECLESP4.2017.ENG.pdf.

3.2 Argentina, Brazil, and nuclear non-proliferation

International concern about nuclear issues in the region has been mostly centred around Argentina and Brazil, because, as noted, these two countries pursued competitive such programmes in the past**.** The rapprochement between the two and the establishment of a bilateral institutional framework to deal with nuclear issues is considered a paradigmatic example of a successful regional nuclear regime. This process culminated with the signing of what became known as the "Guadalajara Agreement" in 1991. The Agreement included the guarantee of the peaceful nature of the programmes, the waiver of the right to conduct nuclear explosions, and the establishment of the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC). Right after the signing of this document, negotiations with the IAEA over the implementation of agreements on safeguards took place. These negotiations led to the "Quadripartite Agreement" (ABACC, Argentina, Brazil, IAEA) at the end of 1991. After the establishment of the ABACC, Argentina and Brazil ratified the NPT. These developments paved the way for the two countries' further cooperation, and so they moved on to the joint production of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. The most significant cooperation initiative came in 2008, when the two countries established a binational commission (which became known as COBEN), with the mission of extending joint endeavours in the nuclear field. In 2010, Presidents Lula da Silva and Cristina Kirchner (2007–2015) signed the "San Juan Statement on Nuclear Cooperation"[7] regarding the construction of two multipurpose reactors: the Brazilian Multipurpose Reactor and RA-10 in Argentina respectively.

Since the Additional Protocol came to life in 1997, Argentina and Brazil have coordinated their policies around the refusal to sign this document. Their position has been that the safeguards agreed with the ABACC and IAEA are enough to guarantee non-proliferation commitments. In addition, Argentinian and Brazilian representatives have stated on many occasions that anything outside the ABACC framework is non-necessary interference, hampering these countries' right to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

ABACC is considered a unique case of successful regional nuclear cooperation, but it currently faces a number of challenges. In Argentina, there are strong voices advocating for the signing of the Additional Protocol. The eventual pursuit of such a policy would have to be coordinated with Brazil in order to preserve ABACC's role in nuclear monitoring. ABACC also faces the issue posed by Brazil's ownership of a nuclear-propelled submarine, and negotiations are being held on how to guarantee that the latter is monitored. This is because neither ABACC nor IAEA safeguards apply to "non-proscribed military activities" such as nuclear propulsion. Historically, this was not a problem since nuclear submarines were only in the possession of nuclear-weapon states. Brazil's nuclear submarine is therefore a challenge without precedent (Costa 2017).

7 Available online at: https://www.abacc.org.br/en/agreements-and-statements/?lang.

Finally, in spite of a great record of cooperation on non-proliferation initiatives and of policy coordination on nuclear issues, Argentina and Brazil's nuclear cooperation is situated in a broader context of deteriorating bilateral relations. The maintenance of cooperation between the two is pivotal for Latin American participation in global nuclear-governance initiatives such as the TPNW. Unfortunately, the current state of affairs does not appear to be promising.

3.3 Brazilian foreign policy under the Jair Bolsonaro government

When the TPNW became reality in 2017, Brazil was the first country to sign it. But ratification has since not taken place. Although changes in the country's nuclear sphere have been mostly geared towards the involvement herein of private actors,[8] the current administration in Brazil might alter nuclear diplomacy in tune with the transformations it has been trying to promote more widely in Brazil's foreign policy.

Bolsonaro (2019–) has followed the lead of former US president Donald Trump (2016–2020) on foreign policy and other matters. This has had a number of consequences, including a lack of interest in multilateral projects, decreasing coordination with Argentina and other Latin American countries, a complete abandonment of South–South cooperation projects as initiated by the former government under the Worker's Party (that is, under Presidents Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff, 2011–2016), the treatment of Cuba and Venezuela as enemies, and neoconservative hardline support for Israel. These changes in Brazil's foreign policy have led to more conflictive relations with countries led by "leftist" governments (broadly defined) and consequently rendered regional cooperation extremely difficult. As interdependence and cooperation have been discarded in a drive to stress nationalism and traditionalism, multilateralism on the global or regional level has been dismissed.

