Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences
Department of International Relations

ACHIEVING THE GOAL OF NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT: LIMITATIONS OF STRUCTURAL REALISM AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

Elif ERGİNYAVUZ

Master's Thesis

Ankara, 2023

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ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

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Elif ERGİNYAVUZ

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ETİK BEYAN

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ABSTRACT

ERGİNYAVUZ, Elif. "*Achieving The Goal of Nuclear Disarmament: Limitations of Structural Realism and Contributions of Social Constructivism*" Master's Thesis, Ankara, 2023.

The pursuit of nuclear disarmament has been a complex and contentious issue in international relations, shaped by competing strategies. This thesis examines how normative shifts influenced by constructivist ideas have played a crucial role in accelerating nuclear disarmament progress. By focusing on the emergence of the new humanitarian approach and the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), this study demonstrates how the application of constructivism has challenged and transformed the structural realist paradigm that underpinned the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). It posits that the slow pace of nuclear disarmament under the structural realist paradigm was attributed to its inadequacy in explaining change and setting up the groundwork for a safer world, while constructivism has appeared as a more effective framework to address these shortcomings. By explicitly stigmatizing nuclear weapons and delegitimizing their possession, the TPNW has supplied a transformative framework that empowers non-nuclear-armed states and civil society actors to actively promote disarmament, independently of the nuclear-armed states' positions.

This thesis concludes that the incorporation of constructivist ideas, through the new humanitarian approach and the TPNW, has accelerated nuclear disarmament progress and opened new pathways. By fostering normative shifts that prioritize humanitarian concerns and collective identities, constructivism has revitalized the nuclear disarmament discourse and enabled possibilities beyond the constraints of structural realism. The findings shed light on the dynamic interplay of interests in shaping global nuclear disarmament efforts, supply insights into the potential for further advancements in disarmament diplomacy, and underscores the critical role of constructivism in setting the groundwork for a more secure and peaceful world, overcoming the limitations of structural realism and paving the way for a transformative nuclear disarmament process.

Key Words

Nuclear Disarmament, Constructivism, Structural Realism, International Security

ÖZET

ERGİNYAVUZ, Elif. "*Nükleer Silahsızlanma Hedefine Ulaşmak: Yapısal Realizm'in Sınırlamaları ve Sosyal İnşacılık'ın Katkıları"* Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2023.

Nükleer silahsızlanma çabası uluslararası ilişkilerde karmaşık ve tartışmalı bir konu olmuş, rekabet eden stratejiler tarafından şekillenmiştir. Bu tez, normatif değişimlerin, konstrüktivist fikirler tarafından etkilendiğini ve nükleer silahsızlanma ilerlemesini hızlandırmada kritik bir rol oynadığını incelemektedir. Yeni insani yaklaşımın ortaya çıkışına ve Nükleer Silahların Yasaklanması Antlaşması (TPNW) yürürlüğe girdiği sürece odaklanarak, bu çalışma, konstrüktivizmin uygulanmasının, Nükleer Silahların Yayılmasının Önlenmesi Antlaşması (NPT) tarafından desteklenen yapısal realizm paradigmasını sorgulayıp dönüştürdüğünü göstermektedir. Yavaş nükleer silahsızlanma hızının, yapısal realizm paradigmasının değişimi açıklamak ve daha güvenli bir dünya için temel oluşturmak konusundaki yetersizliğiyle ilişkilendirildiğini öne sürerken, konstrüktivizmin bu eksiklikleri ele almada daha etkili bir çerçeve olarak ortaya çıktığını ileri sürmektedir. Nükleer silahları açıkça damgalayarak ve sahip olma haklarını geçersiz kılarak, TPNW, nükleer silahlara sahip olmayan devletleri ve sivil toplum aktörlerini nükleer silah sahibi devletlerin pozisyonlarından bağımsız olarak silahsızlanmayı aktif olarak teşvik eden dönüştürücü bir çerçeve sunmuştur.

Bu tez, konstrüktivist fikirlerin, yeni insani yaklaşım ve TPNW aracılığıyla nükleer silahsızlanma ilerlemesini hızlandırdığını ve yeni yollar açtığını sonuçlamaktadır. İnsani endişeleri ve kolektif kimlikleri önceliklendiren normatif değişiklikleri teşvik ederek, konstrüktivizm nükleer silahsızlanma tartışmasını canlandırmış ve yapısal realizmin sınırlarını aşan olanaklar sağlamıştır. Bulgular, küresel nükleer silahsızlanma çabalarını şekillendirmede çıkarların dinamik etkileşimini aydınlatırken, silahsızlanma diplomasisinde daha fazla ilerlemenin potansiyeline dair içgörüler sunar ve daha güvenli ve barışçıl bir dünya için temel oluşturmanın kritik rolünü vurgular; yapısal realizmin sınırlarını aşarak dönüşümcü bir nükleer silahsızlanma sürecine yol açar.

Anahtar Sözcükler

Nükleer Silahsızlanma, Yapısalcılık, Yapısalcı Realizm, Uluslararası Güvenlik

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABM Treaty	**:** Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty
CD	: Conference on Disarmament
IAEA	**:** International Atomic Energy Agency
ICAN	: International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons
ICBMs	: Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles
INF Treaty	**:** Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty
JCPOA	**:** Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action
MEWMDFZ	**:** Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone
MIRVs	**:** Multiple Independently Targeted Re-Entry Vehicles
New START	**:** New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
NNWSs	**:** Non-nuclear-weapon States
NPT	**:** Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
NWFZ	**:** Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones
NWSs	**:** Nuclear-weapon States
Rev-Cons	**:** Review Conferences
SALT I	**:** Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
SLBMs	**:** Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missiles
SORT	**:** Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty
START I	**:** Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
TPNW	**:** Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
WMD	**:** Weapons of Mass Destruction

INTRODUCTION

According to Ban Ki-moon (2009), the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, “the world is over-armed, and peace is underfunded” (para. 1). In other words, the current global situation is characterized by an excessive prevalence of weapons and a lack of investment in peace. While all forms of weaponry pose a threat to humanity, nuclear weapons are still the most dangerous and destructive. This is primarily due to the extensive and long-lasting humanitarian consequences associated with nuclear detonations. Consequently, it is crucial for the international community to give priority to nuclear weapons policies, and to name and overcome the obstacles impeding progress towards achieving the goal of nuclear disarmament.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons technology had implications for the international community, particularly in the context of the Cold War. Initially, only a few nations, including the United States, Britain, and the Soviet Union, owned nuclear strike capabilities, allowing for a doctrine of deterrence to prevail. The concept of mutually assured destruction served as a strong incentive for avoiding nuclear conflict, as both sides had substantial arsenals and the capability to retaliate effectively. However, the situation became more complex as more countries, especially developing nations on the periphery of the global power balance, acquired nuclear capabilities. This raised concerns about the balance of deterrence being disrupted and the potential threat to the existing system. In particular, the prospect of nuclear-armed states with unresolved territorial disputes heightened the risk of a catastrophic global nuclear war.

Moreover, the Cuban Missile Crisis, a tense standoff between the United States and the Soviet Union in 1962, served as a stark wake-up call for the international community, revealing the catastrophic consequences that could result from unchecked nuclear proliferation. The crisis underscored the urgent need for a comprehensive framework to prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons and avert the potentially devastating scenarios that could emerge. As the world witnessed the alarming escalation of tensions and the potential for a nuclear conflict, the imperative for international cooperation to address the nuclear arms race became increasingly apparent. Consequently, nuclear-

armed nations became cautious about sharing nuclear technology, even for peaceful purposes, to prevent further proliferation. These apprehensions stimulated international interest in establishing a nuclear non-proliferation treaty to effectively control and limit the spread of nuclear weapons, a process that resulted in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) being proposed (Office of the Historian, Foreign Service Institute, United States Department of State, 1968).

In 1970, the NPT was entered into force as an effort to prevent further nuclear proliferation (Gillis, 2017, p. 32). The NPT is a distinctive treaty in global politics as it aims to permanently limit the number of states possessing nuclear weapons, thereby interrupting the course of history in a critical area (Goldschmidt, 1980). It is widely considered one of the most important treaties in history due to its multi-faceted approach to addressing nuclear weapons. It is commonly referred to as the central element of the non-proliferation regime, and its member states have committed to fulfilling their obligations towards ensuring a world free of nuclear weapons in the end. The treaty sets the norm and groundwork for an international system aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons worldwide (Bunn, 2003).

The treaty addresses three objectives, namely, peaceful use of nuclear energy, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and nuclear disarmament, which are outlined in Articles I and II, III and IV respectively. The genesis of Article VI, the nuclear disarmament objective, can be traced back to the underlying clash of two key political realities at the core of the NPT "bargain." The first reality revolves around the inherent injustice of permitting certain states to possess nuclear weapons while simultaneously denying this privilege to others. On the other hand, the second reality recognizes that this perceived injustice, in most cases and for most countries, is outweighed by the greater threat posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The presence of these two interconnected realities underscores the importance of dedication to nuclear disarmament for the effectiveness of the NPT's political agreement. While progress in actual disarmament is essential, it is acknowledged that the NPT still holds significant value, particularly because, for most countries, it offers a far more advantageous alternative than having no treaty at all (Harries, 2015, p. 2).

The NPT establishes a balance of rights and obligations for States, distinguishing between nuclear-weapon States (NWSs) and non-nuclear-weapon States (NNWSs). States that manufactured and exploded a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device before January 1st, 1967, are considered Nuclear Weapon States (NWSs). This includes the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom (International Atomic Energy Agency, 2015, p. 7).

Numerous experts have emphasized that the inclusion of Article VI was crucial, as it facilitated the successful negotiation of a non-proliferation treaty, garnering the support of a substantial number of non-nuclear weapons states. Without Article VI, the feasibility of such a treaty would have been exceedingly challenging, if not unattainable (Dunn, 2009, p. 160, as cited in Harries, 2015, p. 2). These two realities were present during the establishment of the NPT and continue to hold in the contemporary context. As a result, Article VI has become a focal point of ongoing discussions as the international community grapples with the complexities of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation (Harries, 2015, p. 2).

The International Court of Justice, which is the highest court in the United Nations, gave a unanimous advisory opinion in 1996 stating that nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT are obligated to "conclude negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament" per Article VI (Gillis, 2017, p. 32). However, Ford (2007) challenges this interpretation by arguing that the Article only obliges each nuclear weapons-possessing state party to disarm in good faith and that negotiations must be pursued in good faith towards achieving nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control (pp. 402-403). The lack of a definite emphasis on concluding the Article has led to discussions on whether negotiations should be concluded. The order in which the steps towards complete elimination of nuclear weapons should be fulfilled, if at all, is also a matter of debate. The absence of a definite time frame and the lack of emphasis on a legally binding norm to prohibit nuclear weapons are other shortcomings of the Article. Hajnoczi (2020) argues that a legally binding norm to prohibit nuclear weapons is required to achieve and maintain a world free of nuclear weapons. However, nuclear-weapon states argue that such a norm should only be created when the disarmament process has advanced significantly (pp. 89-90). The ongoing debate on whether the prohibition norm or the

destruction should come first is yet to be resolved. Therefore, the lack of a clear timeline, uncertainties, and differing interpretations of Article VI have hindered progress towards complete nuclear disarmament.

The emergence of nuclear weapons has had a significant impact on various fields, including human beings, nature, state relations, international structures, strategic stability, war, deterrence, and international security. The negative effects of nuclear weapons, including the threat of physical and mental harm, radiation, and damage to the environment, emphasize the importance of eliminating nuclear weapons. The existence of nuclear weapons creates a negative environment in terms of security, increasing the arms race and putting other states in an insecure position. Barry R. Posen (1993) engages in a debate regarding the realist theory, which asserts that the condition of anarchy within the international system prioritizes security as the foremost concern for states. As long as some value security, competition emerges to secure the key to power necessary for ensuring security. This competition often persists until the competing entities accumulate power beyond the requirements of security, thereby initiating threats to others. Consequently, the threatened entities respond, thereby giving rise to the security dilemma (p. 28). The need to create and maintain an environment in which countries could feel safe without nuclear weapons makes it necessary to evaluate the perception of power indicators and consider non-life-threatening options. Therefore, the thesis suggests that a comprehensive approach is necessary, which includes not only legal frameworks but also a reconsideration of the concept of power and security in the international system and brings out the question of what are the characteristics of effective nuclear disarmament.

However, there has been a transformation in the general understanding of the nuclear disarmament norm. The structural realist paradigm that underpinned the NPT has been challenged and transformed with the emergence of the new humanitarian approach and the entry into force of the TPNW. While traditional disarmament aims primarily to protect state security, humanitarian disarmament strives to end human suffering (Docherty, 2020, p. 163). TPNW, which underlines these new aspects, is an invaluable part of the innovative approach to the disarmament norm. Hamel-Green (2018) argues that the treaty, through its normative delegitimating and stigmatization of nuclear weapons, is already creating a discernible impetus for substantive nuclear disarmament within and

beyond the NPT and Conference on Disarmament (CD) forums, despite the present resistance mounted by the nine nuclear-armed states (p. 436). The evolution of perspective has been made feasible through the transition from structural realism to constructivism, allowing for a more comprehensive analysis of changes within the international environment.

Patrick McCarthy (2005) critically examines the conventional paradigm of nuclear disarmament. He identifies three key characteristics that have traditionally defined approaches to arms control and disarmament. Firstly, he notes that these approaches primarily revolve around addressing threats posed to states by nuclear weapons. Second, the negotiations associated with traditional disarmament, exemplified by initiatives like the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty negotiations, have typically been dominated by diplomats, military experts, and exclusive groups of scientific and technical specialists. Moreover, he contends that these traditional methods have suffered from a lack of transparency. Thirdly, McCarthy highlights that the traditional approaches have tended to be bureaucratic, cumbersome, and time-consuming (pp. 56-57). By closely examining these defining features, it becomes evident that the conventional approach to nuclear disarmament has been state-centric.

However, the dynamics of these approaches have exhibited discernible changes with the emergence of the new humanitarian approach and the subsequent entry into force of the TPNW. The shift from a focus on states and their security to a heightened emphasis on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapon use became evident with the emergence of the humanitarian pledge. As articulated in the original text of the pledge, it calls for states to be acutely aware of the unacceptable harm endured by victims of nuclear weapon explosions and testing, while recognizing the insufficient attention given to addressing the rights and needs of these victims. Moreover, the pledge acknowledges that the immediate, medium-term, and long-term ramifications of nuclear weapon detonation far exceed the previous understanding and are not confined by national borders. Instead, they can have regional or even global repercussions, potentially posing a threat to the very survival of humanity (United Nations General Assembly, 2016).

