Negotiated Inequality:
Developing Countries and the Making of the Nuclear Club

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Abstract

International law plays a central role as a tool to address international security problems. Despite its benefits, this tool enshrines inequalities that favor powerful states. Recent literature studying lawmaking focuses on the creation and reproduction of inequalities, but there needs to be more attention to why developing countries accept or reject the institutionalization of disparities. I present a theory of inequality acceptance through a controlled comparison of the divergent Brazilian and Mexican positions during the negotiations drafting the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in the 1960s. The NPT has been fundamental to promoting international stability. However, the treaty also excluded developing countries from mastering technologies that nuclear powers argued could promote development at faster and cheaper costs. I argue that developing countries accept inequalities when they modify treaty proposals to better reflect their preferences and their favored allocation of rights and duties in institutions designed to address security problems.

Keywords: International law, inequalities, global nuclear order, Global South, Latin America, Brazil, Mexico.

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The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the cornerstone of the global nuclear order, institutionalized an unequal compromise. Recent scholarship on the origins of the global nuclear order investigates how the negotiators of the NPT in the 1960s attempted to balance nonproliferation, development, and disarmament objectives. Instead of balancing these goals for all states equally, the NPT created "a managed system of deterrence" for NPT members with nuclear arsenals and "a managed system of abstinence" for everyone else.[1] Scholars disagree on the intent of this unequal compromise. For some, nuclear powers "petrified" most states in a position of atomic inferiority to maintain their own privileges;[2] for others, securing nuclear primacy helped nuclear powers prevent proliferation.[3] Despite differences, authors agree that the NPT asked weaker states to grant exclusive privileges to great powers.

There is less attention in existing accounts on the origins of the global nuclear order to *why* weaker states accepted the inequalities that the NPT institutionalized, especially when they participated in designing this treaty. If the NPT helped the hegemon and other nuclear powers impose an unequal nuclear order, why did some developing countries accept it while others did not? The acquiescence of these countries was not automatic because, during the NPT negotiations, representatives from nuclear states understood that they needed the support of developing countries, what we now call the Global South, if they wanted to amass a commanding majority in favor of the NPT in the United Nations General Assembly when the treaty opened for signatures. This was especially important in a context when decolonization multiplied the number of developing countries in this forum.[4]

This paper explores the conditions under which weaker states accept inequalities in global security governance. I argue that developing countries accept inequalities if treaty proposals change

[1] Walker 2000, 703 and 705.
[2] Hunt 2022.
[3] Gibbons 2022.
[4] Hunt 2022, 2.

to better reflect their preferences and their favored allocation of rights and duties. Thus, weaker states acquiesce if (1) they gain from resulting solutions and (2) proposals change to moderate asymmetries, even if resulting institutions distribute benefits unequally. I posit this theory of inequality acceptance through a controlled comparison of the Brazilian and Mexican positions in the NPT drafting in the 1960s. Brazil and Mexico were the only two Latin American states included in the exclusive Eighteen-Nation Disarmament Committee (ENDC) drafting the NPT. Both countries supported nonproliferation and favored multilaterally designed, collectively enforced nonproliferation commitments.[5] Despite these commonalities, Brazil denounced the emerging nuclear compromise as discriminatory,[6] while Mexico was among the NPT's most prominent Global South supporters.[7]

I have divided this article into four sections to explore why developing countries rejected or accepted the inequalities institutionalized in the NPT. I start by exploring explanations for the acceptance of inequalities and the literature on the origins of the global nuclear order. I draw on these accounts to outline a theory of inequality acceptance in section two, where I also present the logic behind my case selection and the methods I use. Section three analyzes the Brazilian and Mexican nuclear and order preferences by delving into their assessment of the risks and possibilities of nuclear technologies. The last section follows the negotiations of the NPT to explore how Brazilian and Mexican representatives translated their preferences into negotiation strategies aiming to strike a compromise balancing rights and duties for nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon states (NNWS). The concluding section discusses implications for studies of nuclear politics emanating from my theory of inequality acceptance.

[5] Serrano 1992.
[6] Hunt 2016.
[7] Kassenova 2014.

Negotiated Inequalities in Security Governance

The NPT is an instance of an international treaty designed to guide responses to international security threats. It exemplifies how international law can play a central role as a tool to address international security problems. As a tactical undertaking, managerial instrument, or collective security mechanism, international law provides states with a common language and practices to handle conflict.[8] At the same time, it enshrines inequalities in the international system that favor powerful states. Privileges come in the form of veto powers, voting rights, and the legitimization of possession of some resources institutionalized in international treaties.[9] Literature on lawmaking analyzes the creation and reproduction of these inequalities, but there is less attention to exploring under what conditions inequalities become acceptable. The literature on institutional creation and design offers two broad potential but incomplete responses based on interests and legitimacy.

I group different explanations as interest-based if they posit that weaker actors acquiesce to inequalities because they expect to gain from them. Theories focusing on relational contracting argue that inequalities are not just an imposition from the powerful.[10] For liberal internationalists, weaker states consensually grant the powerful special privileges because a hegemon is necessary to provide global public goods.[11] For some realists, weaker states give up authority in exchange for great powers bearing the costs of providing international security.[12] For historical institutionalists, the need to respond to security challenges in the short term can trap developing countries into accepting inequalities that get reinforced through positive feedback loops.[13] Even when authors differ on how unequal arrangements emerge and evolve, they agree on the underlying causal mechanism: powerful

[8] Weller 2015, 4–11.

[9] Egel and Ward 2022.

[10] See Clark 2017 for an explanation in the English School tradition; Ikenberry 2011 in liberal internationalism; Lascurettes 2020 in realism; and Mitzen 2013 in constructivism. These authors rely on the work of classical realists that study the creation of international institutions after major wars, mainly Gilpin 1981 and hegemonic stability theory.

[11] Bukovansky et al. 2012; Deudney and Ikenberry 1990; Ikenberry, 2001.

[12] Lake 2009. Other realists argue that security governance mirrors great powers' preferences; see Mearsheimer 2018.

[13] Pierson 2016, 136. See Fioretos 2017 for a literature review of historical institutionalism in IR.

states dominate processes of institutional design, but weaker actors accept inequalities expecting to gain from them. Thus, inequalities arise from functional decisions by great powers and weaker actors—they are not mere impositions from the powerful.