Although the new government has not formally changed its nuclear policy, there are strong voices close to the Brazilian president who advocate for the acquisition of nuclear weapons, including his son Eduardo Bolsonaro (G1 2019). Since Eduardo Bolsonaro is the current head of the Foreign Relations Commission in the Chamber of Deputies (the Brazilian "lower house"), his positions cannot be disregarded. In fact, he has coordinated with allies in Congress to stall TPNW ratification (Spektor et al. 2019). It is important to state that the complete reversal of Brazil's nuclear policy is dependent on a constitutional amendment and the current government is unlikely to gather the legislative support for such a move. Nonetheless, this state of affairs might result in diminished Brazilian willingness to promote the TPNW's advancement.

8 As of the first half of 2021, the government was planning on sending a proposal for a constitutional amendment to Congress to end the state monopoly over nuclear power.

3.4. General trends

Overall, for Latin America we should establish links between the participation of the region in developing a treaty to ban nuclear weapons and a long pattern of supportive behaviour regarding nuclear governance and multilateralism. In contrast to other regions, where adherence to nuclear disarmament has been hampered by the possession of nuclear weapons and the employment of the deterrence strategy, Latin America has historically been in favour of such initiatives. Nonetheless, the regional multilateralism crisis and domestic developments may hinder the TPNW ratification process. Therefore, focusing on the present state of international relations in the region, we have sought to highlight three interrelated trends which explain the current lack of energy for engagement with this endeavour.

We have pointed out how regionalism and regional cooperation are currently in a state of decline, how relations between Argentina and Brazil can be described as exhibiting a lack of communication at the highest levels, and how the latter's foreign policy has abandoned its previous interest in multilateral institutions more broadly and regional cooperation in particular. This regional environment is in stark contrast with three traditional sources of regional support for the nuclear governance sphere in post–Cold War Latin America: the debates within regional forums; the cooperation and coordination between Argentina and Brazil; and, the latter's leadership. The analysis of the patterns of behaviour in the region regarding nuclear governance indicates clearly that without these forces it will be very difficult to move ahead on nuclear disarmament. In a nutshell, diminished regional cooperation on a broad array of issues and a lack of leadership have resulted in a decrease in the regional capability to support nuclear-disarmament and non-proliferation goals globally. Therefore, one should expect it to be some time before banning nuclear weapons can be treated seriously as a foreign policy goal around a regional negotiating table.

4 A Middle East Free of Nuclear Weapons and The Long Road Ahead[9]

An analysis of the TPNW from the perspective of the Middle East requires a contextualised link to the attempts to establish a NWFZ. This contribution shows that the support or rejection of nuclear-weapons-ban principles by Egypt, Iran, and Israel – the key players in any regional nuclear-weapons dialog – overlaps with their considerations on the establishment of a NWFZ. From a regional perspective, a nuclear-weapon ban will create dramatic shifts in the regional balance of power since only Israel has been attributed with having such capabilities. Israel, however, has never introduced or admitted to having nuclear weapons as part of its policy of nuclear opacity. Accordingly, Iran and Egypt, which lead the Arab countries' related diplomatic efforts, have sought the establishment of a NWFZ to build trust and eliminate the Israeli nuclear threat. Israel, on the other hand, maintains that trust should be preconditioned before

9 This section was written by Nir Hassid.

any progress on the subject is made and perceives the Arab countries and Iran as motivated by a desire to undermine its security. This contribution's review of the underlying reasons for these regional key players' positions on a NWFZ illustrates the challenges and opportunities regarding promoting norms on the TPNW's adoption.

This contribution briefly discusses the diplomatic efforts to establish a NWFZ in the Middle East. It then shows how Egypt, Iran, and Israel justify their positions and how each country's stance is linked with their respective views on the regional balance of power. I then show that the great powers' involvement and the active conflicts in the region are the main barriers to adopting a nuclear-weapon ban. In concluding, suggestions for overcoming these challenges are offered.