Patrick McCarthy (2005) provides a comprehensive evaluation of the contrasting characteristics between the new humanitarian approach and the traditional approach to nuclear disarmament. Firstly, he highlights that the novel approach places a greater emphasis on safeguarding the security and well-being of individuals, signifying a departure from the state-centric perspective. Secondly, McCarthy observes that the new humanitarian approach tends to accord greater significance to civil society groups, viewing them as possessors of valuable expertise and practical experience in this domain. Consequently, this approach perceives civil society involvement as conducive to enhancing multilateral negotiating processes. Thirdly, the novel approach places increased emphasis on expediency, ingenuity, and adaptability, demonstrating a departure from the bureaucratic and time-consuming nature of traditional methods. This shift in approaches has amplified the impetus to negotiate the status of nuclear weapons in the international arena (pp. 56-57).

The differences between the new humanitarian approach and the traditional paradigm, underpinned by the principles of constructivism and the recognition of the inevitability of change, have profoundly invigorated the discourse surrounding nuclear disarmament. Embracing constructivism, it is now acknowledged that the perceptions, identities, and beliefs of actors involved in disarmament negotiations significantly influence the outcomes, making the eradication of nuclear weapons a complex and nuanced endeavour. The emergence of the TPNW, which reflects the collective will of a majority of states to ban nuclear weapons comprehensively, represents a transformative change in the global nuclear disarmament landscape. As societies and international relations continue to evolve, constructivism highlights the importance of adapting policies and approaches to reflect new norms and shared values, ensuring that disarmament efforts remain relevant and effective. By integrating change-oriented perspectives and constructivist principles, this re-evaluation of the traditional paradigm and its engagement with the TPNW paves the way for a more comprehensive and inclusive framework, fostering collaborations and dialogues among nations to uphold their commitments to nuclear disarmament.

In this context, the thesis will attempt to answer the following research question:

How have normative shifts driven by constructivist ideas influenced the progress of the goal of nuclear disarmament?

To support and better analyse the research question, the thesis will attempt to answer the following sub-questions:

What are the limitations of structural realism in explaining and advancing nuclear disarmament progress?

How has the new humanitarian approach influenced the normative discourse surrounding nuclear disarmament?

How does constructivism's understanding of change contribute to accelerating nuclear disarmament progress?

To what extent has the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) challenged the structural realist foundations of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)?

Accordingly, the hypothesis of the research is as follows:

The incorporation of constructivist ideas, exemplified by the new humanitarian approach and the TPNW, has significantly accelerated nuclear disarmament progress by challenging the prevailing structural realist paradigm. By emphasizing normative shifts, collective identities, and humanitarian concerns, constructivism provides a more comprehensive framework for understanding change, fostering state engagement, and facilitating multilateral efforts towards achieving a safer and more peaceful world without nuclear weapons. This departure from the limitations of structural realism is reflected in the success of the humanitarian approach and the TPNW in shaping state behaviour, motivating policy changes, and revitalizing the global discourse on nuclear disarmament.

The thesis is structured as follows:

The introductory chapter provides essential background information on the significance of nuclear disarmament, establishing the rationale for investigating the research question. This includes an introduction to the NPT and the TPNW. Subsequently, the chapter elucidates the relevance of this background information to the thesis, while also reviewing prior research on the topic to establish its foundation. Finally, the chapter presents the hypothesis and lays the groundwork for the research by providing relevant information and context.

In the first chapter, the limitations of structural realism in the context of nuclear disarmament will be established through a critical examination of the NPT. The chapter begins with an overview of structural realism as a theoretical framework and explores how the NPT was influenced by structural realist thinking. It will then analyse the NPT's limitations in advancing nuclear disarmament progress, utilizing structural realism as a lens to comprehend the diverse challenges and opportunities related to disarmament. Finally, the status of the nuclear disarmament pillar of the NPT in light of the NPT Review Conferences (Rev-Cons) will be examined to exemplify the challenges posed by the treaty in the context of nuclear disarmament efforts.

In the second chapter, the theory of constructivism and its significance in the context of nuclear disarmament will be explored. Following an explanation of constructivism's core concepts, it will conduct a comparative analysis with structural realism. This analysis aims to highlight the distinctive features of constructivism and how it diverges from structural realism in understanding nuclear disarmament. Additionally, it will investigate how constructivism provides novel perspectives and insights for nuclear disarmament efforts.

In the third chapter, the constructivist pathway to nuclear disarmament will be explored through the humanitarian approach and the TPNW. Firstly, an analysis will be conducted on the constructivist foundations and departure from state-centric approaches, followed by an exploration of the emergence of the new humanitarian approach with the humanitarian pledge. Subsequently, after the examination of the TPNW and its Articles,

a comparative analysis of the TPNW and the NPT will be made. Additionally, the chapter will address the discussion of TPNW contradicting and undermining the NPT. After the comparative analysis of the theoretical foundations of the NPT and TPNW, the chapter will conclude with an example that illustrates how the TPNW mobilized Japan's civil society towards more explanatory and detailed nuclear disarmament movements, driven by the principles of constructivism. This chapter will provide a comprehensive understanding of how constructivism has influenced and facilitated nuclear disarmament progress through these distinct pathways.

Finally, the research will culminate with an evaluation of the effectiveness of constructivist-driven approaches and the synthesis of the findings. In this section, the findings will be thoroughly analysed and discussed, providing a comprehensive understanding of the impact of constructivism on nuclear disarmament progress.

The thesis utilizes descriptive data from primary sources including international treaties, reports, speeches, and interviews, as well as secondary sources such as peer-reviewed articles, books, and online sources.

Having established the background and significance of nuclear disarmament, the focus now shifts towards exploring the role of structural realism in shaping global nuclear policies and treaties. The upcoming chapter will provide an overview of structural realism and analyse the NPT as a product of structural realist thinking. Through this analysis of the NPT, the limitations of the treaty in achieving nuclear disarmament progress will be discussed, shedding light on the challenges that arise from a state-centric approach to disarmament.

CHAPTER 1

STRUCTURAL REALISM AND ITS LIMITATIONS IN NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT: A CRITIQUE OF THE NPT

1.1. OVERVIEW OF STRUCTURAL REALISM

Structural realism, as proposed by Waltz (1979), aims to focus solely on the abilities and capacities of states while disregarding other characteristics. The goal is to emphasize the influence of anarchy and the distribution of capabilities. According to Waltz, the global framework arises from the way states engage with each other, which both limits their potential actions and encourages specific behaviours. This approach implies that even though states may differ considerably in their attributes and interactions, there remains a remarkable consistency in international affairs over many centuries.

By honing in on this aspect, the theory seeks to underscore the significance of anarchy's impact and the distribution of capabilities among states. However, it is essential to note that structural realism, as a framework, does not inherently encompass an explanation for change within the international system. While it excels in analysing the enduring patterns and constraints imposed by the distribution of power and anarchy, it tends to underemphasize the factors that drive transformation and shifts in global dynamics. The theory's primary focus on capabilities and its propensity to overlook socio-cultural, technological, and ideological developments may limit its ability to account for the evolving landscape of international politics. As a result, structural realism may offer a robust understanding of enduring trends, but its explanatory scope regarding change is notably constrained.

The theory concentrates on the profound influence exerted by the international system on states' conduct. While alternative theories delve into factors like human nature, institutions, and norms, structural realism, in contrast, places a primary emphasis on the distribution of power among states. This viewpoint posits that states, driven by rationality, strategically pursue the maximization of their security and survival within a global arena

characterized by an absence of central authority. This anarchic environment compels states to rely on their capabilities and power to secure their existence, thus engendering a self-help dynamic where each state acts in its self-interest. Stronger states are more likely to engage in aggressive behaviour to expand their power, while weaker states are more likely to seek alliances and balance against more powerful states. This can be seen in the historical behaviour of states where powerful states like the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War sought to expand their spheres of influence while weaker states sought to maintain the balance of power by forming alliances.

While international institutions can serve as platforms for states to engage in communication and cooperation, their ability to reshape the fundamental nature of the anarchic international system remains limited. Additionally, within this framework, the significance of norms and moral considerations is downplayed. Conversely, structural realism places greater emphasis on the role of power and the distribution of power in shaping how states behave within the international arena.

The main idea of structural realism is that in a world without a central authority, states are more likely to seek a 'balance' among themselves rather than blindly joining a stronger side ('band wagoning'). In hierarchical political systems, actors often align with a dominant player because losing doesn't directly endanger their security. These 'bandwagoners' try to benefit from associating with the stronger party to increase their gains or minimize their losses. However, in a state of anarchy, following the bandwagon strategy can be risky since it can empower someone who might later become a threat. In this context, the power of other states, especially major powers, poses a constant danger when there's no higher authority to offer protection. Therefore, 'balancers' in anarchy try to lower their risks by opposing the stronger party to maintain stability and security (as cited in Burchill et. Al, 2005, p. 35).

The agent-structure debate holds a principal place in the realm of structural realism. According to this viewpoint, the aspiration for power is not rooted in human nature, but rather finds its origins in the underlying structure of the international system (Mearsheimer, 2017, p.72). In the current global landscape, there exists a notable absence of a higher governing authority to oversee the actions of major powers. This underscores

the importance of each state actively seeking and maintaining enough power to ensure its defence in the face of potential attacks. This structural arrangement, rather than the specific traits of individual states or their collective interactions, is recognized as the primary driving factor influencing how states behave on the international stage.

The pursuit of nuclear weapons by states can be understood through the lens of structural realism. In an anarchic international system, possessing nuclear weapons is seen as a means of ensuring national security and survival. States seek diverse ways to ensure their security and survival against other states, and nuclear weapons are one of these ways. This is because the possession of nuclear weapons provides a significant deterrent against potential aggressors, as the risk of massive destruction makes war likely unfeasible. Therefore, nuclear weapons are viewed as a tool for maintaining the balance of power, rather than an aggressive or offensive weapon.

1.2. NUCLEAR WEAPONS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF STRUCTURAL REALISM

The use of nuclear weapons is a subject of controversy within the context of structural realism. While they are regarded as an indicator of power, they are also weapons of mass destruction that pose a threat to the lives of countless people and other states. Within the context of the NPT, Article VI encapsulates the intricate relationship between disarmament and arms control. This article calls upon each of the Parties to the Treaty to engage in negotiations aimed at achieving nuclear disarmament (United Nations Office For Disarmament Affairs, 1970). It recognizes that disarmament efforts are not entirely distinct from arms control measures.

The NPT recognizes that arms control and disarmament are intertwined aspects of achieving global nuclear security. Arms control measures, including verification mechanisms and limits on nuclear testing, play a crucial role in preventing the further spread of nuclear weapons and reducing the likelihood of their use. In this context, arms control treaties can be seen as supporting disarmament efforts up to a certain point, acknowledging that complete disarmament remains the long-term objective. This nuanced approach categorizes countries into Nuclear-Weapon States (NWS) and Non-

Nuclear-Weapon States (NNWS), with the understanding that both categories share the responsibility of working towards a world without nuclear weapons, with arms control serving as a steppingstone on this path.

Importantly, Article VI recognizes that the fulfilment of the nuclear disarmament goal may take time, acknowledging the complex geopolitical and security considerations involved. This emphasis on gradual progress aligns with the understanding that nuclear disarmament is a long-term endeavour. In this context, arms control treaties, with their provisions for transparency, verification, and limitations on the development of new nuclear weapons, become crucial components of the nuclear disarmament process. They not only help prevent the further spread of nuclear weapons but also contribute to building trust among nations, creating a stable foundation upon which disarmament efforts can proceed. The importance of arms control treaties is underscored by the statement in the article that calls for the State Parties to "pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race." (United Nations Office For Disarmament Affairs, 1970). This emphasizes that arms control treaties play a pivotal role in limiting the nuclear arms race. However, it is essential to recognize that while arms control and disarmament are intertwined aspects within the article, they cover each other only to a certain point. The ultimate objective remains complete nuclear disarmament, but arms control measures serve as initial steps toward achieving that goal, addressing the immediate security concerns and complexities inherent in the process.

The NPT requires all nuclear states to negotiate disarmament but ensuring that states comply with these commitments is challenging due to verification and compliance issues. The absence of mutual verification and opposition to including disarmament verification regimes highlights the reluctance to pursue nuclear disarmament. This resistance is largely due to a lack of mutual trust and credible partnerships, as well as the significant status and prestige nuclear weapons hold in the international security environment. This lack of trust and cooperation leads countries to view acquiring nuclear weapons as a highly desirable option, as it is seen as an indicator of status and prestige. Barry O'Neill (2002) explores the association of prestige with nuclear weapons, attributing it to specific characteristics of these weapons. These include the distinct demarcation between nuclear and conventional arms, the global attention drawn to a newly emerged nuclear-armed

state due to the abruptness of nuclear tests and the consequential widespread concern they provoke, as well as the symbolic significance of nuclear weapons in signifying influence. As a result, it is less appealing to implement verification mechanisms in the context of nuclear disarmament, and without effective verification mechanisms, states may be tempted to keep developing and maintaining nuclear weapons, thereby disrupting disarmament efforts.

Additionally, there is uncertainty surrounding the number of nuclear weapons that would be considered sufficient to indicate a state's power. A clear division exists among structural realists, and this division becomes evident when we tackle another question important to realist thinkers: how much power should a state aim for? Defensive realists, like Kenneth Waltz (1979), caution against states striving to maximize their share of global power. They argue that seeking excessive power can lead to negative consequences within the international system, particularly discouraging the pursuit of hegemony. On the other side, offensive realists, exemplified by John Mearsheimer (2001), hold a different view. They believe it makes strategic sense for states to gather as much power as possible and, when circumstances allow, even aspire to achieve hegemony. Their argument isn't about advocating conquest or domination, but rather about emphasizing that possessing overwhelming power is the most effective path to ensuring a state's survival. While classical realists view power as an end goal on its own, structural realists see the power to a greater end—namely, the survival of the state (Mearsheimer, 2006).

Although the structure of the international system requires states to be more powerful, it remains a subject of debate whether this will lead to the states paying less attention to disarmament measures. The fact that states are ultimately responsible for their security in an anarchic system implies that states may pursue nuclear weapons or other means of power projection to maintain their security. On the other hand, the need to maintain a balance of power in the system may encourage disarmament measures to prevent the rise of a dominant power. This debate continues to be relevant in the current international system, as states continue to pursue nuclear weapons as a means of ensuring their security.

The idea of states seeking nuclear weapons to enhance their security is intimately connected to the principles of structural realism theory. Certain defensive realists contend

that a balance exists between offensive and defensive capabilities, which tends to advantage defence and consequently reduces the drive for security-driven competition. This equilibrium, they argue, acts as a stabilizing factor for maintaining peace. However, some defensive realists acknowledge that the balance between offence and defence can fluctuate significantly, and they propose that a tilt towards offensive advantage often leads to conflicts, whereas a scenario favouring defensive dominance promotes peace. For instance, the Second World War materialized due to the pivotal role played by tanks and dive bombers within a blitzkrieg strategy, which significantly tipped the scales in favour of offence. Conversely, the Cold War between the USA and the Soviet Union remained nonviolent due to the emergence of nuclear weapons, which significantly shifted the balance towards defence (Mearsheimer, 2017, p. 82). Mearsheimer (2017) gives the Second World War as an example of this. He argues that the Second World War materialized due to the pivotal role played by tanks and dive bombers within a blitzkrieg strategy, which significantly tipped the scales in favour of offence. Conversely, the Cold War between the USA and the Soviet Union remained nonviolent due to the emergence of nuclear weapons, which significantly shifted the balance towards defence (p.82).

