State-Level Decision-Making In Cyclus to Assess Multilateral Enrichment

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Abstract

Proposed treaties and agreements that aim to reduce the spread of nuclear weapons are often stalled by skepticism regarding their efficacy. For example, the concept of multilateral enrichment, in which multiple states co-own and operate an enrichment facility, has the potential to reduce the spread of enrichment technology. However, detractors point to the improved international networking opportunities inherent in multinational organizations as a risk factor for increased proliferation. A framework to compare the relative risk between a multilateral enrichment paradigm and the status quo, on a regional scale, can help inform the discussion and potentially identify ways to reduce global risk of nuclear proliferation. As part of the Consortium for Verification Technology, the Cyclus fuel cycle simulator is being used as a test-bed for the development of such new technologies and approaches to treaty verification. Cyclus is a systems-level nuclear fuel cycle simulator that models the interactions between actors in the nuclear arena. While designed to track the flow of nuclear material between facilities, Cyclus also incorporates an innovative Facility-Institution-Region hierarchy that can capture the dynamics of state-level interactions. Drawing on social science literature to identify factors that motivate states to pursue weapons programs, we have developed a regional proliferation model that captures causes and effects of state-level nuclear weapons proliferation. The model identifies eight key factors that influence a states decision to pursue nuclear weapons. These factors include motivations internal to the state, such as military spending and governing structure, as well as interactive factors such as conflict between states. Historical data is used to identify the relative importance of these factors and translate them into a likelihood of pursuing a weapon. The model also provides a feedback mechanism such that acquisition of a nuclear weapon by one state influences the decision-making of the other states. This model will be used to assess the effectiveness of policy approaches, such as multilateralization of the fuel cycle, that seek to reduce the regional risk of proliferation over time.

1 Introduction

Progress in preventing the spread of nuclear weapons is contigent both upon preventing access to the required technology as well as deincentivizing weapons programs. An effective global nonproliferation regime must synthesize knowledge from the realms of political science, international relations, nuclear physics and engineering, and even behavioral psychology. An understanding of when and why states proliferate can inform future treaties and agreements on the policy side to minimize this risk. For example, the concept of multilateral enrichment, in which multiple states co-own and operate an enrichment facility, has the potential to reduce the spread of enrichment technology. However, detractors point to the improved international networking opportunities inherent in multinational organizations as a risk factor for increased proliferation. A regional or global framework to compare the relative risk between proposed treaty

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paradigms and the status quo can help inform the discussion and potentially identify ways to reduce global risk of nuclear proliferation.

As part of the Consortium for Verification Technology, the Cyclus fuel cycle simulator is being used as a test-bed for the development of such new technologies and approaches to treaty development. Cyclus is a systems-level nuclear fuel cycle simulator that models the interactions between actors in the nuclear arena. While designed to track the flow of nuclear material between facilities, Cyclus also incorporates an innovative Facility-Institution-Region hierarchy that can capture the dynamics of regional-level state interactions. We have developed a forward model in which a set of hypothetical states can be given individual political and technical attributes. This model then tracks whether each state develops nuclear weapons over time based on how these attributes evolve in time, including feedback on conflict levels between states.

2   Factors That Correlate to Pursuit of Nuclear Weapons

Social science literature has suggested that a variety of political and technical factors that may motivate a state to pursue nuclear weapons. Political factors include: degree to which governing structure is authoritarian versus democratic, level of military spending, degree to which state is isolated militarily, level of conflict with other states. Technical factors include: degree to which the state's scientific expertise is integrated into the international community, nuclear reactor experience, indigenous reserves of natural uraniaum, and the ability to enrich uranium. **TODO: Citations for why each factor was chosen.**

We have compiled a database of information that quantifies each of these eight factors for states at important historical points. This database is publically accessable at **TODO: link GITHUB**, and complete documentation on source data and assumptions is available at **TODO: link README**. The set includes 42 unique states that have historically had either nuclear energy or weapons technology. The 24 states that have never pursued weapons have data compiled for 2015. The 19 states that have pursued weapons at some point in the past have data for the year in which they pursued as well as the year in which they acquired a weapon, if applicable. Pursuit and acquisition dates are coded from **TODO: CITE**. **TODO: Singh and Way** define pursuit date as the first year in which a significant decision to pursue nuclear weapons was made such as a political decision by cabinet-level officials, movement toward weaponization, or development of single-use, dedicated technology. Acquire date indicates the year in which either the first explosion of a nuclear device occurred or the complete assembly of a weapon since not all countries tested their nuclear weapons.