Legitimacy-centered explanations posit that weaker states accept inequalities in global security governance because they consider the organizations to be rightful. Authors focusing on the processes of institutional design argue that weaker states accept an unequal organization as legitimate "as long as they had the opportunity to discuss, criticize, and vote on it."[14] Thus, following established procedures to design institution—especially when the actors participating are more than just great powers—can convince actors that resulting outcomes are legitimate even if unequal.[15] Neo-Weberian authors posit that the consent principle legitimizes intergovernmental agreements: participation of member states in designing processes, signature, and ratification legitimizes institutions via the invocation of long-standing lawmaking practices.[16] Some hegemony scholars focus on both outcomes and processes of institutional design and argue that weaker actors accept unequal institution through processes of socialization: elites in weaker states internalize the vision of the hegemon through persuasion and inducement.[17]

In this paper, I propose a synthesis between the interest- and legitimacy-based explanations. Most existing studies focus either on great powers' agency at foundational moments, assuming that other states accept outcomes because of functional or legitimacy dynamics, or on weaker states' contestations once institutions emerge, especially when power constellations shift.[18] To address these limitations, I look at a foundational moment when both great powers and weaker actors designed an institutional arrangement to address security challenges. I advance a theory of inequality acceptance

[14] Hurd 2007, 106–107.
[15] See Hurd 2007, especially chapter 4.
[16] Zürn 2018.
[17] Ikenberry and Kupchan 1990. Neo-Gramscian scholars of hegemony posit a similar argument, see, for example, Cox 1987.
[18] Long and Schulz 2023, 8.

by extrapolating from the drafting of the NPT as a response to the possibility of nuclear war and the divergent Brazilian and Mexican positions in these negotiations.

The Making of the Nuclear Club

Nuclear technology changed the international material context. The destructive potential of nuclear weapons surpassed existing limits on the use of force.[19] The possibility of global destruction became evident during the Cuban Missile Crisis, when the United States and the Soviet Union were on the brink of nuclear war in October 1962. The prospects of nuclear annihilation forced international society to build the necessary arrangements to foster security from nuclear weapons,[20] creating "an unprecedented *ordering imperative* in international politics."[21] In response, a consensus emerged among nuclear powers around crafting nuclear arms control "to make war, and especially nuclear war, less likely, and to make it less catastrophic in terms of death and destruction if it should occur."[22]

Conventional accounts of the origins of the global nuclear order focus on nuclear powers' preferences. They trace why these countries favored arms control and nonproliferation, arguing that these policies became tools that could reduce the possibility of nuclear war.[23] Recent scholarship offers a more nuanced interpretation of nuclear ordering.[24] The United States led the construction of the nonproliferation regime because proliferation could change regional or systemic power dynamics threatening the US and Soviet positions of primacy.[25] The United States and the Soviet Union used the NPT to provide international stability while maintaining their privileged status in international

[19] Deterrence theorists promised that nuclear arsenals could prevent war among great powers, e.g., Brodie 1946. See Lieber 2020 and Walt 2010 for critical reviews of this literature.

[20] Deudney 2018, 334.

[21] Walker 2000, 703 and 705, italics in original.

[22] Bull 1976, 4. See also Gibbons 2022, 12–13.

[23] See Krepon 2021 for a literature review.

[24] Hedley Bull was in the minority of authors who argued back in the 1970s that the NPT could institutionalize a discriminatory international order. Bull 1976.

[25] Gibbons 2022, 6.

society.[26] Moreover, the treaty helped nuclear powers preserve the rights, privileges, and deference they had enjoyed before decolonization,[27] entrenching a division between nuclear haves and have-nots in the nuclear nonproliferation regime.[28] In sum, using insights from hegemonic stability theory, recent scholarship argues that the NPT helped nuclear powers create a nuclear club: the United States and the Soviet Union colluded to create the nonproliferation regime,[29] preventing other countries from constructing nuclear weapons and accessing certain technologies.[30]

Global South Responses to Nuclear Uncertainty

Literature on the origins of the global nuclear order tends to overlook nuclear thinking and policies from the Global South. Accounts of the nuclear order usually focus on nuclear powers' actions during the construction of rules, norms, and institutions governing nuclear politics. Recent scholarship argues that the United States, as the hegemon, was the architect building the nonproliferation regime, either mainly by itself[31] or through a networked and coordinated effort with its allies.[32] When it comes to the Global South, conventional interpretations usually focus on countries with nuclear capabilities they could use to build nuclear arsenals. Scholars usually assume that technical hedgers, under certain domestic and regional configurations, can veer toward proliferation paths.[33] There is less attention to why countries that did not wish to acquire or develop nuclear arsenals accepted or challenged the inequalities that the NPT institutionalized.

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[26] Schulz 2019, 94.

[27] Hunt 2022.

[28] Schulz 2019, 101; Viola 2020, 4.

[29] Coe and Vaynman 2015

[30] Bull 1976, 7; Hunt 2022.

[31] Gibbons 2022. Mpofu-Walsh 2022, 149–52 traces how different schools of thought in International Relations literature share the assumption that powerful actors order international politics, especially in the nuclear security domain.

[32] Onderco 2022.

[33] Kaplow 2022. Narang 2022, especially chapter three, maps out how the literature portrays technical nuclear hedgers and the potential risks they pose to the global nuclear order and international security.

The United States' efforts to order nuclear politics depended on US hegemony, relied on nuclear powers' cooperation, and initially ignored the Global South. The United States used consensual multilateralism to build nuclear governance. Five countries from the North American Treaty Organization and five from the Warsaw Pact started working on drafting a treaty. After this group of ten governments could not reach a consensus, US and Soviet leaders formed the ENDC by inviting four neutral and four non-aligned nations to the negotiating table. The United States considered that these countries, most of them its allies, would accept its preferences, while the Soviet Union thought it would have a favorable audience in the Global South nations.[34]

Countries in the Global South that supported nonproliferation were more than just passive audiences or mere challengers to the nascent global nuclear order. Using the tools of both interest- and legitimacy-based explanations allows scholars to analyze how these states contributed ideas, strategies, and approaches to promote nuclear stability and nonproliferation—i.e., they participated in global nuclear *ordering*. During the origins of this order, developing countries actively designed regional mechanisms to manage nuclear risks, like NWFZ, and crafted institutions to enforce them. They also attempted to influence global nuclear governance during the drafting of nonproliferation treaties like the NPT. Thus, they were necessary actors in ordering efforts since the inception of the global nuclear order.[35] However, their acceptance or reluctance to support the nuclear governance proposals introduced by nuclear powers did not necessarily reflect their proliferation inclinations. Developing countries accepted inequalities when they managed to modify treaty proposals to better reflect their nuclear and order preferences.