In summary, structural realism has played a significant role in the field of international relations by providing a framework to comprehend how states behave in a world without a centralized authority. Focusing on the structural aspects of the international system, it offers a powerful tool to predict and explain state behaviour, especially in situations where cooperation and peaceful conflict resolution are challenging. However, structural realism's emphasis on power dynamics and security considerations often aligns with the pursuit of nuclear weapons for offence-defence balance, presenting a challenge to nuclear disarmament efforts. The allure of nuclear prestige, coupled with the intricate power calculus, may undermine the commitment to comprehensive disarmament. This tension highlights the need for a new and more comprehensive approach that addresses both security imperatives and the global push for a nuclear-free world. Balancing these complex factors is essential to overcoming the obstacles posed by structural realism and advancing meaningful nuclear disarmament. Having explained the nuclear weapons within the context of structural realism, it is now essential to evaluate how structural

realism applies to the Non-proliferation Treaty, examining its benefits and drawbacks in comprehending the limitations and possibilities associated with nuclear disarmament.

1.3. NPT AS A PRODUCT OF STRUCTURAL REALIST THINKING

The NPT stands as a manifestation of structural realist thinking, providing a comprehensive and cohesive framework for the analysis of international relations, particularly within the realm of nuclear non-proliferation. Its historical roots trace back to the Cold War era, a period marked by a power struggle between dominant superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. During this period, the dominant superpowers engaged in a competition to expand their nuclear arsenals, driven by the imperative to maintain an equilibrium of power. During this time, there was widespread fear of an impending nuclear war and the catastrophic consequences it could bring to humanity. Simultaneously, concerns about the proliferation of nuclear weapons in other countries heightened the risk of nuclear conflicts. These concerns were made worse by numerous factors, such as certain nations wanting nuclear weapons for strategic or ideological reasons, and the increasing availability of nuclear technology and materials.

Against this backdrop, the Non-Proliferation Treaty emerged as a unique intersection where the USSR and the United States managed to find a degree of common ground, based on the security-oriented framework that reflects the tenets of structural realism. This alignment was predicated upon the shared recognition of security imperatives, manifested in a collective reluctance towards the expansion of their respective allies' influence. The USSR harboured concerns about the United States' strategic involvement in regions encompassing Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, and Germany, apprehensive of the potential avenues for nuclear proliferation. Correspondingly, the United States remained circumspect of its adversary's expansion over territories such as North Korea and Cuba, serving as allies to the Soviet bloc. Noteworthy is the agreement forged between the two superpowers regarding the desirability of curbing horizontal proliferation, despite their mutual disinclination to relinquish vertical proliferation. It is essential to highlight that the Non-Proliferation Treaty does not explicitly impose restrictions on the expansion of nuclear arsenals; rather, its emphasis lies in the sharing of technology and material

exchange, a strategic paradigm that notably favours the interests of the five nuclear-capable states (Ryan, 2021, p. 8).

By delineating rights and responsibilities among states, the NPT establishes a balance of rights and obligations for States, differentiating between nuclear-weapon States (NWSs) and non-nuclear-weapon States (NNWSs). States that manufactured and exploded a nuclear weapon or other nuclear explosive device before January 1st, 1967, are considered Nuclear Weapon States (NWSs). This category encompasses states such as the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom (International Atomic Energy Agency Safeguards, 2015, Table 7). At present, the NPT boasts a membership of 93 Signatory States, while the number of States Parties stands at 191 (United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, 1970). These statistics underscore the success of non-proliferation efforts, revealing that most countries aligning with the NPT have chosen to abstain from nuclear weapons development.

However, this success underscores that the NPT places a stronger emphasis on non-proliferation rather than nuclear disarmament, consequently relegating the goal of nuclear disarmament to a secondary position. As highlighted earlier, structural realism aligns with the possession of nuclear weapons due to its consideration of the offence-defence balance. The emphasis on power distribution and state behaviour within structural realism holds significant relevance in assessing the NPT's impact on nuclear non-proliferation. In the context of nuclear disarmament, the possession of nuclear weapons bestows states with substantial power and influence, inherently shaping their approach to disarmament based on perceived security imperatives. States possessing nuclear weapons are thus disinclined to relinquish them, viewing these capabilities as essential components of their deterrent strategies. Conversely, states relying on alternative security paradigms may exhibit a greater inclination toward participating in collaborative disarmament endeavours.

In acknowledging the importance of military capabilities and deterrence in international relations, the NPT aligns with structural realism's recognition of nuclear weapons as pivotal to state security. Operating within an anarchic international system, states are cautious about disarmament, fearing vulnerability to potential adversaries. The treaty

endeavours to balance disarmament aspirations with security considerations, encapsulating the complexities intrinsic to structural realist thinking.

In conclusion, the NPT stands as a product of the structural realist thinking during the Cold War era, reflecting a shared security-oriented approach between dominant superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union. While its primary focus lies on non-proliferation, the NPT's historical foundation and alignment with structural realism underscore the intricate balance between power, security imperatives, and disarmament. The NPT's legacy serves as a testament to the complexities of international relations, encapsulating the ongoing struggle to harmonize the goals of preventing nuclear proliferation and pursuing global security within the framework of structural realist thought.

However, the NPT's alignment with structural realism introduces inherent complexities that hinder the effective achievement of nuclear disarmament goals. Consequently, the treaty falls short of offering a clear and comprehensive description of the aim of nuclear disarmament and the necessary steps to progress towards its realization.

1.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE NPT IN ACHIEVING NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT PROGRESS

Article VI of the NPT addresses the nuclear disarmament pillar. This clause stipulates that each of the Parties to the Treaty commits to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control (United Nations, 1970). The Article underscores the requisite endeavours for the goal of general and complete nuclear disarmament. Additionally, it highlights the shared obligations of all State Parties to the treaty in pursuing the endeavours outlined. The Article mandates earnest negotiations on measures effective in halting the nuclear arms race, negotiates in good faith for impactful mechanisms towards nuclear disarmament, and prolongs these negotiations with integrity towards the creation of a universally binding treaty for comprehensive disarmament, subject to effective international oversight. Unlike the detailed explanations in other parts

of the treaty, Article VI is relatively short. However, it has been subject to many criticisms that resulted in different discourses over time, with ongoing endeavours aimed at fulfilling its articulated goals persisting to the present day. It's important to closely examine the key parts of this Article, given its comparatively less successful nature among the treaty's other pillars.

Upon closer analysis, the integral components necessary for attaining the nuclear disarmament set forth by the treaty emerge with clarity. The Article mandates state parties to engage in negotiations that encompass three pivotal facets: the cessation of the nuclear arms race, nuclear disarmament, and the establishment of a comprehensive and all-encompassing disarmament treaty. Notably, however, the Article doesn't mention a specific deadline within which these negotiations are to be concluded. Each of these separate goals, when pursued individually, contributes together towards the overarching goal of achieving complete nuclear disarmament.

The arms control aspect of the treaty mentioned in Article VI, which calls for 'pursuing negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date,' is significant. However, it doesn't encompass the entire nuclear disarmament process. Nevertheless, as an initial step towards achieving complete nuclear disarmament, it's equally important to assess arms control treaties aligned with disarmament objectives. Regarding the cessation of the nuclear arms race, a series of initiatives have been undertaken, most notably the pursuit of arms control between the United States and the Former Soviet Union. This endeavour, although long sought, encountered obstacles stemming from both external and internal factors that hindered substantive discussions on the subject. Ultimately, on January 20, 1969, the Soviet Union signalled its willingness to engage in discussions about strategic arms limitations. Subsequently, on November 17, 1969, the United States and the Soviet Union initiated the historic Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT I), aimed at curbing both anti-ballistic missile defence systems and strategic nuclear offensive systems (Nuclear Threat Initiative, 2011). A significant milestone was reached in May 1971 when a preliminary agreement outlining the parameters of a limited Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM Treaty) was reached. The negotiations culminated with the signing of two fundamental SALT I agreements: the Interim Agreement, delineating specific measures to limit

strategic offensive arms, and the ABM Treaty, which imposed restrictions on strategic defensive systems. The ABM Treaty capped strategic missile defences at 200 interceptors for each side while permitting the construction of two missile defence sites—one safeguarding the national capital, and the other designated for a single ICBM field. In 1972, the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM Treaty) came into force, marking a significant stride forward.

After this, negotiations for the second phase of SALT commenced in late 1972. Recognizing that SALT I did not preclude either side from augmenting their forces through the deployment of Multiple Independently Targeted Re-Entry Vehicles (MIRVs) on their Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) and Submarine-Launched Ballistic Missiles (SLBMs), SALT II directed its focus toward constraining, and ultimately reducing, the number of MIRVs—an endeavour that encapsulates the complexity of arms control negotiations (United States Office of the Historian, 2018, para. 4).

Continuing these endeavours, the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, effective from June 1, 1988, emerged as a pivotal stride. This treaty mandated the complete elimination and enduring renunciation of all nuclear and conventional ground-launched ballistic and cruise missiles within the range of 500 to 5,500 kilometres by both the United States and the Soviet Union. The treaty's profound significance resides not only in its capacity to effectuate a reduction in nuclear arsenals but also in its groundbreaking inclusion of an entire category of nuclear weaponry, accompanied by the innovative integration of extensive on-site inspections for robust verification—a precedent-setting achievement. However, it is noteworthy that the United States subsequently opted to formally withdraw from this treaty at a later juncture (Kimball, 2019).

After these initiatives, a strategic nuclear weapons reduction pact, the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I), was established. Commencing an era of profound nuclear reductions, START I facilitated substantial decreases in the inventories of strategic nuclear armaments for both the United States and the Soviet/Russian bloc. This pivotal treaty played an instrumental role in cultivating predictability and stability within the strategic equilibrium, and its framework laid the groundwork for the pursuit of even more

substantial arms reductions. During the 1990s, a series of concerted efforts by the United States and Russia sought to replace START I with a novel treaty that would engender deeper and more comprehensive reductions in nuclear arsenals. Despite these aspirations, the proposed 1993 START II treaty, while bearing the potential for transformative change, regrettably failed to come into force. Russia's perception of substantial deficiencies inherent in the treaty was the primary impetus behind its non-ratification (Nuclear Threat Initiative, 2011).

In a decisive stride, President George W. Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin signed the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT). This landmark agreement stipulated that each nation would be constrained to deploy no more than 1,700-2,200 strategic warheads, effectively mirroring the proposed limits of 2,200-2,500 warheads posited for START III. However, it is noteworthy that SORT fell short of addressing pivotal aspects such as strategic nuclear warhead dismantlement and the imposition of constraints on tactical nuclear weapons—innovative arms control dimensions that had been recommended for inclusion within the framework of START III.

Regrettably, despite ongoing deliberations, the aspirations for a successful START III negotiation were ultimately unrealized, rendering the treaty unsigned. This shortfall accentuated the imperative for a comprehensive replacement for START I, as the proposed START II had failed to be ratified and the trajectory of START III negotiations remained unfruitful (Kimball 2022).

Emerging as a beacon of progress, the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START) was signed on April 8, 2010, in Prague, jointly embraced by the United States and Russia. This pivotal treaty officially came into force on February 5, 2011, stepping into the breach left by the expired 1991 START I treaty and superseding the 2002 Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT), whose mandate was overshadowed by New START's implementation. A testament to continued collaboration, the United States and Russia reaffirmed their commitment on February 3, 2021, electing to extend the duration of New START by five years—a prerogative expressly sanctioned by the treaty itself—thus fortifying its tenure until February 5, 2026 (Bugos, 2022). Collectively, these multifaceted initiatives encompass the pivotal components underpinning the overarching

goal articulated in Article VI: curbing the arms race's momentum. As each of these endeavours unfolds, they invariably contribute to the broader objective of achieving general and complete nuclear disarmament.

A series of negotiations aligned with the objective of nuclear disarmament, as mandated by Article VI, underscores a commitment to this pivotal endeavour. Among the paramount initiatives directed towards achieving comprehensive nuclear disarmament, the establishment of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZ) assumes a position of significance. However, the NPT has not effectively addressed regional imbalances and security concerns. The NPT's global structure, recognizing the five nuclear-armed states, perpetuates an inequitable power distribution. This perceived injustice has led to calls for a region-specific approach to address the unique security challenges.

These designated areas constitute regions where participating nations pledge to abstain from activities such as nuclear weapons manufacturing, acquisition, testing, and possession. Currently, five distinct NWFZs have been established, with four encompassing the entirety of the Southern Hemisphere. These zones encompass distinct regions, including Latin America (marked by the 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco), the South Pacific (enshrined in the 1985 Treaty of Rarotonga), Southeast Asia (institutionalized through the 1995 Treaty of Bangkok), Africa (ensured by the 1996 Treaty of Pelindaba), and Central Asia (defined under the 2006 Treaty of Semipalatinsk) (Davenport, 2022, para. 1). Notably, Mongolia has unilaterally declared itself a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, further reinforcing this paradigm.

Supplementing these regional commitments, various international treaties reinforce the prohibition of nuclear weapons in specific domains. For instance, the Antarctic Treaty designates Antarctica exclusively for peaceful pursuits, and international agreements extend the ban on nuclear weapons to the seabed, outer space, and the moon (Congressional Research Service, 2023, p. 27). These efforts at both regional and global levels are in line with what Article VI emphasizes, representing the ongoing negotiations for nuclear disarmament.

However, the Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone (MEWMDFZ) presents a unique case among NWFZs due to its intricate connection with structural realism. The Middle East is characterized by significant power imbalances and historical tensions among its states. These factors amplify the security dilemma, where nations perceive the acquisition of nuclear capabilities as vital for their safety. Israel's undeclared nuclear status and the nuclear program of Iran further complicate regional dynamics, fuelling concerns among its neighbours. Such disparities in power and unresolved conflicts align closely with the structural realist perspective, as they generate insecurity and incentivize states to consider nuclear deterrence.

The inability to reach a consensus on the MEWMDFZ during NPT Review Conferences exemplifies the structural realist underpinnings of the NPT and its limitations in promoting nuclear disarmament. These conferences, where State Parties assess the NPT's progress, have exposed the deep-rooted divisions among Middle Eastern states. The failure to agree on the MEWMDFZ further emphasizes the role of power politics in international diplomacy, highlighting the difficulty of achieving disarmament goals within the structural realist framework. Ultimately, the failure to reach a consensus on the MEWMDFZ within the NPT underscores the structural realist backdrop of the treaty and the need for more effective mechanisms to advance the disarmament agenda, particularly in regions with deeply entrenched security concerns.