2.1   Pursuit Score

The source used to define each factor has been taken from social science literature and is listed in table **??** The raw data for each attribute has been normalized on a 1-10 scale so that all factors can be compared directly, as described in Appendix 5. The conflict requires a special note. Conflict has been defined historically for a given state by identifying three significant state-pair relationships. Each of these relationships is coded as enemy, neutral, or ally. Each of the two states in the pair is also identified as being a non-weapons state, known to be pursuing weapons, or a weapons-state. The combination of weapons status and relationship status is combined to provide a conflict score for each pair. The net conflict factor is the average of the state's three conflict scores.

Once every state had been assigned a 0-10 score for each factor, a correlation analysis was applied to the derived factor scores to quantify the degree to which each individual factor is correlated to the decision

Factor	Source Database
Authoritarian	Center for Systemic Peace
	Polity IV Annual Time-Series, 1800-20
Military Spending	SIPRI Military Expenditure Database 19492015**TODO: cite https:/**
Military Isolation	???**TODO: Fill in and cite**
Conflict	?????**TODO: Fill in and cite**
Scientific Network	Internal Expert Opinion considering GDP, opportunities for
	nuclear infrastructure, technical human
Nuclear Reactors	IAEA Power Reactor Database **TODO: https://www.iaea.org/PRIS/CountrySt**
	IAEA Research Reactor Database **TODO: https://nucleus.iaea.org/Rl**
Enrichment/Reprocessing	Nuclear Latency Dataset **TODO: Fuhrmann, M. and**
Uranium Reserves	OECD Uranium: Resources, Production and Demand Report **TODO: https://www.oec**

Tab. 1: Source data for each factor contributing to pursuit of nuclear weapons addressed in this paper.**TODO: SYSTEMIC PEACE HAS COPYRIGHT RESTRICTIONS**

Factor	Weight
Authoritarian	0.12
Military Isolation	0.075
Reactors	-0.18
Enrichment & Reprocessing	0.10
Scientific Network	0.05
Military Spending	0.21
Conflict	0.26
Uranium Reserves	0.0

Tab. 2: Relative weighting of each factor toward pursuit decision as determined by correlation analysis of historical data. Note reactor technology is anti-correlated.

whether or not to pursue weapons. Each weight factor corresponds the Pearson correlation coefficient, or the bivariate correlation between the factor and the score and can be determined using the equation 1:

$$w_f = \frac{\sum_{i=0}^{N}(f_i - \bar{f})(s_i - \bar{s})}{\sqrt{\sum_{i=0}^{N}\left(f_i - \bar{f}\right)}\sqrt{\sum_{i=0}^{N}\left(s_i - \bar{s}\right)}}, \tag{1}$$

where N corresponds to the number of countries, f_i and s_i respectively to the factor and the score of the country i and, $\bar{f}$ and $\bar{s}$ to the mean factor and the mean score over all the countries.

The final pursuit score is defined as the weighted linear combination of its different factors. The final pursuit score has been normalized to have values distributed between 0 and 10.

TODO: ADD DETAILS OF HOW THE CORRELATION ANALYSIS WAS DONE. Something about ordered results for pursue vs not-pursue. Final pursuit score defined as a weighted linear combination of the factors.

The relative weights of the 8 factors are shown in **??**. Two major insights arise from this analysis. Firstly, a state's reactor technology is anti-correlated to pursuing a nuclear weapon. Denoted in the table with a minus sign for illustrative purposes, in practice the factor scale was inverted such that maximum reactors

led to a minimum reactor score, and then the absolute value of the weight (18%) was used. Secondly, indigenous uranium reserves were uncorrelated to weapons programs. These two results were not predicted by the social science literature.