In 1974, Iran and Egypt submitted their first proposal to establish a NWFZ to the UNGA (UN 1974). Since then, Egypt has been expanding its diplomatic efforts to promote a WMDFZ (United Nations Security Council. A/45/219, April 16, 1990). In the early 1990s, regional negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbours ultimately failed to promote a regional-security mechanism. However, the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference adopted a Resolution on the Middle East and made it an integral part of the NPT agenda (NPT/CONF.1995/32/RES/1, 11 May 1995). In 2010, the NPT state parties reached a consensus over convening a conference in 2012 on a Middle East WMDFZ (NPT/CONF.2010/50, Vol. I, 18 June 2010). Israel agreed to take part in the process, despite its official "long corridor" policy which supports some forms of *de jure* NWFZ but makes it conditional upon establishing trust and lasting peace in the region as the first step (Beres 2016: 8). Nevertheless, the conference did not materialise after the US (a NPT depositary state) called it off in 2012 on the grounds of "present conditions in the region" (Nuland 2012: 1).

Official facilitation attempts to realise the WMDFZ conference continued between 2013 and 2014, with Israel playing an active part in the process. The latter's insistence on agreement regarding draft-agenda issues and the procedural rules before the convening of the conference was perceived by Egypt as intended to raise difficulties. The Arab states objected to the continuation of the process and chose to promote it instead within the 2015 NPT Review Conference. This move ultimately failed after Canada, the UK, and the US rejected the final draft on the creation of a WMDFZ. The US cited "unrealistic" and "unworkable" conditions as the reason why the dialog was terminated.[10]

A more recent expression of the Arab League's efforts to establish a WMDFZ Middle East occurred in December 2018 with the adoption of a UNGA Resolution (A/73/546, 22 December 2018) which called for the convening of a conference on an annual basis until such time a legally binding treaty on a Middle East WMDFZ had been concluded. In November 2019, the first session was held with the participation of the Arab League countries and Iran

10 Remarks at the 2015 NPT Review Conference. Rose Gottemoeller Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, UN, New York City, NY, 22 May 2015.

(A/CONF.236/6, 28 November 2019). The conference reinvigorated the formal regional dialog and provided a platform for the countries concerned to share their views on the issue. In November 2021, the second session convened for closed discussions focused on formulating agenda issues and procedural rules, in which it was eventually agreed that the conference's decisions will be based on consensus. Such a consensus-based mechanism might satisfy some of Israel's concerns; however, the latter has argued that there was no change in its prerequisites for regional-security negotiations, not least when it was agreed at the conference that the discussions should be delinked from the regional peace process.

4.1 The regional viewpoint on the TPNW

The Arab states, and specifically Israel's immediate neighbours Egypt and Jordan, view Israel's nuclear activity as contributing to the regional nuclear arms race, as well as a risk to the safety and the environmental and humanitarian security of the entire region. Of particular concern is the operation of a nuclear facility in the Negev region, which is not safeguarded by the IAEA. Thus, after decades in which Egypt and the other Arab states had unsuccessfully promoted the establishment of a WMDFZ within the NPT framework, it was not a surprise that Egypt also proactively promoted the TPNW. Yet despite the additional support for the latter among the Arab countries and Iran, to date only Palestine has ratified the treaty.

Israel claims to have unique strategic vulnerabilities which arms-control arrangements cannot mitigate against. Israel perceives the Iranian nuclear programme and its destabilising activities in the region as an existential threat, further to seeing the international community's efforts to reach a nuclear deal with Iran as poor and insufficient too. Hence, Israel's approach is one of reluctance, suggesting that confidence-building measures and trust should be pursued first to holistically support the conditions for a WMDFZ. This also explains Israel's opposition to the UNGA Resolution (71/258) of 23 December 2016, which called for the initiation of discussions on the TPNW, and the country's absence during the negotiation process on the treaty.

Iran, a member of the NPT, has been developing its own nuclear programme – and there is much evidence of a military dimension to it. The country has continued to develop this programme while simultaneously challenging the non-proliferation regime with a strategy of brinkmanship. Accordingly, Israel has tended to take part in the diplomatic dialog on its nuclear activities, but at the same time promote its nuclear project too. Its opponents accuse it of implementing destabilising, aggressive behaviour. This strategy correlates with Iran's supportive approach to the TPNW and its simultaneous abandonment of its commitments to the NPT and its obligations to the "Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action." In practice, Iran's foreign policy is eroding the achievements and value of the TPNW, since its conduct is intensifying mistrust and discouraging regional-security dialog.