The nuclear disarmament pillar of the NPT emerges as the most controversial facet within the treaty, giving rise to discussions centring around Article VI and its stipulations. The heart of these debates lies in divergent interpretations of the Article, a divergence that underscores its controversial nature. At a crucial moment, the International Court of Justice, the highest court in the United Nations system, issued a unanimous advisory opinion in 1996, affirming that Article VI of the NPT requires nuclear-weapon States parties to the treaty “to bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament.” (Gillis, 2017, p. 32) In this context, Ford (2007) presents a counterargument by challenging the perceived import of the July 1996 ICJ advisory opinion on the "Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons," contending that Article VI's alleged categorical requirement for each nuclear weapons-possessing state party to disarm is, in fact, a myth. Instead, Ford posits the court's stance as asserting an

obligation that extends beyond conduct alone – encapsulating the imperative to not merely engage in "negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race, upon nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control." Rather, the court intimated that Article VI imposes an obligation to attain a precise result – nuclear disarmament in all its aspects – through the pursuit of negotiations on the matter in good faith (ICJ, 1996, as cited in Ford, 2007, pp. 402-403).

A contentious issue has revolved around whether negotiations within Article VI should culminate in a definitive conclusion. Given the Article's absence of explicit emphasis on concluding, diverse interpretations have emerged from varying perspectives. Another aspect under scrutiny pertains to whether Article VI mandates a specific sequence for the successive steps leading to the complete eradication of nuclear weapons. This contention is exemplified by Egeland et al.'s (2018) reference to the Netherlands' proposal during the Open-ended working group on nuclear disarmament in August 2016. The Netherlands advocated for a comprehensive nuclear disarmament treaty, asserting that such an initiative should unfold "in the context of the chronological disarmament steps as they are foreseen in Article VI of the NPT." These steps encompass cessation of the nuclear arms race, nuclear disarmament, and a treaty on comprehensive disarmament under international control. However, as the Article does not definitively prescribe the order of fulfilment, differing interpretations have emerged in this regard as well (OEWG, as cited in Egeland et al., 2018, p.11).

Moreover, the discourse has extended to the timing of establishing a legally binding norm to prohibit nuclear weapons. Hajnoczi (2020) contributes to this discourse by underscoring the widely accepted notion that the full realization of Article VI necessitates a legally binding prohibition of nuclear weapons. Without such a norm, the attainment and sustainability of a nuclear-free world remain elusive. Nonetheless, a complex issue arises from the perspective of nuclear-weapon states, which posit that a legally binding norm should only materialize once the nuclear disarmament process has advanced considerably, approaching the threshold of complete nuclear elimination (pp. 89-90). This precondition, based on the proximity to total disarmament, adds a layer of complexity in terms of applicability. Although the nuclear disarmament process continues irrespective,

its pace could potentially hasten when spearheaded by nuclear-weapon states as precursors to such a binding norm. Consequently, the ongoing debate delves into whether the priority should be on establishing the prohibition norm or the actual destruction of nuclear weapons. In essence, one of the most pronounced shortcomings of Article VI lies in its inherent ambiguities, lack of emphasis, and absence of a prescribed timeframe.

Considering the array of initiatives and critiques, it becomes apparent that the nuclear disarmament pillar within the NPT stands as the most controversial aspect of the treaty. While some endeavours aimed at fulfilling the diverse requisites of Article VI have yielded success, others persist as subjects of ongoing deliberation. Central to the criticisms surrounding Article VI is the conspicuous absence of a definitive timeline and the resultant uncertainties. These ambiguities have engendered diverse interpretations, prolonging the journey towards the fruition of the nuclear disarmament pillar.

Considering the comprehensive landscape, it is evident that additional international agreements, bilateral commitments, and multilateral inspections collectively contribute to advancing the realization of this pillar. However, achieving a consensus on these mechanisms proves notably more intricate than analogous efforts targeting the treaty's other facets. Further compounding this challenge is the relatively diminished support the disarmament pillar garners from nuclear-weapon states compared to its counterparts. Consequently, the imperatives outlined within Article VI remain subjects of perpetual interpretation and discourse, indispensable for the attainment of comprehensive nuclear disarmament.

Moreover, while the treaty officially recognizes only five states as possessing nuclear weapons—namely, India, Pakistan, Israel, and North Korea—rumours persist that Iran also possesses such arms, although these countries have not signed the NPT. This exclusion allows these non-signatory states to pursue and enhance their nuclear weapons capabilities without being bound by the treaty's regulations. This inherent gap in the treaty significantly weakens its efficacy and undermines its core objective.

At its core, the NPT relies on international cooperation among states, necessitating adherence to inspections and compliance with the requirements set forth by the

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). However, the issue of non-compliance presents challenges. The determination of non-compliance lacks clarity in terms of definition and enforcement mechanisms. The responsibility for verifying non-compliance lies with the IAEA's safeguard systems, which serve as the sole mechanism for assessing non-compliance under the NPT. When a state breaches the treaty, it violates Article III concerning safeguards on nuclear material and potentially Article II prohibiting the acquisition of nuclear weapons. Yet, the absence of a well-defined framework for gauging non-compliance complicates the identification of direct violations. While the IAEA has identified instances of treaty violations, the lack of a universally agreed-upon definition hampers the clarity, integrity, and validity of the IAEA's safeguard systems.

The NPT has seen instances of state withdrawal, notably North Korea's departure. Libya and Iraq, other withdrawing states, were alleged violators of the treaty, highlighting the challenge of non-compliance within the NPT framework. These withdrawals underscore the potential misuse of NPT membership as a cover for advancing nuclear capabilities. This practice directly contradicts the treaty's terms and stipulations. The United States emphasized the need for more than verification, advocating for new methods to ensure compliance, as the most rigorous verification system is rendered futile if confirmed violations are not addressed.

Moreover, the NPT exhibits shortcomings in terms of its provisions. While it prevents non-nuclear weapon states from acquiring nuclear weapons, it does not explicitly forbid them from retaining existing nuclear weapons. Additionally, the treaty lacks stipulations regarding non-nuclear states' involvement in assisting other non-weapon states in nuclear weapon production. The IAEA does not require verification of non-weapon states' commitment to refraining from nuclear weapon assistance. These gaps create complexities when non-nuclear NPT member states interact with each other, potentially aiding in the manufacturing and acquisition of nuclear weapons. Furthermore, the absence of sanctions for treaty violation or withdrawal hampers enforcement, as evidenced by North Korea's withdrawal.

North Korea's withdrawal from the NPT exemplifies the influence of structural realist ideology. The country saw greater benefits in deviating from international law and

pursuing its strategic objectives, reflecting the realist notion that states prioritize their interests. While North Korea invoked Article X of the NPT, allowing states to judge whether extraordinary events jeopardize their supreme interests, they improperly cited it as their rationale and failed to adhere to the three-month withdrawal requirement. Even if their withdrawal was legitimate under Article X, the United Nations Security Council could still deem North Korea's actions threatening and impose sanctions. However, this process is constrained by the Security Council's composition and potential for veto by the five permanent members, reflecting structural realist dynamics (Ryan, 2021, pp. 9-11).

In conclusion, the NPT's Article VI, which aims for comprehensive nuclear disarmament, faces substantial challenges within the framework of structural realism. The absence of a specific timeline for negotiations, divergent interpretations of the Article, and the prioritization of national security interests over disarmament objectives exemplify these limitations. Additionally, it encounters challenges marked by exclusions, ambiguities, and issues of non-compliance. Structural realism underscores the intricate interplay of power dynamics and self-interest among states, hindering swift progress towards nuclear disarmament. As states navigate their security concerns and strategic priorities, the road to achieving the ambitious goals set by Article VI remains complex and requires a nuanced understanding of these structural constraints for meaningful advancement.

Having explored the inherent limitations of the NPT within the framework of structural realism, it becomes crucial to delve into the current status of the nuclear disarmament pillar of the NPT in light of the NPT Review Conferences (Rev-Cons), which exemplify the challenges posed by the treaty in the context of nuclear disarmament efforts.

1.5. THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT PILLAR OF THE NPT

Egeland et al. (2018) contend that while the nuclear-weapon states and their allies have utilized the review conferences to underscore the significance of the NPT's non-proliferation provisions, non-nuclear-weapon states have advocated for more robust commitments to disarmament, expanded access to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, and the establishment of time-bound obligations for disarmament. This

divergence in prioritization among the NPT's three pillars is unsurprising, considering the division of treaty membership into nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states (pp. 5-13). This underscores an inherent imbalance within the NPT, as these arguments highlight the substantial disparity between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon states, which significantly undermines the progress of nuclear disarmament.

The NPT review conference of 2022 and the NPT PrepCom of 2023 serve as compelling illustrations of the NPT's shortcomings in advancing nuclear disarmament. The 10th NPT review cycle, which began in 2015, was marked by challenges, which were exacerbated by Russia's military intervention in Ukraine in February 2022. Nuclear-weapon states demonstrated a lack of progress in executing the disarmament measures previously endorsed by past review conferences, indicating a persistent or heightened reliance on nuclear weaponry for their security. The crisis surrounding U.S.-Russian arms control evolved into a state of near-complete breakdown, simultaneous with the ongoing modernization of nuclear arsenals across all five nuclear-weapon states (Mukhatzhanova, 2022).

Gaukhar Mukhatzhanova (2022) argues that anticipating a successful outcome for the review conference in terms of evaluating treaty implementation and formulating additional disarmament measures seemed unlikely. Yet, on the conference's final day, a consensus seemed imminent for adopting a concluding document, even though its perceived impact fell short for many delegates. This intriguing scenario can be attributed to several factors: the unexpectedly professional ambience during the conference that elevated delegates' hopes, the relatively limited involvement of the Russian delegation, and, most notably, the dedication of the majority of states-parties to attaining an agreed-upon result.

Another influential factor stemmed from an early accord between Egypt and the United States, discreetly resolving a typically contentious matter regarding the establishment of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) a free zone in the Middle East. The drafted text underscored the significance of creating such a zone and acknowledged the progress made during the initial two sessions of the novel conference process dedicated to the Middle East zone, initiated by the UN General Assembly in 2018. Despite these positive

developments, the NPT review conference ultimately failed due to the challenge of bridging the divergent stances between Ukraine and the Western nations on one side, and Russia on the other, about the conflict in Ukraine and the occupation of its nuclear facilities. In the end, the review conference's failure was attributed to the inability of the States Parties to reach a consensus and adopt an outcome document.

The 2023 NPT PrepCom did not yield a more favourable outcome either. During the two-week meeting, state parties engaged in debates concerning critical global matters. However, the conclusion of the session was marred by disputes over the inclusion of specific documents in the meeting's procedural report. Iran, Russia, and Syria objected to incorporating the Chair's summary and recommendations for the second session of the PrepCom into the official documents. To facilitate the adoption of the procedural report and document the meeting's proceedings, the Chair opted to withdraw his summary. This decision was made due to a lack of consensus on adopting the summary as an official outcome. Although the Chair intended to submit the summary as a working paper under his authority, Iran, supported by Russia and Syria, opposed listing the summary even as a working paper. Iran's objections were rooted in concerns that the summary exhibited a negative bias against Iran, particularly concerning the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Iran also criticized what it perceived as a Western bias throughout the summary, asserting that the Chair favoured the views of Western Group delegations over those of other participating delegations (Acheson, 2023, p. 1).

The general debate has expanded disproportionately, negatively impacting the effectiveness of the NPT review procedure. Valuable time was wasted as delegations provided opening statements that merely reiterated well-established positions, which were already widely known. When specific positions or calls to action were expressed, the vast differences between them often led to a situation where they were essentially talking past each other. The willingness to bridge these gaps was notably lacking, although this is not a novel development. As expected, disarmament obligations under Article VI were largely to blame for the current paralysis. Despite the lack of consensus before the 2023 NPT PrepCom, a substantial majority of state parties acknowledged during the General Debate the imperative of critically reevaluating the Treaty's review

process to facilitate more effective implementation of its preamble and Articles (James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CNS), 2023).

The failures of the 2022 NPT review conference and the 2023 NPT PrepCom serve as examples of the deadlock of the nuclear disarmament progress. The 2022 NPT review conference exposed the persistent reliance on nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon states, undermining disarmament aspirations. Despite high hopes for consensus, discord over geopolitical conflicts, such as the situation in Ukraine, hindered the adoption of a conclusive outcome document. Likewise, the 2023 NPT PrepCom highlighted the expansion of the general debate without substantial progress, highlighting the large gaps between the positions of member states. As disarmament obligations under Article VI remain contentious, the inability to agree on a factual summary or release it as a working paper underscores the ongoing impediments to effective cooperation and the achievement of general and complete nuclear disarmament.

Amidst these formidable challenges, it becomes increasingly apparent that a transformative shift is necessary within the international community's approach. There exists an urgent need to reinvigorate commitment to the nuclear disarmament pillar of the NPT while simultaneously addressing the structural imbalances that have consistently impeded its advancement. Mukhatzhanova argues that the absence of an agreed outcome during a review conference may not trigger an immediate and drastic collapse of the regime. However, it is anticipated that this situation will give rise to increasing inquiries in the coming months and years regarding the purpose and significance of the process, as well as the extent to which state parties are inclined to engage and allocate resources to it. The likelihood of more states gravitating towards the TPNW, even if only as observers at states-parties meetings, remains high. Enhancing collaboration between TPNW-affiliated and non-affiliated states could potentially enhance discussions concerning nuclear hazards, the humanitarian aftermath of nuclear weapon utilization, and victim support, and also mount pressure on both the NPT and nuclear-weapon states to fulfil their established commitments (Mukhatzhanova, 2022).

In reflection, the challenges and impasses witnessed within the NPT review conferences and preparatory commissions have become vivid indicators of the cruciality of the

TPNW. These instances lay bare the deep-rooted complexities and differing priorities among nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon states within the NPT framework. The limitations of the review conferences and the PrepCom sessions underscore the necessity for alternative avenues that emphasize cooperation, nuclear disarmament, and the humanitarian imperative to eliminate nuclear weapons.

To break the cycle of stagnation, a departure from the prevailing paradigm of structural realism becomes imperative. As the NPT struggles to bridge divides and produce meaningful outcomes, the TPNW stands as a hope, offering a fresh perspective and a constructive platform for states to engage in meaningful dialogue and concrete action. The principles of constructivism offer an avenue for progress, underlining the importance of shared norms, identities, and cooperative frameworks in fostering international cooperation. A collective endeavour to bridge divisions, cultivate open dialogue, and cultivate consensus is paramount to forging a future where nuclear disarmament is pursued with unwavering commitment. It is through this transformative shift that the international community can lay the foundation for a world where the nuclear disarmament goal is achievable, and the pursuit of global security takes precedence over discord and competition.

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO CONSTRUCTIVISM AND ITS RELEVANCE TO NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

2.1. THE CONCEPTS OF CONSTRUCTIVISM AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS WITH STRUCTURAL REALISM

In the realm of International Relations, the predominant paradigms of realism and liberalism have long shaped the discourse, relegating constructivism to the sidelines due to its emphasis on the social construction of reality over material factors (Barkin & Sjoberg, 2017). However, the tides of change were set in motion in the late 1980s with the fall of the Soviet Union and the conclusion of the Cold War, prompting a re-evaluation of established theories and a fresh perspective on global dynamics (Hopf, 1998). At the forefront of this paradigm shift stands Alexander Wendt's (1992) constructivist theory, which offers a profound alternative lens through which to decipher international relations and catalyse a new era of scholarly exploration.