[34] Hunt 2022.
[35] Hunt 2022.

Preferences and Inequality Acceptance

International law is a tool states can use to produce international stability potentially benefiting all countries—they provide a global public good.[36] International law, however, also creates an excludable club good where great powers get privileges in exchange for assuming managerial responsibilities.[37] Powerful states use international law to engage in "social closure," namely, to "monopolize socially valued resources to improve or maintain their position in society" and "entrench their advantages in legal orders."[38] With these closures, great powers create clubs that "enable insiders to maximize their own benefits and to limit outsiders' access to certain privileges or resources."[39] Why do developing countries accept or reject the institutionalization of these inequalities?

I argue that developing countries accepted or rejected inequalities in the NPT depending on whether they could modify treaty proposals to better reflect their nuclear and order preferences. Acquiesce to this unequal institution, then, required two conditions: first, weaker states calculated that they could gain from the NPT even if it distributed benefits unequally, and second, these countries were able to revise proposals that nuclear powers introduced. Different balances of fears and opportunities around nuclear technologies influenced developing countries' preferences. Thus, it is necessary to understand the factors informing the decisions of these countries and how they translated their preferences into strategies to influence the drafting of institutional responses to security problems. This theory is restricted to cases when the proposed solution to international security challenges is a collective and legal response enshrining privileges for great powers.

[36] These are non-rivalry, non-excludable goods. Cafaggi and Caron 2012.
[37] Bukovansky et al. 2012, 5; Bull 1977, 202.
[38] Schulz 2019, 94.
[39] Viola 2020, 64–65. See also Naylor 2019 for another Weberian approach, and Lascurettes 2020 for a similar argument based on the realist tradition.

This theory of inequality acceptance has two observable implications. Developing countries rejected club-forming governance propositions when they calculated that the promises around nuclear technologies outweighed perils and they could not modify treaty proposals more substantially. In contrast, developing countries accepted club-forming governance propositions when they calculated that the perils around nuclear technologies outweighed promises and they modified treaty proposals to better reflect their preferences. Alternative explanations would expect to see developing countries accepting inequalities (a) due to a functional decision granting privileges to nuclear powers in exchange for international security or (b) because they considered institutions to be legitimate since they participated in their design and embraced them.

Actors and Concerns behind Nuclear and Order Preferences

Different balances of nuclear fears and opportunities around nuclear technologies inform the nuclear and the order preferences of developing countries. Hence, it is necessary to understand *who* assesses these balances. Domestic politics influence which actor or agency determines how international nuclear norms and rules would affect national security and development policies. Paying attention to civil-military relations and the rivalries between diplomats and armed forces in these countries is fundamental to understanding who controls the nuclear enterprise and designs positions in international nuclear negotiations.[40] A version of the alternative theory focusing on functional decisions would argue that a country's preferred allocation of rights and duties in nuclear governance results from the particular interest of the government in turn. Scholars studying the Brazilian case usually argue that regime change explains the Brazilian nuclear preferences because

[40] Sotomayor 2013, 90–96.

the military assumed control over civilian authorities through a coup in Brazil in 1964.[41] As I explain in the next sections, though, regime change in Brazil did not modify the country's preferences.

In the early years of the nuclear age, proponents of nuclear technologies argued that they could modify the security considerations of states and reduce industrialization costs for developing countries.[42] Security and economic considerations, then, informed the nuclear preferences of Global South NNWS. Nuclear politics scholarship has an established literature exploring the security concerns informing the nuclear preferences of these countries.[43] Policymakers in these states assess the possibility of being caught in a potential nuclear conflict among nuclear powers or being dragged into one by the nuclear power guaranteeing their security.[44] They factor in their geopolitical conditions as well, including the regional threats or rivalries that could escalate to nuclear arms races. Thus, for these countries, multilaterally designed, collectively implemented mechanisms can be more effective and less costly and risky than alternative ways of ensuring security.[45]

Global South NNWS also assess the economic consequences of nuclear governance, especially when agreements could limit their development options.[46] Thus, it is essential to assess the balances around nuclear technologies informing their order preferences. Global South nonproliferation supporters worried about nuclear powers monopolizing technological advancements through the NPT, denying them access to industrialization tools.[47] In the early years of the nuclear age, nuclear powers argued that certain nuclear undertakings in the grey zone between

[41] Authors studying the Brazilian nuclear program might disregard the explicit arguments that Brazilian diplomats made about development as tactical. In the 1970s, Brazil developed a military uranium enrichment "parallel program" outside the safeguards framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency (see Doyle 2008, 313; Mallea, Spektor, and Wheeler 2015, 90; Narang 2022, 101). Brazilian authorities did not configure the nuclear facilities to produce weapons-grade uranium, but they raised suspicions about the country's nuclear intentions (Narang 2022, 104).

[42] Brodie 1946. See Kaufman 2013 for a literature review of the arguments on nuclear technologies and development.

[43] See Narang 2014 for a review of the literature.

[44] Sukin 2020 explores how NNWS fear that nuclear powers might drag them into precipitous nuclear conflicts.

[45] As Albaret 2014 explains, secondary powers in particular saw international stability as a necessary condition to promote domestic certainty.

[46] Albin 2001, 184.

[47] Bull 1976.

peaceful and bellicose activities, like peaceful nuclear explosions (PNEs), had promising economic benefits. This was the official thinking in the United States when President Dwight D. Eisenhower promoted the Atoms for Peace program.[48] Some developing states concluded that dependence on nuclear powers to share nuclear technology would negatively affect their quests to industrialize.

Brazil and Mexico in the Making of the NPT

I posit a theory of inequality acceptance by comparing the Brazilian and Mexican positions in the NPT negotiations. These countries were the only Latin American countries included in the ENDC, they shared similar diagnoses about the dangers of nuclear proliferation and nuclear arms races between the Cold War superpowers, and they agreed that multilateral nuclear arms control and nonproliferation could prevent nuclear war. However, Mexico and Brazil had contrasting positions in the NPT debates.