4.2 Key barriers to the adoption of a nuclear-weapon-ban norm

Two key barriers are likely to influence the adoption of a regional nuclear-weapon ban. First, the great powers, which rejected the TPNW, are deeply involved in the Middle East through regional geopolitics, which creates dependencies for states in the region. The nuclear powers have called on the latter to renounce their support for the TPNW, with the US describing such support as a "strategic error" (Lederer 2020). For many states in the region, maintaining strong alliances with the great powers is indispensable to both economic growth and national security. The great powers are the major exporters of arms to the Middle East, while the region has the highest military expenditure as a share of gross domestic product with an average of 4.9 per cent. Furthermore, the need to develop energy sources in the region plays into the hands of the great powers, which are invested in regional nuclear projects and other commercial relationships which yield economic benefits for both sides. Christopher Ford, the former US assistant secretary of state for international security and non-proliferation, said in 2019 that a full-fledged nuclear-cooperation partnership could lead to the establishment of political and economic ties lasting as long as 50 or 100 years, and be the catalyst for additional cooperation between governments on many other national-security and foreign policy issues (Ford 2020).

The second barrier to adopting these norms is the many active conflicts in the region, which affect all Middle Eastern countries in one way or another. These involve multiple actors, both state and non-state – such as Hizballah as well as regional groups like the Houthis in Yemen. Some are long-standing, such as the Israeli–Palestinian dispute, and some have emerged in the past decade, such as the Syrian civil war, in which Iran, Israel, Lebanon, Russia, the United States, and Turkey are involved. These conflicts also create indirect ripple effects, such as domestic social and political instabilities, fluctuations in the economies, energy disputes with greater global impacts, the increased involvement of great powers, and more. This creates an atmosphere in which constructive norms which help build trust, confidence, and responsible behaviour cannot emerge in support of any regional-security arrangement – let alone a nuclear ban.

4.3 Trends and outlook

Given the nature of the conflict in the Middle East, it appears that any chance of implementing the TPNW can be rejected outright. Yet if we look more closely, there are factors in play which may eventually lead to broader acceptance of the TPNW in the Middle East. First, as noted by the IAEA, a resolution which ends the crisis with Iran will be key to moving forwards to a regional-dialog phase. Additionally, in recent years Israeli officials have affirmed that the ratification of the CTBT is being seriously contemplated. Closer cooperation between the moderate countries in the region can create more incentives to promote related ban norms as a first step.

The "Abraham Accords" of 2020 normalising relations between Israel and the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco are an encouraging sign, as they have a real impact on

warming relations and building trust between peoples. The agreements are starting to materialise today with the emergence of tourism, investment, and trade relations between these states. They are an expression of a growing security-dialog trend among the countries of the region, as taking place alongside the ongoing regional tensions. These warming relations are driven, among other things, by the fear of a nuclear Iran which unifies many of the countries in the region but also pushes Iran outside.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the future of a nuclear agreement with Iran, and the NPT Review Conference in August 2022 are likely to change the geopolitical dynamics of the great powers in the Middle East. A nuclear deal with Iran is a minefield difficult to overcome. If an agreement is reached, it will not contribute to the stability of the region and the trend of a regional nuclear arms race is a plausible matter. At the same time, if an agreement is not reached, the security dilemma will increase, as will the possibility of violating norms in the field of unconventional weapons. The NPT Review Conference in the summer of 2022 in the context of the Middle East WMDFZ issue and the possibility that Egypt and the US will reach an understanding can, on the other hand, strengthen the formal process of establishing a UN Convention on the subject.

For now, the Middle East countries appear to be short-sighted about the benefits of regional nuclear security arrangements. Unlike Latin America, the Middle East's adherence to major treaties governing WMDs is far from universal, as is countries' cooperation with international institutions and their adoption of non-proliferation norms. This may also explain the failure to promote a WMDFZ within the framework of the NPT, and the toll the process has taken on other global non-proliferation goals. Thus, the key to stabilising the Middle East and adopting global norms of non-proliferation is to ensure accountability and responsibility among states so as to temper regional hostilities. This can be achieved if the countries realise that a collective regional-security mechanism will contribute more to each's national security and help reduce dependency on great powers.