3 A Cyclus Model of Regional Interaction

We have applied the factors correlated to pursuit of nuclear weapons in a regional model of state interactions using CYCLUS [2, 3, 4]. The Computational Nuclear Engineering Research Group (CNERG)[1] group at the University of Wisconsin has developed the CYCLUS[2] nuclear fuel cycle simulator to model all aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle in a flexible way [5]. CYCLUS has three key features: it is *agent-based*, it tracks *discrete materials*, and it incorporates *social and behavioral interaction models*[6, 7]. This design allows customized facilities and institutions to engage in dynamic decision-making based on their preferences, needs, or political constraints across a wide range of scenarios. A specific agent might have preferences based on material composition, physical proximity between facilities, or preferred trading partners, which are implemented in a region-institution-facility hierarchy that enables economic modeling [8].

3.1 Nuclear Weapon Pursuit: A Forward Model

The region-institution-facility design has been used to develop the Nuclear Weapons Pursuit Model (NWPM). This forward model features two custom archetypes, an interaction region (InteractRegion) and a state institution (StateInst) **TODO: CITE mbmore**. The state institution represents the a nation-state. It includes time-dynamic information about each of the pursuit factors. The interaction region is an omniscient presence in the simulation that tracks weapon status as well as interactive pursuit factors such as conflict(as described in section **??**), and communicates that factor to each individual state.

Each of the motivating factors is defined for every state in a time dynamic way. Individual factors must have values between 0-10. There are several tim dynamics currently available in the model: constant, linear growth or decline, step-function (at either a specified or a randomly chosen time), or power-law. These functions enable modeling of characteristics such as growth in military spending, development of new technologies such as enrichment, and sudden changes such as to governing structure or inter-state conflict. At each timestep, the state combines all of these factor values into a pursuit score using the weighted linear equation defined in section **??**.

3.2 Likelihood

The score is then converted into a likelihood that the state will pursue a weapon. The relationship between pursuit score and likelihood of pursuing a weapon has been characterized using historical data of the 42 states that have developed nuclear technology since 1942. 1 shows the fraction of states with a given pursuit score that pursued a weapon during that time. A power-law (red) provides a better fit to the data compared with a weighted linear fit (black). This data represents the total likelihood integrated over the course of 75 years (T). 2 is used to convert to the likelihood of pursuit L in any given year, given a pursuit score s.