Brazilian authorities denounced the emerging nuclear compromise as discriminatory, while Mexican officials were one of its prominent Global South supporters.[49] Brazilian diplomats were wary about the NPT institutionalizing a potential division between nuclear haves and have-nots. They were especially cautious about accepting a treaty that would limit their ability to carry out PNEs, an ability they considered necessary to promote development. In contrast, for Mexican representatives, even if discriminatory, the NPT was a necessary tool to prevent nuclear war. They concluded that nuclear social closure—great powers' monopolization of nuclear expertise and technologies through a legal order—was a reasonable price to avoid nuclear chaos.

Brazil and Mexico had similar domestic and international conditions, which could have led them to share the same positions in the NPT negotiations. They had governments that favored state-led industrialization models. Brazil and Mexico were the two regional powers in Latin America:

[48] See Kaufman 2013.
[49] Hunt 2016; Kassenova 2014.

they had the largest military forces and the biggest economies in the region, and both had "economic miracles" in this period.[50] They were very active in international organizations and favored international rules over military means to address security problems.[51] More importantly, Brazil and Mexico shared a commitment to nonproliferation during the 1960s and preferred a version of the NPT offering balanced privileges and duties for nuclear powers and NNWS.[52] Despite these similarities, Brazil and Mexico adopted contrasting positions in the NPT negotiations.

I use original archival materials, comparative historical analysis, and a controlled comparison to understand the factors informing the Brazilian and Mexican nuclear and order preferences.[53] I draw on archives from state agencies, the legislature, media sources, and the correspondence and memoirs of representatives in the NPT negotiations. I gathered materials from August 1958 to June 1968 in the Contemporary Brazilian History Research and Documentation Center in Rio de Janeiro, and the Diplomatic Archive Genaro Estrada in Mexico City. I began my analysis by paying attention to the domestic dynamics in each country, comparing the actors balancing nuclear perils and promises and making the decisions to support or reject the NPT. Then, I explored how nuclear technologies could benefit or affect these countries in terms of security and economic considerations. Finally, I reconstructed the Brazilian and Mexican participation in the NPT negotiations, focusing on how representatives translated preferences into goals, means, and rhetoric. My aim with this process was to classify, contextualize, and link archival materials to embed the decisions that Brazilian and Mexican elites made in the larger, slow-moving process of crafting the NPT and legislating inequalities.[54]

[50] Sotomayor 2013, 81–82.
[51] Albaret 2014. See Stuenkel and Taylor 2015 for Brazil and chapter 3 in Zolov 2020 for Mexico.
[52] Patti 2016. See Patti 2021 for an exploration of the Brazilian case in particular.
[53] Bennett and Checkel 2015.
[54] I followed the advice for conducting archival research in Obert 2021.

Brazilian and Mexican Nuclear and Order Preferences

Brazil and Mexico were the only two Latin American countries invited to the ENDC. Their representatives came with instructions to seek a treaty balancing nonproliferation, disarmament, and access to peaceful nuclear technologies. Brazilian and Mexican diplomats managed to draft several preambular clauses and binding articles that got included in the final text of the NPT, most of the time by adapting elements from the treaty constituting the Latin American NWFZ.[55] Despite their similar domestic and international conditions and shared support for nonproliferation, Brazil and Mexico had contrasting positions during the NPT negotiations, exemplifying a dilemma that other Global South countries encountered. Developing countries had a predicament between accepting or rejecting the proposals introduced by nuclear powers, which would institutionalize a nuclear club and create a division between nuclear haves and nuclear have-nots.

This section analyzes the actors forming and the factors behind the Brazilian and Mexican nuclear and order preferences. Brazilian leaders concluded that their latent nuclear abilities could help them promote economic development. They opposed the NPT because they could not modify treaty proposals to guarantee their access to PNEs. The costs of renouncing these capabilities outweighed the benefits of joining the treaty. Brazilian democratic and military administrations shared this assessment, which explains the continuity of Brazilian nuclear and order preferences despite the regime change in 1964. In contrast, Mexican governments worried that nuclear arms races between the Cold War superpowers would increase Mexico's nuclear vulnerability and domestic instabilities. They supported the NPT because they managed to modify treaty proposals to guarantee their access to peaceful nuclear technologies and the commitment of nuclear powers to start disarmament negotiations in good faith. The benefits of opening the treaty for signatures

[55] Hunt 2022.

outweighed the costs of renouncing PNEs. Table 1 summarizes the Brazilian and Mexican balances of nuclear fears and opportunities.

	Brazilian Considerations	Mexican Considerations
Domestic Politics	Military dominates nuclear planning, but presidents are veto players.	Civilian authorities de-securitize nuclear politics.
Security Perils	Low vulnerability to nuclear conflicts, rivalries, or accidents.	High vulnerability to security and safety risks, especially after 1962.
Economic Promises	Nuclear technologies as key for development.	Nuclear technologies offer limited development options.
Nuclear and Order Preferences	Opportunities outweigh fears. Priority is to secure access to nuclear technologies.	Fears outweigh opportunities. Priority is to prevent proliferation of nuclear weapons.
	Reject the NPT as a discriminatory instrument.	*Support* the NPT as a stabilizing tool.

Table 1: Brazilian and Mexican Considerations

Domestic Politics

Developing an indigenous and fully independent nuclear program was an ambition that Brazilian elites shared, but there were disagreements about the possibility of developing nuclear arsenals. Pro-weapon factions, especially in the navy, dominated the nuclear program and managed to have autonomy from other ministries, including Foreign Affairs—better known as Itamaraty. Even during democratic administrations, the military officers in charge of the Brazilian nuclear program excluded Itamaraty for fears of information leaks.[56] Some civilian policymakers were worried that assuming nonproliferation commitments could compromise "defense possibilities in the event of a nuclear conflict" in exchange for "an illusionary influence that leads to victories of purely academic

[56] Patti 2021, 29.

interest."[57] However, Brazilian presidents did not support plans to use nuclear technologies for security purposes.[58] The military authorities opposed research programs dedicated to producing knowledge and developing technology on uranium enrichment during the second half of the 1960s. Civilian and military Brazilian governments alike had a close diplomatic and commercial relationship with the United States during this decade.[59] Policymakers calculated that investing in a program to develop nuclear weapons would antagonize the United States and hurt Brazil economically.[60]

Mexican civilian authorities supported the nonproliferation regime to keep the military out of politics and foreign policy debates. Mexican authorities guaranteed civilian control over politics and stable civil-military relationships after the Mexican Revolution. Civilian leaders governed through a single-party political system, which coopted and depoliticized the armed forces by offering them autonomy.[61] The Cuban Missile Crisis forced civilian leaders to rethink the role of the armed forces in designing foreign policy. Mexican authorities could have sought "an agreement with the United States to obtain an explicit nuclear umbrella, a request to deploy US missiles on Mexican territory […], or the development of military nuclear capabilities."[62] Instead, they favored nonproliferation to "de-securitize nuclear issues" by favoring diplomatic solutions and limiting the role of nuclear technologies only to the energy sector. The Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs kept the military out of designing the country's nuclear and order preferences.[63] The Federal Commission on Electricity also succeeded in keeping the armed forces out of nuclear energy planning.[64] After

[57] Patti 2021, 54, quotes Marcelo Damy, president of the Brazilian National Commission of Nuclear Energy from 1961 to 1964.