While regional peace will not simply emerge from this realisation, this understanding could reduce the likelihood and lethality of future armed confrontations. In this sense, Israel can only benefit from being more proactive and engaged in existing international institutions regulating global security. Thus ratifying the CTBT will come at little cost, since Israel already contributes to the Treaty's verification regime. Egypt could contribute by warming up relations with Israel, and by abandoning its policy of rejecting normalisation after more than 40 years of formal peace between the two states. This relationship has only rarely been translated and diffused to the socio-economic realm. Iran's adherence to any form of nuclear agreement has great value; however, for many Middle Eastern states this would be nullified if the country undermines regional security through its support for the Houthis, Hizballah, and its involvement in Syria.

Expanding the social, economic, and political ties between states in the region will create more interdependencies between them and their societies. This, in turn, could also contribute

to greater support for collective security concepts and the reinvigoration of the WMD disarmament dialog. Finally, scholars and regional research institutions can contribute more knowledge on the conditions, practices, and benefits derived from the implementation of global arms-control norms, and pave the way for thinking constructively about it.

5 Old Wine in a Broken Bottle? South Asian Perspectives on a Nuclear-Weapon Ban[11]

South Asia as a region has been critical of the global nuclear order in both ideational and empirical terms. That order – in its current form as represented by the NPT and ancillary arrangements – has had an interactive relationship with the region ranging in intensity from instrumental to integral. Unsurprisingly, the stakes are significant for India and the global nuclear order, and this is anchored in the ineluctable fact that the South Asian country has been and continues to be an outlier in terms of its position on nuclear disarmament within the global nuclear order. Incidentally, Pakistan also opposed the TPNW's creation (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pakistan 2017) – both the Indian and Pakistani official responses highlighted the TPNW's inability to advance the creation of customary international law. What emerges from surveying the trends in the region is that normative issues need to be considered in tandem with empirical on-the-ground realities; otherwise, the effective impact of the norms tends to be diluted. Hence, it can be argued that the process for nuclear disarmament should be primarily a political one aimed at consensus-building which engages with and assimilates normative concerns. The context and comparison of the South Asian experience reveals key takeaways which provide a sobering assessment of the TPNW.

In the current context, the broader multilateral and normative order is witnessing severe contestation – arguably to the point of an existential crisis. Accordingly, the advent of this treaty might have been a potentially welcome development due to the ongoing erosion of the multilateral order(s) globally. In contrast, the Treaty has been rendered a non sequitur since it essentially entails banning the (nuclear) bomb for countries which do not even have it in their arsenal. Significantly, the critical stakeholders on the topic – that is, the nuclear-weapon states, which are indispensable to the question of nuclear disarmament and ipso facto should have been part of the conversation – are conspicuously absent from the process. Further, the latter is paradoxical considering the emerging tendencies in the strategic nuclear realm, as the major nuclear powers are re-examining their nuclear doctrines, strategic deterrence policies, and nuclear-force postures. Such exercises by the world's nuclear-weapon states primarily connote a reconsideration of strategic options through an emphasis on the integration of emerging strategic technologies with existing nuclear (and conventional) platforms; this in turn facilitates the framing of an alternative nuclear response. Essentially, the Treaty appears, then, to be grounded in an alternate reality inasmuch as the adherents to it are remarkably disengaged

11 This section was written by Harsh V Pant and Shounak Set.

from the critical constituencies most heavily invested in the topic, while also being divorced from the realities of regional-security issues too.

A key effect of the Treaty has indubitably been to expose the colossal chasm between the nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon states. While this cleavage has been an enduring trend within the global nuclear architecture, this treaty represents at once both the cause and the effect of this symptom, illustrative as it is of an insider–outsider dynamic. Counterintuitively, while the very rationale of this treaty has to an extent been premised on this, the non-nuclear-weapon states have in practice replicated an exclusive insider–insider dialog at the cost of the outsider – the nuclear-weapon states in this case. This tempers expectations regarding tangible deliverables from the Treaty and in turn raises the question of its sustainability; the advent of the post–Second World War global order demonstrates that multilateral orders underperform when there is not an optimal balance between idealistic aspiration and pragmatic underpinnings. Even if the Treaty does potentially generate a powerful global norm, the impact thereof on the global nuclear order would remain severely limited in face of the inherent asymmetry between the aspirations of non-nuclear-weapon states and the concerns of the nuclear-weapon ones – thereby belying the pious intention of eventual global nuclear disarmament.