At the core of Wendt's constructivist theory lies a fundamental departure from traditional paradigms. Central to his perspective is the belief that international relations are primarily shaped by shared ideas, a radical departure from the prevailing focus on material forces. Wendt contends that the structures governing human associations are born from these shared ideas, thereby challenging the foundational tenets of realism and liberalism. While the role of material factors is acknowledged, Wendt positions them as secondary to the pervasive influence of shared ideas in shaping identities and interests, thereby underscoring the transformative power of social construction within global interactions.

Wendt's constructivist paradigm introduces a dynamic and intricate interplay between identities and interests. He classifies identities into four distinct categories – personal or corporate, type, role, and collective – each representing a manifestation of shared ideas that evolve through interactions. In contrast to the deterministic perspective of structural realism, which grounds national interests in material factors, Wendt's constructivism

emphasizes the generative role of shared ideas in shaping interests. This reciprocal relationship leads to an understanding where identity and interest continuously influence and redefine each other, resulting in a flexible framework that adapts to the evolving dynamics of the global landscape (pp. 1-336).

Wendt's (1999) constructivist approach also reshapes the concept of anarchy within the international system. He views anarchy as an inherent and enduring aspect of the international system. In this perspective, anarchy is perceived as a material structure that governs state behaviour. Structural realism contends that anarchy compels states to engage in self-interested actions, leading to a perpetual state of conflict. This interpretation, known as "Hobbesian anarchy," underscores the inevitability of war and the temporary nature of peace within the international realm.

Contrasting structural realism, constructivism offers a nuanced understanding of anarchy as a socially constructed phenomenon. Wendt posits that states and the international system mutually shape one another through shared ideas and interactions. This implies that anarchy is not an immutable structure, but rather a malleable concept influenced by the evolving identity and interactions of states. Constructivism challenges the notion of fixed national interests, suggesting that they transform with changing identities.

Wendt's constructivist framework categorizes anarchy cultures into three distinct types, each arising from different forms of state interaction. In the Hobbesian anarchy culture, states lack shared ideas and consequently view each other as adversaries. Key features include a predisposition toward aggressive actions to alter the status quo, an emphasis on military power, and a readiness to employ unrestrained violence against perceived foes. Decision-making tends to prioritize short-term gains over long-term prospects, reflecting a cynical view of international relations.

Lockean cultures emerge when states share certain ideas and regard each other as rivals rather than outright enemies. This culture prioritizes the preservation of sovereignty at the status quo, resulting in a more cautious approach to conflicts. Rational behaviour is influenced by the institution of sovereignty, reducing the inclination for escalating

tensions. The emphasis shifts from unbridled aggression to calculated responses, fostering a more stable environment.

Kantian cultures arise when states treat each other as potential allies, leading to the establishment of shared institutions. This culture rests on two principles: a commitment to non-violence and mutual assistance. States refrain from employing war or the threat of war to settle disputes and unite to collectively respond to external threats. The Kantian culture embodies a cooperative approach to international relations, seeking to achieve collective security and long-lasting stability (p. 231).

In conclusion, the emergence of constructivism marks a pivotal departure from the confines of traditional paradigms, particularly structural realism. As the comparison has illuminated, constructivism's emphasis on shared ideas and the intricate interplay of identities and interests unveils a dynamic framework for understanding global dynamics and change. Unlike the deterministic underpinnings of structural realism, constructivism's view of anarchy as socially constructed challenges the conventional notions of unending conflict, highlighting the adaptable nature of international relations. By foregrounding the transformative power of shared ideas and interactions, constructivism presents a compelling alternative to structural realism, shedding new light on the complexities of change within the international arena. Having examined the concepts of constructivism and its distinctions from structural realism, the focus now shifts to how constructivism can bring forth novel insights into the realm of nuclear disarmament efforts.

2.2. HOW CONSTRUCTIVISM OFFERS NEW INSIGHTS FOR THE CONTEXT OF NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

Guzzini (2013) clarifies that constructivism avoids the pitfall of assuming a straightforward accumulation of power, where all potential sources of power are combined and aggregated. Such a collective evaluation of power (resources), detached from actors' interpretations and the contextual environment, not only lacks accuracy but is also theoretically unfeasible. This underscores the constructivist stance on power. When we consider the cumulative arguments, the concept of a power equilibrium doesn't find a place within constructivism as it does in structural realism (p. 5). This distinction

emerges because constructivism attributes power to agencies and recognizes the potential for change. Since power is a variable that can undergo transformation rather than a fixed characteristic with rigid indicators, this perspective also alters the lens through which nuclear weapons are viewed within the constructivist framework.

Van Wyk et al. (2011) proposes that the enduring existence of nuclear weapons and a state's prominence in the nuclear arena shape the fabric of social realities. What becomes apparent through these weapons is the states' dedication to their socially constructed objectives of upholding power, prestige, and dominance – a manifestation of their commitment to safeguarding their identity and interests. Nevertheless, since nuclear weapons are not the sole indicator of this commitment and because such dedication is a socially constructed ambition, it assumes a somewhat abstract nature. From the perspective of constructivist theory, nuclear weapons function as tools to influence adversaries' perceptions, leveraging their portrayal as instruments of mass destruction. This manipulation of adversaries' perceptions segues into the realm of nuclear deterrence. As elucidated by Van Wyk, states bolster their security and sovereignty by procuring weapons, driving their ongoing pursuit of nuclear arms for strategic significance, deterrence, and potential wartime victories. The intricate interplay of states engaging in relevant international agreements leads to a reconfiguration of their identities, behaviours, and relationships (pp. 23-26). Deterrence, therefore, finds a foothold in the constructivist framework owing to this process of reconstruction. Given the plausibility and occurrence of reconstruction through international agreements and norms, the veracity of nuclear deterrence becomes less assured and predictable. Consequently, the inclination to steer the concept of deterrence in the desired direction is heightened, underscoring the imperative to anchor deterrence on solid foundations.

Within this framework, Alolaimy (2017) puts forth the nuclear taboo as a paramount constructivist theory in the realm of disarmament. He posits that the nuclear taboo stands in stark contrast to realist notions of nuclear deterrence and mutually assured destruction. While the latter two theories attribute the restraint in using nuclear weapons to the fear of nuclear reprisal, the nuclear taboo delves deeper by accounting for the inhibition of nuclear weapon deployment in the post-Second World War era, even against non-nuclear states lacking second-strike capabilities.

As elucidated, nuclear deterrence is predominantly viewed as a concept centred on counter-offensive measures, whereas the nuclear taboo extends its consideration to encompass non-nuclear states as well. Disarmament, therefore, aligns more harmoniously with the discourse surrounding the nuclear taboo, as it not only aims to prevent nuclear weapon usage against nuclear-armed states but also against every other state without such arms, ultimately striving for the complete eradication of these weapons.

Constructivism offers a distinctive perspective on the arms race in contrast to structural realism. States' pursuit of nuclear weapons can often be driven by a desire to attain a sense of power within their identities and secure a place on the power spectrum. This might lead them to engage in an arms race to ascend the hierarchy. However, as Alolaimy highlights, arms control can be perceived as a socially constructed mechanism by which armed states endeavour to manage the arms race (p. 42). Similar to nuclear weapons, the concept of arms control is also subject to social construction, drawing significance from the identity ascribed to nuclear weapons.

Crucially, the meaning associated with arms control evolves alongside the shifting conceptions of nuclear weapons. Thus, alterations in the perceived purpose of nuclear weapons could correspondingly influence the purpose attributed to arms control. Consequently, the feasibility of arms control measures increases, augmenting the likelihood of achieving disarmament objectives. This underscores the significance of delving into and discussing the essential tools required for shaping norms about nuclear weapons.

States can bolster their power status and bolster international security efforts by actively engaging in multilateral agreements. Among the array of strategies for implementing and propagating norms, international agreements hold a position of paramount effectiveness, yielding a substantial impact on the normative landscape of nuclear disarmament. Notably, the United Nations members forged a universal norm through the adoption of resolutions and conventions aimed at curbing the development, accumulation, and utilization of nuclear weapons. Viewed through the lens of constructivism, this collective endeavour played a pivotal role in shaping an international order wherein nations

abstaining from nuclear arms development, stockpiling, and deployment were not perceived as lacking in power.

These agreements, as widely accepted custodians of norms, have propelled the dissemination of norms of nuclear weapons to unprecedented levels. As a result, the impetus behind norm diffusion in the realm of nuclear disarmament has gained substantial momentum, ushering in a more comprehensive and universally acknowledged framework for nuclear non-proliferation.

The constructivist theory offers its most significant insights within the context of norms. A crucial justification for this standpoint stems from Van Wyk's (2011) insight, underscoring that the initial period (1945-1970) marked the formalization of disarmament as a normative framework encompassing the regulation, elimination, and oversight of nuclear weapons (p. 28). Gillis (2017) echoes this sentiment, emphasizing that arms control and disarmament encompass not only the technical management of weapons but also a profound reconsideration of our national identities in a global context (p. 9). Hence, while the discussions on nuclear weapons might seem confined to the weaponry itself, they are heavily intertwined with how states perceive one another and attribute meanings to their actions.

This highlights a crucial aspect of the constructivist identity debate. By shifting the focus from mere nuclear weapons to the broader meanings attached to them and the states wielding them, a fresh perspective emerges that enriches the disarmament norm. This novel approach offers a pathway to better grasp the norm's limitations and potential for progress, steering away from the traditional narrative.

Within this dynamic framework, the disarmament norm gains new significance by investigating the power dynamics of states possessing nuclear weapons and redefining their role in promoting global peace. By exploring the power status of these states and reassessing their contributions to international harmony, a deeper layer is added to the disarmament norm. Going beyond the surface-level existence of nuclear weapons and delving into the complexities of state identities and their implications, constructivism

introduces a unique viewpoint that enhances our comprehension of the multifaceted nature of disarmament.

Extending the perspective of constructivism's capacity to introduce fresh viewpoints in the context of nuclear disarmament, the discussion now pivots to the humanitarian approach and the TPNW. These elements present constructivist avenues towards realizing comprehensive nuclear disarmament. By delving into the humanitarian approach, which foregrounds the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons use, and examining the TPNW's emergence as a normative framework rooted in global cooperation and legal commitment, the research gains a deeper appreciation for the constructive potential that constructivism lends to the pursuit of a world free from nuclear threats.

CHAPTER 3

THE HUMANITARIAN APPROACH AND THE TPNW: CONSTRUCTIVIST PATHWAYS TO NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

3.1. CONSTRUCTIVIST FOUNDATIONS AND DEPARTURE FROM STATE-CENTRIC APPROACHES

The discussions surrounding nuclear disarmament have sparked ongoing debates, leading to a wide range of viewpoints that often make the term contentious. Amidst these debates, the focus has consistently been on the role of nuclear weapons in global security and the complex political factors involved in their elimination. Patrick McCarthy, contributing to a UNIDIR anthology, closely examines the traditional path of nuclear disarmament and highlights three key attributes. Firstly, he emphasizes that conventional approaches to arms control and disarmament primarily revolve around perceived threats to individual states. Secondly, McCarthy sheds light on the historical context, revealing that negotiations in traditional disarmament processes, such as those seen in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, have been led by diplomats, military experts, and select scientific and technical specialists. However, these negotiations often lacked transparency, hindering trust and collaboration. Lastly, McCarthy notes that these traditional methods tend to be bureaucratic, cumbersome and time-consuming (Docherty, 2020, p. 165).

Considering these attributes, it becomes clear that the traditional approach to nuclear disarmament has largely centred on the sovereignty of individual states. However, the landscape of nuclear disarmament is now undergoing significant changes that challenge this state-centric perspective. As consequential developments reshape the narrative, the dominance of state-centred paradigms is waning. A pivotal moment in this shift was marked by the emergence of the humanitarian pledge, which redirected attention from states' security concerns to the profound humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapon use.

In conclusion, the rising emphasis on the humanitarian approach to nuclear disarmament represents a momentous paradigm shift. Departing from traditional state-centric models, this approach places humanity's well-being at its core. By focusing on the catastrophic humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons, this approach transcends national interests and highlights the urgency of collective action. This departure from conventional methods not only promises a more inclusive and transparent path toward disarmament but also underscores the importance of shared human values in achieving a safer world without nuclear weapons.

Having delved into the transformation of nuclear disarmament paradigms away from traditional state-centric perspectives, it is crucial to now explore the emergence of the new humanitarian approach encapsulated within the humanitarian pledge.

3.2. THE EMERGENCE OF THE NEW HUMANITARIAN APPROACH WITH THE HUMANITARIAN PLEDGE

The excerpt from the humanitarian pledge encapsulates the essence of this new humanitarian approach to nuclear disarmament. It reflects a transformative shift in perspective from the traditional security-centric framework to one that prioritizes the profound and far-reaching humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapon use.

The first element underscores the crucial recognition of the suffering endured by victims of nuclear weapon explosions and testing. This acknowledgement reframes the discourse, placing the human toll at the forefront and emphasizing the moral imperative to address the profound harm inflicted upon individuals and communities. By foregrounding the rights and needs of victims, the humanitarian approach places a moral responsibility on states and the international community to ensure that the plight of those affected is not overlooked or dismissed.

The second element delves into the understanding that the consequences of a nuclear weapon explosion far surpass prior estimations. This acknowledgement transcends mere state security concerns, venturing into a realm of global implications. By highlighting that these consequences are not confined by national borders but can cascade into regional or

even global effects, the approach accentuates the interconnectedness of humanity and underscores the potential for widespread catastrophic harm. This recognition serves as a sobering reminder of the collective vulnerability shared by nations and underlines the necessity of collaborative efforts to prevent such outcomes.

Overall, the excerpt encapsulates the core tenets of the new humanitarian approach to nuclear disarmament. It centres on the acknowledgement of human suffering, elevates the rights and needs of victims, and extends the analysis beyond state-centric security to embrace a broader, interconnected understanding of the potential consequences. This approach seeks to align disarmament efforts with fundamental humanitarian values, fostering a paradigm that prioritizes the well-being and survival of humanity over traditional geopolitical interests (United Nations General Assembly, 2016).

Patrick McCarthy contrasts the attributes of the novel humanitarian approach to nuclear disarmament against those of the traditional approach. Firstly, he underscores how these emerging approaches place a heightened emphasis on the security and well-being of individuals. Secondly, McCarthy notes that the new humanitarian paradigm is more inclined to recognize civil society groups as repositories of expertise and on-the-ground experience. Moreover, he argues that such an orientation has the potential to enrich multilateral negotiation processes. Thirdly, he highlights that these nascent approaches prioritize speed, innovation, and flexibility, reflecting a departure from the conventional cumbersome and bureaucratic pace (Borrie et al., 2005, pp. 56-57).