[58] Spektor 2016, 639.

[59] In a speech to recently admitted candidates to the diplomatic school at Itamaraty, the first military president declared that "We have the conviction that Brazil and the great North American nation link their economic and commercial interests with the formulation of a respectful relationships and mutual friendship." "Discurso do Presidente Humberto de Alencar Castelo Branco no Palácio Itamaraty, por ocasião da entrega de diplomas aos candidatos aprovados popr concurso à Carrera de diplomata. Rio de Janeiro, 31 de julho de 1964," Garcia 2008, 540.

[60] Dalaqua 2019, 233; Patti 2021.

[61] Camp 1992; Serrano 1995.

[62] Sotomayor 2013, 95.

[63] Serrano 1992.

[64] Stevis and Mumme 1991, 60; Vera 2020, 147–48.

seeing how militaries gained political control throughout South America, Mexican civilian authorities reaffirmed their decision to exclude the armed forces from the Mexican nuclear enterprise.[65]

Security Perils

Civilian and military Brazilian authorities alike did not contemplate the option of building a nuclear program for military purposes since they had a relatively benign threat environment in South America in the 1960s.[66] Brazil did not consider Argentina as an enemy or a security threat despite their rivalry for regional leadership.[67] In the 1950s, Brazilian authorities collaborated with their Argentinian counterparts to develop civilian nuclear programs, benefiting from the Atoms for Peace Program that the Eisenhower administration launched. Throughout the 1960s, Brazil and Argentina had a high degree of nuclear cooperation, even coordination, to try to circumvent what they perceived as an emerging "unjust nuclear order imposed by the nuclear weapon states."[68]

Mexico did not face an enemy in its vicinity that would justify setting up a military nuclear program. However, "Mexico has a border with the nuclear world," which increased Mexican nuclear fears in the 1960s.[69] The United States conducted nuclear testing in Nevada and deposited nuclear waste close the border zone with Mexico, increasing Mexican anxieties about potential nuclear accidents.[70] Moreover, Soviet strategies specifically targeted various border and major cities in Mexico to block assistance going into the United States in case of a nuclear war.[71] As a result, in

[65] Sotomayor 2013, 95.

[66] Some military elites wanted to keep the option of building a nuclear weapon open "in case Argentina were to do so" (Barletta 1997, 15). Argentina built a reactor that could potentially produce the necessary material for nuclear weapons until 1968, once the NPT negotiations had finished. This was a natural-uranium fueled heavy water reactor (Narang 2022, 103). However, as the former Brazilian Minister of Science and Technology, José Goldemberg, argues, "Brazil has no political problems with its neighbors that might lead the military to seek nuclear weapons on security grounds" (Goldemberg 1985, 84). See also Sotomayor 2013, 87.

[67] Costa 1993, 204–10; Reiss 1995, chapter 3.

[68] Doyle 2008, 315.

[69] Heller 2021, 121.

[70] See Sagan 1995.

[71] Nadal 1989, 105.

1962, Mexico decided unilaterally to renounce its ability to acquire or develop a nuclear program for military purposes and refused to allow the storage and transit of nuclear weapons through its territory.[72] Mexican authorities also became active supporters of multilateral nuclear arms control and favored agreements to end nuclear testing.[73]

The Cuban Missile Crisis made Latin American countries aware of their geographical vulnerabilities. However, Brazilian authorities were less worried about the superpower rivalry than their neighbors were.[74] When great powers called for nonproliferation mechanisms to prevent another crisis, Brazilian authorities countered arguing that complete nuclear disarmament was a better response to prevent the existential risk around nuclear arsenals.[75] Proximity with the United States made Mexico the most exposed Latin American state during the crisis.[76] Conscious of their limited abilities to protect their country from nuclear vulnerabilities, Mexican officials favored designing legal limits on nuclear arsenals.[77] Moreover, Brazilian and Mexican authorities were anxious about the possibility of the United States attempting to prevent nuclear proliferation in Latin America unilaterally. Even when both countries reacted differently to the Cuban Missile Crisis, they saw in the construction of multilaterally designed, collectively enforced nonproliferation rules tools to tame great powers' interventionist attempts.[78]

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[72] Heller 2021, 124.

[73] Zolov 2020, 205.

[74] Keller 2015, 198. The Brazilian president Joao Goulart "showed very little concern over the threat to the hemisphere of the missiles in Cuba." Central Intelligence Agency, "The Crisis USSR/Cuba: Information As of 0600, 28 October 1962," quoted in Keller 2015, 215.

[75] A year after the military coup, on September 14, 1965, Brazil, together with the eight nonaligned members of the ENDC at the United Nations, insisted that the NPT should be a means to achieve general disarmament as the ultimate end (FGV AAS-1966.01.27-I).

[76] Sotomayor 2013, 89.

[77] AGE XII-400-72, October 1963. See also Heller 2021, 121.

[78] Keller 2015, 208. In 1965, the Mexican president Gustavo Díaz Ordaz, borrowing from John F. Kennedy, offered the best summary of the Mexican thinking around nuclear weapons. According to the Mexican politician, "or the world puts an end to nuclear weapons, or nuclear weapons will put an end to the world" (Quoted in García Robles 1966, 339.)