Against this backdrop, some key regional specificities merit attention. And while these are particular to South Asia, they also generate broader theoretical and analytical questions pertaining to nuclear non-proliferation. To reiterate the centrality of South Asia to the global nuclear order, India and Pakistan (as well as Israel) have steadfastly refused to sign the NPT. Indian opposition to the NPT has been embedded in a larger normative logic highlighting that the Treaty's effect by design and default was to generate a dichotomous double-tiered structure of nuclear "haves" and "have-nots." The definition of a nuclear-weapon state being contingent upon conducting a nuclear test prior to 1967 was particularly contested, and the Indian position was to challenge this central premise of the NPT architecture on a normative basis *ab initio*. Likewise, regional nuclear-free zones have been viewed by India as a piecemeal – if not inadequate – approach to nuclear disarmament, and as contingent upon the specific regional context (Pande 1999). Meanwhile, the design and implementation (or lack thereof) of non-proliferation commitments by the major powers has further reinforced the Indian position.

Incidentally, the ensuing security concerns stemming from Pakistan and China only contributed to the complexity of India's nuclear calculus – in a form still notable today – and this empirical reality complemented the latter's norm contestation here. More poignantly, that even the NPT-led architecture eventually had to reorient itself – as vividly manifested through the "US-India Civilian Nuclear Agreement" (2008) – is testament to the inherent instability of a multilateral order which failed to accommodate crucial stakeholders. Challenging the assumptions and tenets of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, the US–India nuclear agreement was driven by the strategic considerations of great powers and underlines the salience of the same within the global nuclear architecture (Pant 2011) – not to mention the role of South Asia

within it. Incidentally, the global nuclear order had in its initial stages evolved as a response to India's peaceful nuclear explosion in 1974 – illustrated best through the establishment of the Nuclear Suppliers Group and ancillary multilateral export control regimes – and subsequently illicit Pakistani nuclear trafficking. These trends thus foretell some of the potential complications for this treaty, having a bearing beyond the region too.

Quixotically, the Ban Treaty explicitly aims for the complete eradication of nuclear weapons without engaging with the salient causes of the continued existence of them – in this it is similar but not identical to the NPT-led global nuclear order, inasmuch as the underlying concerns of crucial stakeholders are left unaddressed. This contributes to the weakening of the intended normative effect and raises questions about the very sustainability of such an initiative. The fact that such weapons continue to be an important element of the nuclear-force posture for the nuclear-weapon states indicates that there are deeper reasons beyond normative attributes such as prestige, status, or nuclear enhancement in play – being symptomatic of legitimate security issues in large parts of the world.

Pointedly, references to the "Ottawa Treaty" and landmines as a precedent – made in the context of the politico-normative impact of the Ban Treaty on nuclear weapons – are suggestively pious but ultimately puerile. Such reasoning essentially misses the point. The very comparison between landmines and nuclear weapons is fundamentally untenable, owing to the immeasurable differences in terms of strategic and political utility between these two vastly dissimilar classes of weapons.

It is noteworthy that Indian opposition to the TPNW stems from the same ideational construct as its opposition to the NPT. The Indian position on nuclear disarmament has been that it has to be comprehensive, verifiable, and universal – the country's commitment to disarmament remains unchanged, as testified to by the official response (Ministry of External Affairs, India 2021). Significantly, the Indian nuclear doctrine remains unique in explicitly linking its nuclear-force posture to nuclear disarmament (Ministry of External Affairs, India 2003). While Indian efforts at nuclear disarmament would continue unabated, the South Asian country's specific concerns regarding the Ban Treaty were primarily based on verification and procedural concerns. If the Conference on Disarmament would have been the suitable forum for this topic, with appropriate negotiation aiming for a consensus, then the inherent ambiguity on the part of verification and compliance within the Treaty renders it problematic. This is particularly concerning for India given the extraordinarily high stakes on account of its primary security challenges arising from Pakistan and China – both of which have nuclear arms and are in its immediate neighbourhood. Given its history of challenging and resisting the NPT, India is also inclined to contest this treaty on account of its very real limitations – further to the outlined normative and security considerations.