This paradigm shift in nuclear disarmament and arms control approaches has sparked increased motivation to redefine the role of nuclear weapons on the international stage. As Docherty points out, the surge of humanitarian disarmament has propelled states to transcend their immediate security interests, prioritizing the apprehension of the catastrophic human toll associated with nuclear weapons in a conceptual realm. Furthermore, this momentum has not only reshaped conceptual discussions but also laid the groundwork for practical negotiations toward a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons.

3.3. EXAMINING THE TREATY ON THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Article VI of the NPT outlines a significant requirement: the pursuit of negotiations in good faith for a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control (United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, 1970). This mandate has been consistently pursued, with ongoing negotiations aimed at its fulfilment. In 2017, the United Nations General Assembly convened to deliberate on a binding instrument, a crucial stride towards the prohibition and eventual eradication of nuclear weapons. This culminated in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, a landmark achievement marked by its extensive range of proscriptions encompassing all nuclear weapons-related activities. This treaty stands as a substantial milestone in the endeavour to eliminate nuclear weapons.

At its core, the TPNW's initial Articles encapsulate prohibitions, declarations, and safeguards regulations meticulously stipulated by the treaty. A thorough analysis of these foundational Articles assumes paramount importance, offering a profound lens through which to comprehend the treaty's overarching goals and significance. Delving into these Articles provides a nuanced understanding of the TPNW's multifaceted approach, shedding light on the various facets that contribute to its potential to reshape the global disarmament landscape.

Article 1 of the treaty marks a resounding departure from traditional disarmament approaches, embodying the core principles of the new humanitarian approach. This Article outlines a comprehensive set of prohibitions that encapsulate the humanitarian perspective, emphasizing the devastating consequences of nuclear weapons on human lives and the environment.

Central to Article 1 is the categorical prohibition on the development, testing, production, acquisition, possession, and stockpiling of nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices. This prohibition unequivocally underscores the TPNW's commitment to prevent the perpetuation of these highly destructive weapons. By categorically renouncing their existence, the treaty positions human well-being and global security at the forefront.

The prohibition on transferring nuclear weapons or their control constitutes another pivotal facet. This prohibition reflects the new humanitarian approach's emphasis on averting the transfer of weapons that can inflict catastrophic harm, ensuring that the potential for devastation is not disseminated. The treaty's focus on disallowing the receipt of such transfers further reinforces its dedication to curbing the spread of nuclear weapons and their perilous effects.

Moreover, the explicit proscription against using or threatening to use nuclear weapons aligns closely with the humanitarian approach's central contention: the immeasurable humanitarian toll arising from the use of nuclear arms. By condemning any form of use or threat, the TPNW reinforces the imperative to protect human lives, ecosystems, and societies from the irrevocable harm that nuclear weapons can cause.

The Article extends its reach to encompass active discouragement and deterrence of nuclear weapons activities. The prohibition against assisting, encouraging, inducing, seeking, or receiving assistance for activities prohibited under the treaty embodies a collective commitment to prevent any complicity in perpetuating the risks associated with nuclear weapons. This encapsulates the humanitarian approach's ethos of shared responsibility, where states pledge to collaboratively eliminate the potential for harm.

Furthermore, Article 1 places a decisive constraint on the stationing, installation, or deployment of nuclear weapons within a state's territory or under its jurisdiction or control. This prohibition reflects the humanitarian approach's recognition that allowing such weapons on one's soil heightens the risk of their use and exacerbates the potential humanitarian catastrophe.

Article 2 of the treaty encapsulates a series of declarative requirements that crystallize the core concepts of the new humanitarian approach. This Article introduces a framework of transparency, accountability, and collective commitment that underscores the transformation from traditional state-centric approaches to disarmament towards a more globally interconnected and morally conscious stance.

This Article stipulates that each State Party must submit a declaration to the Secretary-General of the United Nations within 30 days of the TPNW entering into force for that state. This declaration is a pivotal instrument through which states collectively contribute to the humanitarian approach's ethos of transparency and accountability. By mandating the disclosure of whether a state-owned, possessed, or controlled nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices and eliminated its nuclear weapon program before the treaty entered into force, Article 2 reflects a commitment to collective awareness of historical disarmament efforts.

Moreover, the Article mandates states to declare whether they currently own, possess, or control any nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices. This requirement directly aligns with the humanitarian approach's focus on acknowledging the ongoing presence of such weapons. By demanding this disclosure, the Article underscores the new perspective's emphasis on recognizing the present-day reality of nuclear weapons and their ramifications.

The Article also addresses the presence of nuclear weapons within a state's territory or under its jurisdiction and control that are owned, possessed, or controlled by another state. This provision resonates with the humanitarian approach's interconnected ethos, emphasizing collective responsibility and the shared commitment to averting the humanitarian toll of nuclear weapons. By requiring states to declare such instances, the Article highlights the need for vigilance and cooperation in preventing the proliferation and potential use of nuclear weapons.

This Article also underscores the humanitarian approach's fundamental principles of transparency, accountability, and collective action. Through its declarative requirements, the Article not only fosters a culture of openness regarding states' historical and present nuclear weapon-related activities but also reinforces the new perspective's focus on the interconnectedness of global disarmament efforts. By placing a premium on shared information and cooperative engagement, the Article resonates with the ethos of the humanitarian approach and represents a crucial step towards redefining the discourse surrounding nuclear disarmament.

Article 3 of the treaty embodies the core principles of the new humanitarian approach by establishing a framework for nuclear disarmament that emphasizes international cooperation, transparency, and the alignment of efforts towards a world free from nuclear weapons.

This Article lays out the obligations for state parties that are not eligible under Article 4, paragraphs 1 or 2, essentially extending its scope to those states that possess or host nuclear weapons on their territories. The Article underscores that these states must maintain their existing obligations under the IAEA safeguards regime at the time of the TPNW's entry into force. This provision embodies the humanitarian approach's focus on fostering cooperative efforts, promoting transparency, and ensuring accountability in disarmament initiatives. By maintaining IAEA safeguards obligations, even in the absence of Article 4 applicability, the Article reinforces the new perspective's commitment to global security and stability.

The article further highlights the importance of comprehensive safeguards by mandating that States Parties that do not qualify under Article 4, paragraphs 1 or 2, establish and bring into force a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the IAEA. This requirement underscores the humanitarian approach's emphasis on fostering an environment of trust and cooperation among states. The 180-day timeline for commencing negotiations and the 18-month deadline for the agreement's entry into force demonstrate a sense of urgency and commitment towards advancing disarmament objectives.

Moreover, the Article exemplifies the humanitarian approach's principles by promoting international cooperation, transparency, and accountability in nuclear disarmament efforts. By extending the scope of obligations to states possessing or hosting nuclear weapons, the Article encourages a collective commitment towards reducing the risks associated with these weapons. The emphasis on comprehensive safeguards agreements underscores the importance of robust mechanisms to ensure compliance and prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Ultimately, Article 3 reflects the new humanitarian approach's dedication to reshaping the disarmament discourse towards a more inclusive, cooperative, and ethically driven framework (United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, 2021).

Moreover, the treaty encompasses provisions that offer detailed elucidations on a range of aspects essential for achieving the complete eradication of nuclear weapons. These encompass guidelines about the comprehensive elimination of these armaments, procedures for national implementation, mechanisms for victim assistance and environmental remediation, frameworks for international cooperation and support, as well as protocols for convening gatherings of state parties. The treaty emerges as a pivotal milestone in the trajectory of nuclear disarmament, demonstrating its significance through its expansive thematic coverage and thorough delineations. In this regard, the treaty can be interpreted as a constructive stride towards the culmination of deliberations concerning the understanding and interpretation of nuclear disarmament.

3.4. THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF NPT AND TPNW

To better understand the limitations of the NPT when it comes to nuclear disarmament, it's important to take a close look at the TPNW and its controversial aspects within the framework of the NPT. The TPNW stands out as a strong addition to the NPT's goals of achieving complete nuclear disarmament because it provides detailed steps on how to achieve this goal. Going into more detail, Article II of the TPNW explains what should be included in the declaration submitted to the United Nations Secretary-General, including its content and the deadline for submission. Similarly, Article III offers a thorough explanation of the safeguards agreement that needs to be established with the IAEA, with a particular focus on the timeline for negotiation and enforcement.

The TPNW pays close attention to the specific procedures it outlines, which align well with the principles of the NPT goal of achieving nuclear disarmament. By clearly defining timeframes and methods of implementation, the TPNW demonstrates a strong effort to turn disarmament goals into concrete actions, something the NPT has struggled with in the past. Additionally, the TPNW takes an egalitarian approach by imposing the same obligations on all countries that sign it, whether they possess nuclear weapons or not. This challenges the longstanding distinction between nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states. While this approach is often debated by nuclear-weapon states, it

represents a significant step towards eliminating this division and strengthening the collective commitment to the ultimate goal of disarmament.

It's important to emphasize how the TPNW contributes to creating an efficient system for verifying commitments to nuclear disarmament. The thorough explanations of what should be included in declarations and the requirements for safeguards agreements show a sincere effort to make the verification process more robust. This aligns with the NPT's overall aim of promoting transparency and accountability in nuclear disarmament efforts, highlighting how the TPNW complements this aspect.

As a result, the TPNW represents a promising and complementary addition to the NPT nuclear disarmament efforts. It stands out by providing detailed procedures, equal responsibilities for all, and a focus on putting nuclear disarmament into practice, thereby paving the way to verify it effectively. The TPNW marks a shift towards tangible action and inclusivity in the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. The treaty offers a new way to revitalize discussions about nuclear disarmament, promote transparency, and advance the shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

However, the departure of the TPNW from traditional norms has generated both support and controversy. Its rejection of nuclear deterrence theory and the exclusion of recognized nuclear-weapon states have sparked debates regarding its compatibility with the NPT and its potential to undermine it.

3.5. ADDRESSING THE DISCUSSION OF TPNW CONTRADICTING AND UNDERMINING THE NPT

The question of whether the TPNW contradicts and undermines the NPT has been the subject of extensive debate. One of the most critical points in this discussion pertains to the legal relationship between the NPT and TPNW (Lina-Marieke et al., 2021, pp. 2-3). Addressed in Article 18 of the TPNW, the provision asserts that the implementation of the TPNW shall not jeopardize obligations under existing international agreements that are consistent with the TPNW (United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, 2017, as cited in Lina-Marieke et al., 2021, p. 2). This clause has sparked concerns and raised the

possibility that the TPNW could be considered legally "subordinate" to the NPT, especially if discrepancies arise in the obligations of member states under both treaties (Lina-Marieke et al., 2021, pp. 2-3).

Another important critique centres on the potential risks posed to the IAEA Safeguards regime by the TPNW. These critics contend that certain provisions within the TPNW may not be effectively verifiable, thereby raising questions about its ability to ensure robust monitoring mechanisms (NATO, 2017, as cited in Lina-Marieke et al., 2021, p. 3). A central point of concern is the absence of a comprehensive verification procedure within the TPNW, which is essential for monitoring and verifying the achievement of full and irreversible nuclear disarmament (Lina-Marieke et al., 2021, p. 3).

In the context of these deliberations, it is worth noting that the NPT's nuclear disarmament pillar also lacks a comprehensive verification system. While the TPNW introduces provisions such as the requirement for a declaration to be submitted to the Secretary-General and the obligation to conclude safeguards agreements with the IAEA, a fully effective verification system remains wanting.

However, a nuanced perspective highlights that the TPNW does contribute positively to the verification framework established by the NPT. It’s emphasized that Article III of the TPNW goes beyond the NPT's language by legally obliging state parties to uphold any additional safeguards agreements that they voluntarily commit to implementing. This implies that states party to the TPNW, already bound by safeguards agreements, are legally compelled to continue adhering to these agreements and are precluded from withdrawing (Hajnozci, 2020, p. 90). While the TPNW may not feature a comprehensive verification system for nuclear disarmament, its provisions reinforce and refine the existing verification mechanisms under the NPT.

In essence, the debate surrounding the relationship between the TPNW and the NPT encompasses legal complexities, concerns about the efficacy of verification mechanisms, and the impact of the TPNW on the existing international nuclear order. While the TPNW does not offer a fully comprehensive verification system, it contributes to the framework

established by the NPT and maintains an important focus on the imperative of verification for nuclear disarmament.

Another critique raised is that the TPNW lacks the necessary analytical depth and conceptual clarity in its key definitions and concepts. A pertinent example cited to support this assertion involves the terms "threat to use nuclear weapons" and the scope of "assistance" delineated within the treaty's provisions. These perceived ambiguities, which warrant reduction, have the potential to create space for differing legal interpretations (Lina-Marieke et al., 2021, p. 3). It is further emphasized that the TPNW employs terminologies aligned with the NPT and other established disarmament treaties focused on weapons of mass destruction. The absence of a precise definition for "nuclear weapons" within the TPNW underscores the endeavour to harmonize the two treaties seamlessly (Hajnozci, 2020, p. 90). This perspective underscores that the shared terminologies between the two treaties serve to further intertwine and complement the TPNW and NPT.

While arguments persist about the extent of detailed elaboration within both treaties, it becomes evident that the TPNW endeavours to bridge this gap. Moreover, a divergence of viewpoints has emerged regarding whether the TPNW should call upon nuclear-weapon states to disarm before joining the treaty or to join the treaty first and then embark on disarmament. This discussion is addressed by noting how these differences were reconciled through the inclusion of provisions catering to both scenarios within Article IV of the treaty. For the latter scenario, the TPNW mandates that nuclear-weapon states "immediately remove them [their nuclear weapons] from operational status and destroy them as soon as possible but not later than a deadline to be determined by the first meeting of States Parties.” (Egeland et al., 2018, pp. 6-7).

In essence, the TPNW's shortcomings of conceptual precision and the sequencing of disarmament efforts among nuclear-weapon states have sparked discussions. These deliberations underscore the dynamic nature of disarmament negotiations and the intricate balancing act between substantive provisions and shared objectives. The TPNW's efforts to align its terminology with established disarmament treaties and address inconsistencies

through nuanced provisions represent meaningful strides towards enhancing clarity and facilitating consensus.

A compelling argument is presented, emphasizing that there was a necessity for a new legal instrument, driven by the inherent disparity between nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states that are parties to the NPT. This inherent imbalance, as pointed out, "renders it [the NPT] structurally unable to categorically delegitimize nuclear weapons and the practice of nuclear deterrence." (Ritchie, 2014, pp. 601-623, as cited in Egeland et al., 2018, p. 7) This assertion carries significant importance, underscoring the contention that the TPNW serves as a supplementary measure to the NPT, augmenting its scope and relevance within the realm of nuclear disarmament. This perspective bolsters the argument that the TPNW represents a crucial initiative, bridging certain gaps and deficiencies within the existing framework, even while it may bear its limitations.