$$L = 1 - (1-s)^{1.0/T}) \qquad (2)$$

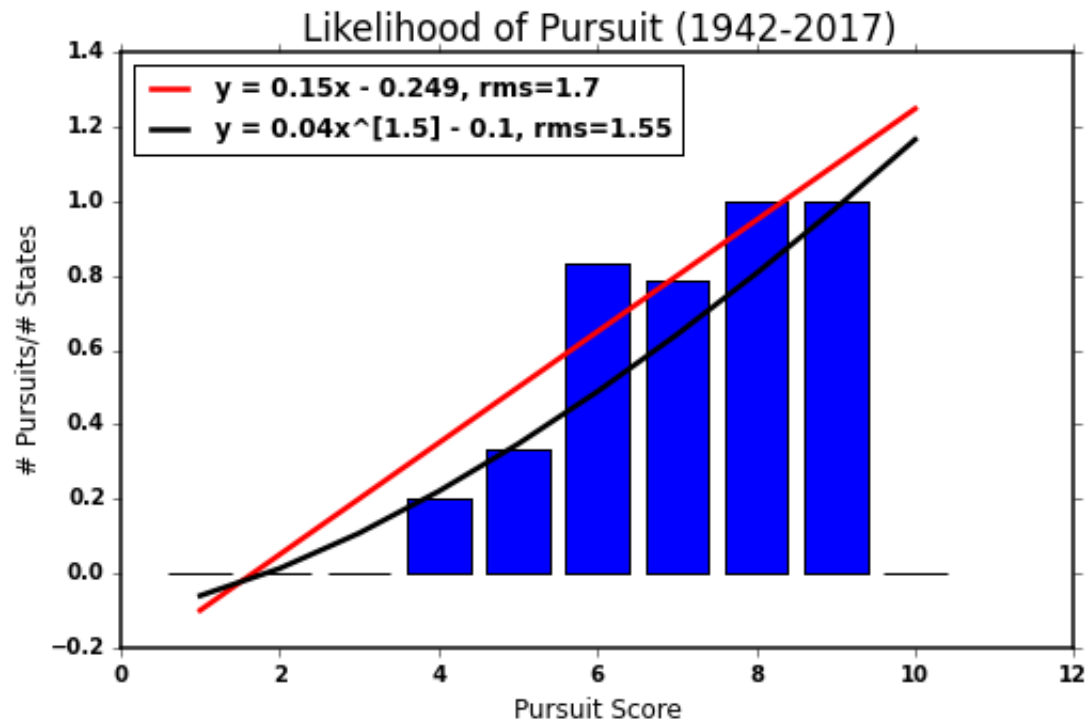[1] http://cnerg.github.io/

[2] http://fuelcycle.org/

Fig. 1: Fraction of states with any nuclear technology (dataset from 2) that pursued weapons at some point in the last 75 years, given their pursuit scores. The black power-law curve is a better fit to the data compared with the red weighted linear fit.

In the NWPM forward model, each state's score is converted to a likelihood of pursuit at that timestep using **??**. The actual conversion is bounded using two heavy-side functions such that scores below a lower threshold (e.g. 4) are forced to a likelihood of zero, while scores above an upper threshold (e.g. 9) are forced to the value of the score at the threshold. A random number generator is used given the likelihood to determine whether or not the pursuit event occurs. If the determination is for pursuit to occur, the state deploys a secret enrichment facility. If a state is already pursuing a weapon, then the model determines whether it succeeds in acquiring a weapon at that timestep using a median time to acquire of 20 years, based on historical data for states that have acquired weapons**TODO: WHAT IS EXACT MEDIAN FOR STATES THAT HAVE SUCCEEDED?**. On the timesteip in which a state succeeds in acquiring a weapon, highly enriched uranium is shipped out of the secret enrichment facility.

3.3   Limitations of the Historical Data

The use of historical data to develop a forward model has several limitations. One set of limitations could be improved with a larger historical dataset. Historical scores for non-nuclear states have not been calculated. Due to the influence of nuclear technology, a non-nuclear state could theoretically have a maximum pursuit score of 7. Considering that the majority of states that have high potential military spending and major historical conflicts have already been incorporated, this further reduces the potential maximum score to below 5, even if all other factors were maximized. A large fraction of states in the world are have scores on the order of 1-3. This large set of missing historical data, heavily weighted to the low score side, would reduce the likelihood of higher-score states from pursuing. The database could also be improved by collecting historical data for many years around dates of pursuit and acquisition rather than just for a single year. This analysis has identified factors that are correlated to weapons programs but there is insufficient data to confirm causal relationships.

This model is intrisnically limited by the small sample size and the degree to which the global landscape changes over time. With only 10 states that have acquired nuclear weapons throughout history, there is large uncertainty in any quantatitative analysis. Additionally, while conflict has been captured in a crude way, it is difficult to develop a parameterization with enough nuance to capture the varying impact of conflict under paradigms such as World War II, the Cold War, or post-9/11.

4   Discussion and Future Work

It is important to note that this model is meant to be indicative rather than predictive. Human behavior is fundamentally difficult to explain, let alone model. The actions of individuals can have outsized effects, for example A.Q. Khan's role in Packistan's weapons program. Humans do not always act rationally, and groups can make very different decisions from individuals. Expertise from psychology, game theory, sociology and international relations could certainly improve our model but there will always be some level of unpredictability in human behavior that prevents models such as this from being predictive.

Nonetheless, we believe this model can be used to offer valuable insights into the relative risks of proposed future paradigms. While we cannot predict whether or not State A will pursue a weapon in the next 10 years, we can investigate ways to reduce the risk of that pursuit occurring based on our understanding of these factors. For example, we plan to apply the model to scenarios investigating how regional multilateral enrichment facilities would affect proliferation risk on a regional or global scale. **TODO: ANY OTHER IDEAS FOR FUTURE WORK? PERHAPS HEDGING STRATEGIES?**

5 Appendix: Factor Conversion Tables

References

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