These arguments raise two broader but interrelated questions pertaining to the realities of the emerging global nuclear order. The era now dawning indicates the resurgence of great-power politics with a certain vigour and intensity unseen in the recent past. This is reflective

of an evolving paradigmatic shift, which is in turn driving contestation between the US and China, while certain regions such as the Indo-Pacific are gaining pre-eminence and the value of nuclear weapons and force posture is being re-evaluated. Concurrently, multilateral orders are facing a litmus test in this era of power transition, with established norms and arrangements being severely constrained by a rising China and acute repercussions unfolding – raising questions about the very survival of the existing liberal order in its current form. Against such a backdrop, multilateral endeavours on a crucial issue such as nuclear disarmament warrant more space being given to security concerns than the current version of the TPNW allows. The moot point remains that the logic of nuclear deterrence, which contributes to the continuing relevance of such weapons, has a certain resonance in several critical geographies across the world.

In essence, these security trends and political drivers are particularly pronounced in South Asia but do also manifest to varying degrees in other nuclearised regions such as Eastern Europe and North Asia. They portend significant impediments to the effective impact of the Treaty in real terms. Moreover, while issues of nuclear deterrence need to be factored into the disarmament discourse for an optimal outcome, some of the underlying assumptions of the Ban Treaty are of questionable functional value. The very fact of unanimous opposition to the Treaty by all the existing nuclear-weapon states – both within and beyond the NPT regime – attests to this and corroborates the Indian position as well. In sum, normative pressure notwithstanding, unless the substantial underlying conditions which sustain nuclear weapons are altered, or at the very least managed through a constructive approach, advocates of nuclear disarmament – and the Ban Treaty – are destined to run around in rhetorical circles.

6 Conclusion[12]

In this Working Paper, we applied a Comparative Area Studies approach to regional perspectives on a global nuclear-weapon ban. Doing so helped both uncover how localised contextual trends influence broader, macro-level mechanisms (and vice versa) while also identifying which attributes matter in what ways vis-à-vis understanding social processes across world regions. Taken together, our case studies indicate, for instance, how five structural patterns within the global order may at least partially emerge from regional systems – all of which are promising avenues for further research.

First, *norms tend to diffuse on a global scale, but assimilation follows regional tendencies.* The acceptance of the nuclear-non-proliferation norm and, eventually, of a nuclear-prohibition norm will depend on regional patterns, institutions, and structures of power. The extent to which norms impact global politics, and the global nuclear order in particular, has been cov-

12 This section was written by Leonardo Bandarra and Miriam Prys-Hansen.

ered in multiple studies (Smetana and Wunderlich 2021). The research presented here demonstrated how norms against nuclear weapons are assimilated and clash with other normative frameworks within different regional landscapes. It showed that, in many cases, assimilation stems far more from regional constraints than from global ones. In Africa and Latin America, the relatively straightforward assimilation of a nuclear-weapon-ban norm is a consequence of a historical consensus hereon in those regions since the 1990s. In South Asia, conversely, the assimilation of a nuclear-weapon-ban norm clashed with deeply engrained deterrence thinking, and as such there has been a lack of consensus on the Ban Treaty.

Second, *receptivity to and the assimilation of norms depend on pre-existing historical connections to institutions associated therewith*. More specifically, receptivity to and the assimilation of the nuclear-weapon-ban norm is dependent on how the respective regions are historically and institutionally connected to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament institutions. These are factors which become accessible through the CAS logic underlying our research, particularly with regards to the contradictions the empirical material offers at first glance – for instance, in terms of the implications of existing or proposed NWFZs. In the African and Latin American contexts, regions covered by existing NWFZs, it was shown how they have been more receptive to the TPNW. Our analysis of the African debates on nuclear weapons demonstrated how historically constructed abolitionist positions and established institutions being in place laid the grounds for the acceptance of a nuclear-weapon ban. This seems a plausible explanation, and we should expect similar assumptions about the effects of normative congruence to play out globally. Yet other, localised effects may also overlay this factor. Latin America's "traditional support for non-proliferation and nuclear-disarmament initiatives" is at times obstructed by other regional tendencies – including a decline in Brazil's official support for multilateralism. These tendencies may damage norm assimilation in the Latin American region, with global implications regarding support for the TPNW. Thus, over time, localised changes in institutional landscapes can affect how norms are assimilated.