Considering this perspective, the TPNW emerges as a complementary instrument, bolstering the broader nuclear disarmament endeavour by addressing certain inadequacies in the NPT. While acknowledging its inherent limitations, the TPNW takes strides towards fulfilling the aspiration of a more comprehensive and unequivocal delegitimization of nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence. Rather than viewing the TPNW as an opposed or conflicting treaty, it can be interpreted as a strategic addition to the disarmament discourse, aimed at reinforcing the principles and objectives embedded in the NPT.

By adopting this perspective, the international community can recognize the TPNW's role in expanding the applicability of the nuclear disarmament pillar, fostering a more inclusive and robust framework. The TPNW, though not without its own set of challenges, represents a crucial step towards recalibrating the nuclear disarmament landscape, enhancing the global commitment to the ultimate goal of a nuclear weapons-free world. In this light, the TPNW assumes a position of complementarity rather than contradiction, a testament to the evolving dynamics of international efforts aimed at achieving comprehensive nuclear disarmament.

3.6. A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE NPT AND TPNW

The analysis provided on the theoretical foundations of the NPT and the TPNW, as seen through the lenses of structural realism and constructivism, highlights distinct perspectives on nuclear disarmament. While the NPT embodies principles of structural realism, emphasizing power, security, and balance among states, the TPNW reflects a constructivist approach that prioritizes normative values, shared beliefs, and the potential for transformative change in the international area.

The analysis of the NPT from a structural realist perspective underscores its origins during the Cold War, where the dominant superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, found common ground on the need to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. This alignment was driven by the shared recognition of security imperatives and the desire to maintain an equilibrium of power. Structural realism's emphasis on power distribution and state behaviour is evident in the NPT's principles. The possession of nuclear weapons is viewed as essential for state security, reflecting the offence-defence balance characteristic of structural realism.

The division between NWSs and NNWSs under the NPT reinforces the power dynamics and hierarchy among states. The NPT's success in preventing widespread nuclear weapons development is attributed to its ability to align with states' perceived security interests. States possessing nuclear weapons are hesitant to disarm due to their perceived strategic advantage, while states without nuclear weapons prioritize security by abstaining from their development. The NPT's structural realist foundation acknowledges the anarchic nature of international relations, where states prioritize self-preservation and defence over nuclear disarmament.

The analysis of the TPNW through a constructivist lens highlights its departure from traditional realist assumptions by focusing on normative values, shared beliefs, and the potential for transformative change. The treaty's foundation in the humanitarian approach underscores its commitment to the well-being of humanity and the environment. This approach challenges the traditional security-centric perspective of structural realism by

emphasizing the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons on human lives and ecosystems.

The TPNW's prohibitions, declarations, and safeguards regulations reflect the constructivist emphasis on shared norms and cooperative behaviour. Article 1 of the treaty categorically prohibits various aspects of nuclear weapons activities, embodying the normative belief that these weapons should not exist. The emphasis on transparency, accountability, and collective commitment in Article 2 aligns with constructivism's focus on international norms and cooperative interactions. The treaty's requirement for states to submit declarations fosters a culture of transparency and acknowledges the interconnectedness of nuclear disarmament efforts.

Article 3 of the TPNW reflects constructivist principles by extending nuclear disarmament obligations to states possessing or hosting nuclear weapons. This inclusivity promotes international cooperation and challenges the traditional division between nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon states. The emphasis on comprehensive safeguards agreements and the timelines for negotiations underscore the treaty's commitment to cooperative disarmament efforts.

When comparing the NPT's structural realist foundation with the TPNW's constructivist approach, several key differences emerge. The NPT's focus on power, security, and state behaviour reflects the structural realist emphasis on state interests and the balance of power. In contrast, the TPNW's emphasis on normative values, humanitarian concerns, and cooperative behaviour aligns with constructivism's belief in the role of ideas and norms in shaping international relations.

The NPT's success in preventing widespread nuclear proliferation is attributed to its strategic alignment with state interests, particularly those of nuclear-weapon states. The NPT's structural realist foundation recognizes the significance of military capabilities and deterrence in international relations. On the other hand, the TPNW's constructivist approach challenges the status quo by emphasizing the ethical and moral imperatives of nuclear disarmament, transcending traditional notions of security.

While the NPT's legacy lies primarily in preventing nuclear proliferation, the TPNW's legacy could potentially lie in reshaping the discourse on nuclear disarmament and challenging the dominance of nuclear-weapon states. The TPNW's comprehensive and cooperative provisions seek to create a normative shift towards a world without nuclear weapons, reflecting the constructivist belief in the potential for transformative change through shared beliefs and norms.

With an understanding of the contrasting theoretical foundations of the NPT and TPNW, it is now crucial to delve into an example that illustrates how the TPNW mobilized Japan's civil society towards more explanatory and detailed nuclear disarmament movements, driven by the principles of constructivism.

3.7. THE CONSTRUCTIVE INFLUENCE OF TPNW ON NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT IN JAPAN'S CIVIL SOCIETY

Japan's post-World War II nuclear disarmament policy was a product of realist principles, heavily influenced by its traumatic experience as the sole victim of nuclear bombings. This unique historical perspective led Japan to initially adopt a security-centric approach, aligning itself with the United States and seeking protection under the U.S. nuclear umbrella. This realist-driven strategy provided Japan with a sense of security in a region characterized by instability and geopolitical rivalries.

Since 2018, Japan consistently voted against an annual UN General Assembly resolution that encourages states to sign, ratify, or accede to the TPNW "at the earliest possible date." Japan made it clear that it does not intend to sign or ratify this treaty. In 2022, Japan's position evolved, acknowledging the significance of the TPNW as a potential step towards a world without nuclear weapons. However, Japan stressed the importance of maintaining engagement with nuclear-armed states to alter the current nuclear reality. Notably, Japan continues to support the retention and potential use of U.S. nuclear weapons on its behalf. This stance is evident in various policy statements, including the country's 2013 national security strategy, which emphasizes the indispensability of U.S. extended deterrence, centred on nuclear deterrence, to Japan's security. Japan's evolving approach to nuclear disarmament reflects the complex interplay of historical trauma,

security considerations, and the pursuit of global nuclear stability (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), n.d.).

However, the findings of academic surveys and polls conducted in Japan in 2019 shed light on the contrasting perspectives within the country regarding the TPNW. According to one academic survey, a significant majority, 75 per cent of Japanese respondents, expressed a belief that Japan should join the TPNW. Conversely, only 18 per cent were opposed to the idea, with 7 per cent remaining undecided (Baron et al., 2020, pp. 299-309). A separate poll conducted by Japan's national broadcaster, NHK, also revealed substantial support for the TPNW, with 66 per cent in favour, 17 per cent against, and the rest undecided (ICAN, n.d.).

Despite this significant public support, the Japanese government has thus far refrained from endorsing the TPNW. This stance has left many survivors of the 1945 atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki feeling betrayed by their government. These survivors, who have a unique and deeply personal perspective on the devastating impact of nuclear weapons, have been vocal in their disappointment with the government's reluctance.

Adding to the complexity of the issue, numerous Japanese cities, including Hiroshima and Nagasaki themselves, have actively called on the Japanese government to sign and ratify the TPNW. These municipal-level efforts reflect a grassroots movement within Japan seeking to align the country's official stance with the sentiments of its citizens and the desire for global nuclear disarmament (ICAN, n.d.).

Additionally, in May 2022, Japanese civil society issued recommendations on Articles 6 and 7 of the TPNW for the First Meeting of States Parties. These recommendations aim to address the enduring harm caused by nuclear weapons and ensure comprehensive assistance to victims and affected communities. They call for acknowledging the ongoing harm and declaring a strong commitment to victim assistance, with all States Parties sharing the responsibility. Additionally, they stress the centrality of victims' involvement in discussions and the importance of seeking input from a wide range of stakeholders, protecting those who claim to be victims. The goal is to leave no one behind, considering

both historical and ongoing impacts. Regular reporting on treaty implementation and information sharing is proposed, with the participation of international organizations and civil society. There's also a call for disclosure of information by nuclear weapons states and educational efforts to deepen understanding of nuclear harm and victims. The establishment of a permanent body and an international trust fund is recommended to support these initiatives. Lastly, representatives from the Parties are encouraged to visit nuclear-affected areas and engage with victims to better comprehend nuclear harm and provide necessary assistance. These recommendations emphasize victim-centred approaches, international collaboration, transparency, and education in addressing the complex challenges of nuclear harm and disarmament (Peaceboat, 2022).

In conclusion, the situation in Japan regarding the TPNW underscores the complex dynamics of nuclear disarmament. The Japanese government's reluctance to sign the treaty, as demonstrated by its policy positions, reflects the country's long-standing security concerns and reliance on the U.S. nuclear umbrella. However, this position sharply contradicts the widespread endorsement of the TPNW by the Japanese population, as indicated by academic surveys and polls. It is noteworthy that civil society, including survivors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, has been vocal in advocating for Japan's involvement in the treaty, emphasizing the importance of addressing nuclear harm and supporting victim assistance.

These differing perspectives highlight the significant impact of the TPNW on the global nuclear disarmament discourse. The treaty has ignited a nationwide conversation in Japan, showcasing the power of civil society and grassroots movements in influencing policy decisions. It underscores the notion that nuclear disarmament is not solely a matter for governments but also a collective aspiration of citizens who have experienced the devastating consequences of nuclear weapons. The role of TPNW in mobilizing civil society and fostering public engagement in nuclear disarmament efforts signifies a positive step forward in the nuclear disarmament process.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CONSTRUCTIVIST-DRIVEN APPROACHES

The constructivist-driven paradigm represents a significant departure from the traditional realist and liberal frameworks that have historically shaped discussions on nuclear disarmament. It challenges the dominant narratives centred around power dynamics and instead emphasizes the importance of shared ideas, norms, and identities. This shift is exemplified by the TPNW, which embodies the transformative potential of this novel approach, establishing a normative foundation grounded in humanitarian values. This underscores the influential role of constructivism as a driving force for change in the international area.

The TPNW is a concrete example of how the constructivist approach shifts the focus to nuclear disarmament. Instead of solely considering national interests, it brings a humanitarian perspective to the forefront. Its comprehensive bans and forward-thinking provisions herald a new era that goes beyond the traditional focus on power politics. As countries support the TPNW, they are embracing a shared vision and a new set of norms that prioritize a world without nuclear weapons. This innovative approach, driven by humanitarian values, has the potential to reshape the very foundations of international relations. It underscores the TPNW's role in reshaping norms and its capacity to drive change, in line with constructivist principles.

Amidst this significant shift in the landscape, Japan's journey in the field of nuclear disarmament serves as a tangible example, demonstrating the relevance of constructivist ideas. While Japan initially prioritized security based on realist principles, the transformation in civil society's views on nuclear disarmament underscores the influential role of shared ideals. The shift in civil society from realist-driven security concerns to an embrace of the TPNW's humanitarian values, inspired by constructivism, highlights how

constructivist principles can reshape a nation's identity and potentially influence its policies. This demonstrates that constructivism is not merely a theoretical concept but also a highly practical approach to international affairs.

Within the realm of constructivist-driven approaches, the idea of collaboration takes centre stage. Constructivism emphasizes the importance of shared norms and cooperative frameworks, creating a space where working together in multilateral partnerships becomes more significant than traditional power politics. The negotiation process of the TPNW, grounded in a shared commitment to humanitarian values, serves as evidence of the harmonious possibilities that constructivist-driven collaboration can bring. This collaborative atmosphere expedites progress in nuclear disarmament by bridging divergent national interests and fostering trust, transparency, and meaningful engagement. Hence, one of the key strengths of constructivist-driven approaches lies in establishing a united collaborative community.

The remarkable effectiveness of constructivist-driven approaches in accelerating nuclear disarmament becomes strikingly clear through these noteworthy findings. Viewing disarmament from a constructivist perspective puts the humanitarian aspect at the forefront, compelling a deep rethinking of efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons. The creation of the TPNW and the transformative mobilization in Japan’s civil society vividly demonstrate the powerful influence of constructivist principles in shaping the state's stance in the international area and promoting cooperative engagement. As constructivism guides the path toward nuclear disarmament, it brings forth a brighter and safer future—a future built on shared norms, collaborative teamwork, and an unwavering commitment to the well-being of all humanity.

4.2. SYNTHESIS OF THE FINDINGS

The research suggests that Kenneth Waltz's structural realism offers a fundamental structure for comprehending how states interact on the global stage. This theory emphasizes power and rational state actions as states navigate to ensure their survival in anarchic world order. Structural realism effectively explains consistent patterns and limitations in international relations. However, it falls short when it comes to addressing

significant changes brought about by socio-cultural, technological, and ideological influences. In essence, while structural realism is valuable for understanding traditional state behaviour, it struggles to account for the impact of evolving socio-cultural, technological, and ideological factors.

The research findings deduced from the analysis suggest that the acquisition of nuclear weapons aligns with the core principles of structural realism, emphasizing power and survival. States pursue nuclear weapons as a means of deterring aggression, which contributes to maintaining a balance of power. This pursuit, however, introduces a paradoxical situation: while nuclear weapons enhance a state's prestige and influence, they also present severe existential risks.

The analysis underscores how the structural realist emphasis on power dynamics and survival influences states' reluctance to embrace comprehensive verification measures. This hesitance perpetuates the nuclear paradox – a situation where states simultaneously pursue nuclear capabilities for security and influence while avoiding measures that could effectively prevent the potentially catastrophic consequences of these very weapons. Consequently, the research highlights the intricate interplay between power, survival, status, and security in the context of nuclear proliferation, as illuminated through the lens of structural realism.

The analysis indicates that the ongoing debate between defensive and offensive realism reflects the intricate challenge faced by states as they attempt to reconcile security priorities with the broader objectives of global nuclear disarmament. Defensive realism's stance, which warns against the overaccumulation of power, contrasts with offensive realism's viewpoint which promotes strategic power buildup.

This dichotomy observed in the debate aligns closely with the principles of the structural realist framework, which emphasizes the significance of power dynamics in international relations. The analysis underscores the inherent difficulty of achieving general and complete disarmament measures without jeopardizing the security interests of states. In other words, the tension between the defensive and offensive realism perspectives sheds

light on the complex struggle to strike a balance between safeguarding national security and pursuing the collective goal of nuclear disarmament on a global scale.

The research findings suggest that the historical context and establishment of the NPT are closely interwoven with the tenets of structural realism. The context of the Cold War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union played a pivotal role in shaping the NPT's formation. Both superpowers acknowledged the critical nature of security concerns, which consequently led to the NPT's primary emphasis on preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. Structural realism underscores the inherent nature of states to prioritize their self-interest within the framework of an anarchic international system. The analysis illuminates how the historical circumstances and the creation of the NPT were intricately influenced by the power dynamics and security considerations characteristic of structural realism.