Economic Promises

Civilian and military administrations in Brazil attempted to master nuclear technology for independent energy production.[79] Brazil was one of the leading suppliers of nuclear minerals at the dawn of the atomic age, mostly thorium and natural uranium.[80] Since the late 1940s, Brazilian civilian governments started investing in nuclear development to achieve energy autonomy. They wanted to transition from being a mere supplier of nuclear minerals to a country that could use nuclear technology.[81] They aimed to build "robust nuclear energy sectors as part of their development strategies."[82] Brazilian authorities assessed that an autonomous nuclear program could be the key to developing faster and at a cheaper cost, decreasing their perceived economic dependency on great powers.[83] To master nuclear technology, they asked nuclear powers to reciprocate the Brazilian export of nuclear minerals with nuclear technology and knowledge transfers.[84]

The military authorities that took power after the coup in 1964 shared the development policies and nuclear emphasis of the previous civilian administrations. The military leaders "did not frame explosives either as deterrents or as tools for geopolitical assertion but spoke of them exclusively in terms of tools for big infrastructure and engineering projects."[85] They saw an autonomous atomic energy program as "a key element for the future of the nation" and were wary of the high economic costs of developing nuclear military capabilities.[86] Moreover, US officials clarified to Brazilian policymakers that US nuclear cooperation with Brazil would continue even if the country did not join the NPT, eliminating a conditionality that could have been an incentive for

[79] See Motoyama 2004.
[80] Patti 2021, 10.
[81] Sikkink 1991.
[82] Narang 2022, 107.
[83] See Gheorghe 2019 for an explanation of why some countries attempted to reduce their dependency on great powers to improve their economic conditions.
[84] Brazil forged close relationships with the United States to promote scientific exchanges. Álvaro Alberto, the vice admiral responsible for the implementation of the Brazilian nuclear program in the 1940s and 1950s, toyed with the idea of nationalizing the atomic minerals. Patti 2021, 18 and 21.
[85] Spektor 2016, 638.
[86] Patti 2021, 59 quotes a speech by Brazilian president Humberto Castelo Branco from March 14, 1967.

the South American country to sign the treaty.[87] Thus, Brazilian administrations throughout the 1950s and 1960s concluded that they could only accept nuclear rules restricting their access to nuclear technologies once they controlled the most critical aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle.[88]

Compared with their Brazilian counterparts, the Mexican nuclear material context limited the interest of the Mexican authorities in the potential applications of peaceful nuclear technologies.[89] Since the 1950s, the Mexican government forged relationships with the US governments and US universities to assess whether Mexico could develop an indigenous nuclear industry. Mexican authorities were especially interested in finding strategies and resources to develop and boost their indigenous energy capabilities to meet the demands of a growing industrial sector. In the mid-1950s, the Mexican federal government sent a small group of Mexican students with scholarships to US universalities. The government aimed to create a group of nuclear experts that could run a national nuclear energy program.[90]

Mexican authorities worked closely with US officials to fund and develop the Mexican nuclear sector with the support of the Atoms for Peace program.[91] In 1955, the Mexican government established the National Commission on Nuclear Energy. Since its creation, this commission competed with the Federal Commission on Electricity, which oversaw the Mexican commercial nuclear program.[92] Throughout the 1960s, the Mexican government worked with the Stanford Research Institute to explore the feasibility of developing a commercial nuclear sector in Mexico. Comparative studies of nuclear and oil-fired plants suggested that the balance was slightly

[87] Swango 2014, 222.
[88] Patti 2021, 3.
[89] Stevis and Mumme 1991, 59.
[90] Mateos and Suárez-Díaz 2021.
[91] Sotomayor 2013, 85.
[92] Vera 2020, 147.

unfavorable for the nuclear alternative.[93] Thus, Mexican leaders decided the nuclear option was not profitable and kept relying on oil as the leading resource to power the country's economy.[94]

Safeguarding Promises and Limiting Perils during the NPT Negotiations

This section explores how Brazilian and Mexican officials translated their nuclear and order preferences into negotiating strategies at the ENDC talks. For nuclear powers, existing rules limiting the use of military force offered inadequate responses to prevent nuclear conflicts.[95] After some debate, they decided to craft nuclear nonproliferation mechanisms to manage nuclear risks.[96] The ENDC started drafting a treaty proposal in March 1962 on which the General Assembly of the UN would vote. Brazilian and Mexican authorities considered that the optimum nuclear order would promote total nuclear disarmament. However, they realized that it would be challenging to accomplish this goal. Thus, they asked for a version of the NPT that offered a more balanced distribution of rights and duties between nuclear powers and NNWS, reducing the inequalities it would institutionalize.

Brazilian and Mexican authorities helped international society reach a consensus on a collective, multilaterally designed nuclear arms control, nonproliferation, and disarmament instrument.[97] Mexican and Brazilian diplomats came to the ENDC with the lessons they learned as orchestrators of a regional treaty promoting proliferation and disarmament.[98] These two states led the negotiations of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, commonly known as the Treaty of Tlatelolco, between March 1965 and February 1967.

[93] Stevis and Mumme 1991, 60–62.
[94] Frieden 1991, 180–82; Vera 2020, 145.
[95] Bull 1965; Gibbons 2022.
[96] Bull 1976. See also Krepon 2021.
[97] Hedley Bull argued that this restricted approach was more realistic, since "making the states system work is a matter of preserving and nurturing what remains of a rudimentary consensus about 'minimum order,' not of advancing towards some 'optimum order' about which, at the global level, no consensus exists or is in prospect." Bull 1976, 10.
[98] Hunt 2022.

The Latin American NWFZ reinforced the US nuclear-weapon monopoly in the hemisphere, but it also limited the threat and use of nuclear force, guaranteed the exchange of nuclear technology from nuclear powers to Latin American countries, and created loopholes around PNEs favoring governments that questioned nuclear social closure attempts.[99] Thus, the regional treaty institutionalized inequalities, but it also addressed Latin American nuclear fears and opportunities. Brazil and Mexico wanted to form a similar compromise in the NPT.