A variation in this norm-assimilation process, the second pattern, can be observed for less institutionalised regions. South Asia, for instance, remains absent from most non-proliferation and disarmament institutions. India is not only opposed to the "dichotomous double-tiered structure of nuclear 'haves' versus nuclear 'have-nots'" enshrined by the NPT, but also pessimistic about NWFZs – which are "viewed [as] a piecemeal – if not inadequate – approach to nuclear disarmament." Our study on the Middle East, meanwhile, showed how the absence of functional regional institutions obstructs norm assimilation. This points to a link between the support for the TPNW and a state's previous backing of negotiations on the establishment of a WMDFZ in the region – with those who rejected the WMDFZ also rejecting the TPNW.

Third, *great-power politics continues to be a major driver of international politics.* This also applies to the global nuclear order, despite the entry into force of the TPNW. At the global level, as highlighted across all case studies, the TPNW is a reaction to a perceived lack of progress

on global nuclear disarmament. Nuclear powers' boycott of the TPNW, as well as current efforts to update deterrence strategies and arsenals by all countries possessing nuclear weapons, indicate a resurgence of great-power politics; this largely limits the prospects for an effective global nuclear-weapon-ban norm. Great-power politics is, furthermore, conducted both at the global but also at the sub-systemic level. In the Middle East, the US and Russia play a significant economic role as great powers, including not least through arms exports.

Fourth, *regional leadership plays a crucial role in creating the environment needed for the acceptance of global norms.* All of our case studies highlighted, at least to some extent, the role of regional leaders in pushing or contrariwise undermining support for non-proliferation institutions, and the TPNW in particular. This leadership role is enhanced when regional powers cooperate, as in Africa and Latin America. The research presented here on the latter region emphasised the centrality of the Argentine–Brazilian axis of cooperation in broader regional adherence to nuclear non-proliferation institutions. This cooperation is crucial, according to the authors, in determining the quality of Latin America's continued positioning in the global nuclear order. Likewise, the analysis of Africa illustrates the fundamental role of a consensus between regional powers – namely, Egypt, Nigeria, and South Africa – in pushing the continent to participate in global discussions on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation – for example, in forums like the HI. In the Middle East and South Asia, conversely, competition between major actors, such as Israel and Iran on the one hand and India and Pakistan on the other, is key to understanding the lack of further support for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament norms and institutions.

Fifth, *domestic drivers are crucial to the implementation of narratives which either reject or support certain behaviours vis-à-vis nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament institutions*. The assimilation, acceptance, or rejection of global norms such as the nuclear-weapon ban depend not only on international systemic, regional, and institutional considerations but also on domestic elements. Countries will adhere to international institutions based on the presence or absence of domestic narratives which can justify the norms behind those institutions to local constituencies. The example of Brazil serves to demonstrate how sudden changes in executive-power leadership can heavily impact well-established foreign positions on global nuclear policies. In Africa, as well, "various stages of state weakness and even collapse" can contribute to countries' capacity to take on international commitments. The extent to which domestic drivers precede or overlap with international elements depends on the region.

These five patterns illustrate how an in-depth understanding of different regional perspectives enables us to uncover broader trends associated with the acceptance or rejection of a global ban on nuclear weapons rooted in home regions. Taken as a whole, our comparative approach demonstrated the diversity of the current global nuclear order(s). We revealed not only how broader trends and patterns can travel across different regions, but also how these emerge from specific regional landscapes and concerns. These trends and patterns can also be

applied to other regions not covered here, but with similar elements regardless – such as Central Asia and Asia-Pacific, two other NWFZs, or East Asia and North America, where deterrence thinking plays a critical role in the lack of adherence to a nuclear-weapon ban. Further comparative studies of these other regions, in adding to the dialog initiated here, will strengthen our understanding of both the nuclear ban and the TPNW's current role in the global nuclear order.

Our research showed that the interconnection and co-construction of institutions, including treaties such as the TPNW or norms such as the nuclear-weapon ban, can be uncovered by honing in on regional tendencies and junctures. Multiple arenas and institutional structures are important in themselves, but they also mutually impact one another to varying degrees across regions. A cross-regional approach therefore offers promising avenues for identifying new patterns and trends affecting research both on nuclear politics and, more broadly, on related norms and international institutions.

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