However, the research also underscores the limitations of the NPT when it comes to advancing nuclear disarmament. This shortfall in achieving comprehensive nuclear disarmament goals emphasizes the inherent tension between the imperative of state security and the broader objective of global disarmament. The analysis suggests that the emphasis on safeguarding national security, at times, takes precedence over pursuing ambitious nuclear disarmament objectives—an outcome consistent with the influence of structural realism. The research reveals how the NPT's dual nature, as both a deterrent against proliferation and a limitation on disarmament progress, reflects the intricate interplay between security concerns and the pursuit of disarmament within the structural realist framework.

The research findings suggest that while Article VI of the NPT obliges signatory states to engage in negotiations for nuclear disarmament, the absence of a specific timeframe poses a challenge to nuclear disarmament progress. The omission of a fixed timeline corresponds to the principles of structural realism, which emphasizes states' pursuit of their self-interest and the interplay of security dynamics in the international area.

The research underscores that differing interpretations of Article VI of the NPT reflect a broader tension between power dynamics and cooperative efforts. These varying

viewpoints impact the trajectory of nuclear disarmament negotiations. The analysis indicates that states' divergent interpretations stem from their considerations of security, national interest, and the realpolitik inherent to structural realism. Consequently, the absence of a clear timeframe and the different interpretations stemming from its absence within the NPT align with the influence of structural realism's principles on state behaviour and international relations.

The analysis reveals that the prioritization of power and security considerations over complete disarmament is evident in states' decision-making processes. This strategic choice resonates with structural realism's emphasis on states' pursuit of self-interest and their cautious approach to international agreements, particularly when it comes to relinquishing assets that hold significant strategic value.

The analysis concludes that the shortcomings observed within the NPT and its review conferences highlight the necessity for a fundamental change in approaches to nuclear disarmament. The inadequacies in the NPT's effectiveness prompt the consideration of alternative strategies. In this context, the TPNW emerges as a distinct path that prioritizes humanitarian considerations and collaborative efforts.

The analysis indicates that the TPNW's emphasis on humanitarian concerns and cooperation represents a departure from the traditional security-centric approach of the NPT. This shift aligns with the principles of constructivism, which places importance on the development of shared norms and the establishment of cooperative frameworks. Constructivism's focus on fostering a sense of common purpose and shared values offers a promising perspective for overcoming the limitations associated with the security-driven paradigm of structural realism.

The analysis suggests that Wendt's constructivist theory poses a significant challenge to the dominant role of material forces in shaping international relations. Instead of emphasizing tangible factors, Wendt's theory highlights the substantial influence of shared ideas. This represents a departure from traditional realist paradigms, which prioritize material power. Wendt's theory argues that shared ideas play a central and transformative role in shaping the structures that govern global interactions.

This shift in focus emphasizes the profound potential of social construction in influencing and shaping global dynamics. The analysis suggests that Wendt's constructivist theory brings to light the often-overlooked dimension of shared ideas as a linchpin that interconnects and redefines international relationships, potentially leading to significant shifts and developments in the international area. Additionally, Wendt's constructivist theory offers a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between identities and interests within international relations.

The analysis suggests that constructivism introduces a redefinition of the concept of anarchy within the international system, challenging the conventional understanding of unchanging national interests. Traditionally, anarchy has been viewed as a rigid framework that compels states to act in self-interested ways. However, constructivism offers a new perspective by emphasizing that anarchy is not an immutable structure but rather a socially constructed phenomenon influenced by shared ideas and interactions among states.

The analysis indicates that this constructivist perspective has significant implications, particularly in discussions related to nuclear disarmament. By highlighting the role of shared ideas and perceptions, constructivism shifts the focus from mere material capabilities to the subjective motivations that influence state behaviour. This understanding is particularly relevant to nuclear disarmament, as it recognizes that decisions related to nuclear weapons are not solely driven by power considerations but also by normative beliefs and cooperative aspirations.

In contrast to the notion of a static and stable equilibrium of power, the constructivist approach emphasizes power's fluid and transformative nature. This perspective challenges the idea that power is solely based on material capabilities, recognizing that power relations are constantly evolving through social processes and changing perceptions.

The analysis further suggests that constructivism offers a comprehensive perspective on nuclear disarmament that extends beyond the mere physical presence of nuclear weapons.

Constructivism highlights the intricate connection between states' possession of these weapons and broader concepts such as power dynamics, prestige, and identity formation.

An important constructivist contribution to the discourse on nuclear disarmament is the introduction of the concept of the nuclear taboo. This concept, situated within the constructivist framework, enriches the discussions on disarmament by addressing the inhibition and reluctance to use nuclear weapons. Unlike traditional deterrence theories that focus primarily on strategic calculations, the nuclear taboo considers the moral and normative dimensions surrounding the use of these weapons.

The research highlights that constructivism introduces a novel perspective on the arms race, challenging deterministic viewpoints. It does so by framing arms control as a socially constructed mechanism rather than an inevitable consequence of power dynamics. According to this perspective, the effectiveness of arms control measures is not solely dictated by structural forces; instead, it evolves because of changing perceptions and shared ideas regarding nuclear weapons.

This dynamic outlook emphasizes the capacity for altering norms and behaviours through diplomatic efforts. Constructivism suggests that arms control measures are not rigidly predetermined but are subject to shifts in understanding and cooperation among states. As perceptions of the risks associated with nuclear weapons change, the potential for effective arms control measures also transforms.

In the context of disarmament, this dynamic constructivist perspective implies that diplomatic initiatives and negotiations can play a crucial role in shaping the trajectory of nuclear disarmament efforts. By recognizing the socially constructed nature of arms control, constructivism offers a pathway for altering the norms and practices related to nuclear weapons. This approach contributes to the ongoing evolution of disarmament endeavours by acknowledging the potential for change through diplomatic means.

The research also reveals that multilateral treaties hold noteworthy influence in shaping norms and driving progress in nuclear disarmament. Constructivism highlights the instrumental role of these agreements in shaping the normative framework and fostering

a sense of collective identity among states dedicated to nuclear disarmament goals. These agreements serve as mechanisms to regulate nuclear weapons and impact how states perceive and respond to disarmament imperatives, thus contributing to the overarching narrative of global peace.

The analysis points out that Patrick McCarthy's examination of traditional disarmament approaches reveals inherent deficiencies within state-centric paradigms. His critique underscores issues such as lack of transparency, bureaucratic obstacles, and an opacity of actions in these approaches. These limitations are inherent to paradigms that prioritize the interests of individual states.

In contrast, the analysis indicates that constructivism offers a more humanitarian-oriented perspective on nuclear disarmament. This is evidenced by the emergence of initiatives such as the TPNW and the humanitarian pledge. Constructivism redirects the focus from narrow state interests to a broader concern for the catastrophic humanitarian consequences associated with the use of nuclear weapons. This perspective transcends national boundaries, recognizing the shared values and collective responsibility of humanity.

By illuminating the devastating consequences of nuclear weapons and acknowledging the interconnectedness of states' security, the humanitarian approach promotes a more transparent, collaborative, and inclusive approach to nuclear disarmament. This departure from traditional paradigms encourages nations to work together to address the global challenges posed by these weapons.

The analysis suggests that two essential aspects of the humanitarian pledge illustrate this shift in perspective. Firstly, acknowledging the suffering of victims serves as a powerful reminder of the human cost of nuclear weapons, promoting empathy and unity among nations. Secondly, highlighting the global consequences reinforces the idea that the effects of nuclear weapons extend beyond national boundaries, impacting the entire international community.

The TPNW itself represents a departure from conventional disarmament approaches, marking a significant shift in the discourse on nuclear weapons. The analysis suggests that the TPNW's departure from traditional approaches is rooted in its emphasis on humanitarian considerations and the recognition of the far-reaching consequences of nuclear weapons. By categorically prohibiting a range of activities and promoting transparency and accountability, the TPNW introduces a new framework for addressing nuclear disarmament that transcends conventional state-centric security paradigms.

A comparison between the TPNW and the NPT shows areas of agreement and disagreement between these two treaties. The research demonstrates how the TPNW's emphasis on inclusivity, transparency, and accountability has a positive impact on the larger nuclear disarmament conversation. Unlike the NPT, which has faced criticism for treating nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon states unequally, the TPNW promotes the involvement of all states and advocates for a more equal approach to disarmament.

The research suggests that the mobility in Japan's civil society after the entry into force of TPNW serves as a compelling and illustrative example from a constructivist perspective. Initially motivated by realist security considerations, the civil society’s approach to nuclear disarmament experienced a notable transformation due to the normative influences emanating from the TPNW and its humanitarian approach. This shift was instrumental in triggering internal debates and catalysing civil society activism within Japan.

Importantly, this constructivist-driven change in Japan's stance led to the redefinition of its historical identity and the reconfiguration of its engagement in the global disarmament discourse. The example highlights how constructivist principles facilitated Japan's ability to leverage its distinct perspective, actively engaging in awareness initiatives, promoting collaboration, and potentially shifting its focus towards diplomatic negotiations and arms control efforts.

The analysis ultimately suggests that constructivism's influence extends beyond mere theoretical considerations. As constructivist principles guide and shape the discourse surrounding nuclear disarmament, the research highlights the prospect of a more secure

and peaceful future. This perspective transcends traditional power politics, emphasizing collective responsibility and shared values as fundamental components of efforts aimed at safeguarding global peace. By challenging conventional paradigms, emphasizing humanitarian concerns, and inspiring normative change, constructivism contributes to a more inclusive, cooperative, and ethically driven approach to addressing the challenges posed by nuclear weapons.

CONCLUSION

In the pursuit of understanding the complex dynamics of nuclear disarmament, this thesis embarked on a research journey guided by a fundamental question: "How have normative shifts driven by constructivist ideas influenced the progress of the goal of nuclear disarmament?" With this central question in mind, the study explored the field of international relations, examining the contrasting paradigms of structural realism and constructivism, both of which influence the path of nuclear disarmament. Through a detailed examination of the new humanitarian approach and the TPNW, this thesis aimed to determine whether constructivist ideas not only had an impact but also accelerated the goal of achieving a world without nuclear weapons.

The initiation of this research endeavour was guided by a central hypothesis that highlighted the transformative potential attributed to constructivist ideas. Specifically, the hypothesis suggested that the integration of constructivist principles served as potent catalysts driving the advancement of nuclear disarmament objectives. Against the backdrop of a prevailing structural realist paradigm, which often constrained the discourse, constructivism emerged as a promising alternative, emphasizing shifts in norms, the cultivation of shared identities, and considerations of a humanitarian nature. By embracing these foundational tenets, constructivism furnished a comprehensive analytical framework, facilitating the understanding of evolving dynamics, enabling meaningful state engagement, and fostering collaborative efforts of multiple actors.

The research undertaken was one of exploration and confirmation. As the study navigated the complex landscapes of international relations theory and delved into the practical implications of constructivist ideas, a coherent pattern of evidence began to emerge. The review extended to the growing importance of the humanitarian approach, emphasizing the ethical issues surrounding nuclear weapons, and the subsequent establishment of the TPNW. Through this analysis, it became clear that these phenomena, influenced by constructivist principles, carved out a distinct path, fundamentally disrupting the rigid boundaries set by structural realism.

The study thoroughly examined the nuances of the TPNW, meticulously unravelling its explicit prohibitions, extensive declarations, and stringent safeguards regulations. Through this analysis, it became apparent that constructivism played a pivotal role in sparking a transformation. The TPNW did not merely exert influence; it expedited the progress of nuclear disarmament by fostering a normative shift. This shift challenged the conventional emphasis on state-centric security, instead foregrounding the profound humanitarian consequences associated with nuclear weapons. This recalibration resonated strongly with the global civil society, reviving grassroots movements and fuelling discussions. The thesis shed light on how the incorporation of constructivist principles within the TPNW gave rise to new narratives that redefined state identities and reoriented civil society movements, ultimately thrusting nuclear disarmament into a prominent position on the international agenda.

The research was extended to investigate the evolution of civil society perspectives in Japan, a nation profoundly impacted by nuclear destruction. The influence of constructivist ideas became increasingly evident as the research traced the shift in Japanese civil society's views. Initially rooted in security considerations grounded in realist principles, these perspectives evolved towards an outlook enriched by constructivist ideals and a resolute commitment to nuclear disarmament. The transformative effect of the TPNW, built upon normative principles, played a particularly noteworthy role in reshaping Japan's self-perception and national identity.

In conclusion, the primary question that guided this thesis has been definitively answered. The initial idea, centred on the concept of constructivist acceleration, has been proven. The adoption of the new humanitarian approach and the establishment of the TPNW, both rooted in constructivist principles, have ignited significant changes. These initiatives have triggered shifts in thinking, introduced new perspectives, and revitalized efforts towards nuclear disarmament. Amid the global effort to create a future free from the threats posed by nuclear weapons, the profound impact of constructivist ideas is abundantly clear. By embracing changes in accepted norms, nurturing a sense of shared identity, and giving priority to humanitarian concerns, we are charting a course towards a safer and more peaceful world. In this envisioned world, the influence of constructivism resonates with hope, ambition, and the potential for meaningful transformation.

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APPENDIX 1. ORIGINALITY REPORT

HACETTEPE UNIVERSITY
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MASTER'S THESIS ORIGINALITY REPORT

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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS DEPARTMENT

Date: 12/10/2023

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Name Surname: Elif Erginyavuz

Student No: N20137521

Department: International Relations

Program: International Relations MA with thesis

ADVISOR APPROVAL

Doç. Dr. Şebnem UDUM

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ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLER ANABİLİM DALI BAŞKANLIĞI'NA

Tarih: 12/10/2023

Tez Başlığı: Nükleer Silahsızlanma Hedefine Ulaşmak: Yapısal Realizm'in Sınırlamaları ve Sosyal İnşacılık'ın Katkıları

Yukarıda başlığı gösterilen tez çalışmamın a) Kapak sayfası, b) Giriş, c) Ana bölümler ve d) Sonuç kısımlarından oluşan toplam ...68.... sayfalık kısmına ilişkin, 16./.10./2023 tarihinde şahsım/tez danışmanım tarafından Turnitin adlı intihal tespit programından aşağıda işaretlenmiş filtrelemeler uygulanarak alınmış olan orijinallik raporuna göre, tezimin benzerlik oranı %20 'tür.

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DANIŞMAN ONAYI

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APPENDIX 2. ETHICS BOARD WAIVER FORM

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Date: 12/10/2023

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My thesis work related to the title above:

1. Does not perform experimentation on animals or people.
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Date and Signature

Name Surname: Elif Erginyavuz
Student No: N20137521
Department: International Relations
Program: International Relations MA with thesis
Status: ☒ MA ☐ Ph.D. ☐ Combined MA/ Ph.D.

ADVISER COMMENTS AND APPROVAL

Doç. Dr. Şebnem UDUM

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Tarih: 12/10/2023

Tez Başlığı: Nükleer Silahsızlanma Hedefine Ulaşmak: Yapısal Realizm'in Sınırlamaları ve Sosyal İnşacılık'ın Katkıları

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Tarih ve İmza

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Statüsü:	☒ Yüksek Lisans ☐ Doktora ☐ Bütünleşik Doktora

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