Brazil and Safeguarding Nuclear Promises

Brazilian representatives sought to modify the draft proposals that the superpowers introduced. They attempted to include more ambitious disarmament goals, which they saw "as a natural path for a fairer international order."[100] Brazilian authorities also attempted to secure the access of NNWS to peaceful nuclear technologies. They saw in the Latin American NWFZ an arrangement guaranteeing security that did not limit their access to nuclear technology. Thus, they embarked on a laborious process of transposing core elements of the Treaty of Tlatelolco into the NPT. They calculated that, by safeguarding their capability to conduct PNEs, they could secure their access to other less controversial peaceful nuclear applications. To achieve this, Brazilian diplomats used anti-colonial rhetoric in the negotiations, arguing that nuclear arms control institutionalizing nuclear oligopolies would create "nuclear protectorates,"[101] "nuclear proletariats,"[102] and "nuclear colonies."[103]

The Brazilian delegation developed a justification for its reluctance to support the US and Soviet drafts over time. They continuously argued that their goal was to guarantee that developing

[99] Rodriguez and Mendenhall 2022, 822.
[100] Wrobel 1993, 31.
[101] FGV AAS-1966.01.27-I.
[102] FGV AAS-1966.01.27-III, March 14, 1967.
[103] FGV AAS-1966.01.27-IV, April 7-8, 1967.

countries could profit from the promises of peaceful nuclear technology for development.[104] In August 1966, Brazilian diplomats argued they could not accept a proposal dividing countries into nuclear haves and have-nots.[105] Similarly, in March 1967, they asserted that nuclear arms controls could not promote peace in an international context marked by a gap between the wealthy and the poor. Thus, they proposed to create a development fund with a percentage of the money saved through nuclear disarmament.[106] In May 1967, Brazilian representatives asserted that Brazil was "determined to put the atom at the service of economic and social development" to avoid new international asymmetries.[107]

Ambassador Antonio Francisco Azeredo da Silveira, head of the Brazilian delegation at the UN debates on the NPT, gave a speech at the ENDC putting together these different arguments on July 4, 1967. Da Silveira contended that his government could not accept a treaty limiting its capabilities to develop nuclear technology, which would place Brazil "in the hardly enviable position of entirely depending on the unilateral will of nuclear powers." Thus, he asked to build a peaceful nuclear technology transfer mechanism. He also reminded delegates that Brazil renounced nuclear weapons and set a precedent toward nonproliferation by ratifying the Partial Test Ban Treaty and participating in the Treaty of Tlatelolco negotiations. Moreover, to further prove Brazil's peaceful intentions, he proposed to create a nuclear disarmament monitoring system.[108]

Da Silveira argued that the US and Soviet drafts proposed an inadequate response to the nuclear threat compared to other instruments, including the Treaty of Tlatelolco. He posited that the NPT placed unnecessary burdens on developing countries by constraining their access to PNEs. Brazilian representatives justified their reluctance to renounce their right to conduct PNEs, arguing

[104] FGV AAS-1966.01.27-IV, May 18, 1967.
[105] FGV AAS-1966.01.27-I, August 25, 1966.
[106] FGV AAS-1966.01.27-III, March 29, 1967.
[107] FGV AAS-1966.01.27-IV, May 18, 1967.
[108] FGV AAS-1966.01.27-V, July 4, 1967.

that this tool could help them in "the digging of canals, the connection of hydrographic basins, the recovery of oil fields, and the realization of great engineering works."[109] Da Silveira contended that the Latin American NWFZ allowed signatories to carry out PNEs in Article XVIII (1). Mexican diplomats protested, saying that the Treaty of Tlatelolco limited nuclear explosions to the point where it practically prohibited them. Brazilians replied that this interpretation contradicted the Treaty of Tlatelolco's text and was a Mexican attempt to gain US support in the NPT negotiations.[110]

The final text of the NPT included some points reflecting the Brazilian nuclear and order preferences. The introductory section established that nuclear powers should never threaten to or use nuclear weapons. Article IV stated that nuclear powers should share nuclear knowledge with non-nuclear countries for non-military purposes, primarily to promote development. However, Brazilian diplomats failed to safeguard developing countries' ability to carry out PNEs, which they argued would institutionalize "a status of dependence."[111] The Brazilian delegation used this new asymmetry to justify not signing the NPT when it opened for signature in 1968.[112] Brazil ratified the NPT in 1998 but, even then, Brazilian democratic authorities asserted that the treaty formed a "nuclear cartel" discriminating against developing countries.[113]

Mexico and Limiting Nuclear Perils

Mexican authorities feared nuclear risks more than they valued nuclear benefits. Thus, they preferred to craft a good enough nonproliferation treaty as soon as possible instead of dragging the

[109] Patti argues that Brazilian diplomats used this language in attempts to mirror "the arguments made by the superpowers, especially the United States, which conducted the Plowshare Program." Patti 2021, 59.

[110] FGV AAS-1966.01.27-III, March 29, 1967. Article XVIII (1) reads "The Contracting Parties may carry out explosions of nuclear devices for peaceful purposes—including explosions which involve devices similar to those used in nuclear weapons—or collaborate with third parties for the same purpose, provided that they do so in accordance with the provisions of this article and the other articles of the Treaty."

[111] FGV AAS-1966.01.27-XII, February 8, 1968.

[112] Kasseonva explains that Brazilian policymakers saw nonproliferation demands as (1) unfair given the "insufficient progress toward nuclear disarmament," and (2) an attempt by "nuclear countries to leave developing countries forever behind as far as nuclear technologies are concerned." Kassenova 2014, 88.

[113] Spektor 2016, 646.

discussions trying to achieve a perfect balance between nonproliferation, disarmament, and development interests. In 1965, the president of the Mexican Delegation in the ENDC, Ambassador Alfonso García Robles, argued that NNWS, especially those in the Global South, had limited influence in crafting the NPT. He advised the NNWS in the ENDC to have "flexible" demands to increase their influence. He promoted the Latin American compromise between nonproliferation, disarmament, and development in the Treaty of Tlatelolco as a limited but effective and fair nuclear order that NPT negotiators should emulate.[114] Mexican diplomats presented most of their proposals in a coalition with the Latin American Group in the UN to take advantage of the parliamentarian characteristics of the UNGA voting process.[115]

Nonproliferation monopolized nuclear powers' attention, while some NNWS in the ENDC pushed for more ambitious disarmament goals. The tension between nonproliferation and disarmament demands could have stalemated the negotiations, especially because some countries, among them Brazil, promoted what Mexico described as an "extreme thesis" asking for complete disarmament.[116] For Mexican negotiators, "to make horizontal proliferation conditional upon or subordinate to vertical proliferation was simply and purely equivalent to opposing the achievement of a nonproliferation treaty."[117] Thus, the Mexican representative Jorge Castañeda introduced a solution satisfying most parties. He proposed to move disarmament commitments from the preamble into the operative text of the draft, asking nuclear powers to "pursue negotiations in good faith" on measures to stop the nuclear arms race, achieve nuclear disarmament, and promote general and complete disarmament. This pledge would become Article VI in the final NPT text. While the

[114] AGE XVIII-221-9, November 22, 1965. See also Hunt 2016 and Rodriguez 2019.
[115] AGE XVIII-221-9, November 22, 1965.
[116] AGE XXII-188-33, April 19, 1968.
[117] Shaker 1980, 571.

effect of this commitment was political more than a legal obligation, it disentangled difficult deadlocks in the discussions.[118]

The Mexican urgency for a treaty did not mean that Mexican negotiators sidelined other interests. Mexican diplomats lobbied to balance security and development in the NPT. The Mexican delegation asked to include elements in the drafts making the threat of the use of nuclear force as unlawful as the actual use of nuclear force. They argued that Article II (2 and 4) of the UN Charter, which asks states to refrain from the threat and use of force, was a good model for thinking of nuclear constraints. They contended that it was necessary to ban explicitly the threat and use of nuclear weapons, given their unique destructive capacity. Thus, they welcomed that the final paragraph of the NPT introductory section included their request.[119] According to Mexican diplomats, this amendment was necessary if nuclear powers wanted to secure NNWS support.[120]

Mexican diplomats asked to include language in the NPT permitting the peaceful use of nuclear energy for development purposes.[121] Mexicans welcomed nuclear powers' commitment to sharing non-military nuclear knowledge with non-nuclear countries in the proposed Article IV, especially when this information could promote development. This point mirrored Article XVII of the Treaty of Tlatelolco.[122] In contrast with the Brazilian delegation, Mexicans decided not to ask to include PNEs in the NPT. In June 1968, during the vote on the NPT final draft, a Mexican diplomat presented the position of the Latin American Group. He explained that, as a group, they supported the treaty because it reflected a compromise between nuclear powers and NNWS that guaranteed international security *while* promoting development.[123]

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[118] Harries 2013, 117.

[119] The text reads "in accordance with the Charter, States must refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State." See also AGE XXII-188-40, May 27, 1968.

[120] AGE XIX-224-17, November 9, 1966.

[121] Hunt 2016, 214.

[122] AGE XXIV-217-128, December 5, 1968.

[123] AGE XXII-188-31, June 12, 1968.

Mexican negotiators attempted to facilitate the NPT negotiation and build bridges among factions. In February 1967, when the Treaty of Tlatelolco opened for signatures, the UN General Secretary U Thant wrote a message to García Robles thanking him for promoting the regional NWFZ as an example for the NPT.[124] A year later, in May 1968, García Robles wrote that some delegates argued that having the Treaty of Tlatelolco as a precedent "sped up" the NPT negotiations.[125] The Mexican campaign achieved "an increase of at least twenty votes in favor above the number that the co-presidents of the Geneva Committee expected."[126] In their correspondence with the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Mexican Mission to the UN stated that the United States and the Soviet Union acknowledged the Mexican efforts to rally support for the NPT.[127] Thus, nuclear powers viewed the Latin American bloc in general and Mexico in particular as allies in the quest to assemble votes in favor of the NPT.[128]

Conclusion

Nuclear weapons disrupted the limits on the use of force in the international order. In response, nuclear powers proposed to create nuclear arms control and nonproliferation mechanisms that would reduce nuclear risks while simultaneously entrenching their rights and privileges. During the negotiations drafting the NPT, the United States and the Soviet Union proposed a system that would institutionalize the nuclear powers' status as "global nuclear guardians."[129] The potential entrenchment of this inequality divided NNWS, even those that were committed to nonproliferation

[124] AGE XX-189-23, October 11, 1967.
[125] AGE XXII-188-29, May 16, 1968.
[126] AGE XXI-250, June 14, 1968.
[127] AGE XXI-250, June 14, 1968.
[128] Hunt 2016, 215.
[129] Hunt 2022. This conceptualization of nuclear guardianship resembles Dahl 1985. Dahl explores the democratic and guardianship ways of designing nuclear policies within the domestic contexts of democracies. He explains that nuclear guardianship is "a vision of a well-qualified minority, the guardians or experts, who rule over the rest, governing in the best interests of all, fully respecting the principle of equal consideration, indeed perhaps upholding it far better than would the people if they were to govern themselves." Dahl 1985, 31.

efforts. This paper compares the Brazilian and Mexican nuclear and order preferences during the NPT negotiations. Both states participated in the quest to regulate the use of nuclear force to achieve security. They promoted nuclear arms control and nonproliferation as responses to the instability that nuclear weapons created. Hence, Brazilian and Mexican policymakers participated actively in global nuclear ordering efforts during a moment when international society shared common primary goals—guaranteeing the survival and security of states from nuclear war.

The literature on the origins of the global nuclear order tends to ignore the nuclear and order preferences and governance contributions of Global South NNWS. Scholars usually focus on nuclear powers as the architects of governance structures and pay attention to developing countries when they pose proliferation threats,[130] thus reinforcing an assumption in mainstream studies of international law and nuclear politics that only powerful actors order international politics.[131] In contrast, this paper centers on the Brazilian and Mexican nuclear calculations and favored allocation of rights and duties between nuclear powers and NNWS in nuclear governance.

The Latin American actions at the ENDC were not a functional, unforeseen, or procedural acceptance of inequalities. Mexican authorities supported the NPT despite the inequalities it institutionalized because they managed to modify treaty proposals to reflect their nuclear and order preferences better. They were aware of the long-term consequences of the treaty but favored the construction of a multilaterally designed, collectively enforced nonproliferation mechanism that balanced security and development. In contrast, Brazilian authorities rejected the NPT because they could not modify treaty proposals to guarantee their right to conduct PNEs. They criticized and did not join the NPT because it offered them fewer benefits than other nonproliferation mechanisms, not out of an ambition to disrupt or question the emerging global nuclear order. During the NPT

[130] Krepon 2021.
[131] Rodriguez and Mendenhall 2022, 18.

negotiations, thus, the Latin American concessions and compromises were strategic decisions that helped them promote their nuclear and order preferences.

Brazil and Mexico favored the construction of a global nuclear order, but they questioned the social closure attempts of nuclear powers. They countries joined other NNWS and managed to include nuclear disarmament and development as legal pillars of the NPT, together with nonproliferation. They also managed to secure nuclear powers' commitments to share nuclear knowledge and technology for development. Thus, Brazil and Mexico infused "a postcolonial conception of international justice" into a project by nuclear powers that created a nuclear club.[132] The Brazilian and Mexican positions in the NPT negotiations invite mainstream nuclear politics scholars to include Global South NNWS into their analyses. These cases also ask Global South scholars exploring these countries' engagements with the international order to pay attention to their security preferences and politics.

[132] Hunt 2022.

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