Unveiling the causes of the lack of antinuclear movementes in India during the Cold War

Investigando as causas da falta de movimentos antinucleares na Índia durante a Guerra Fria

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Abstract

This article aims to explain the lack of robust antinuclear movements in India during a period that ranges from the 1950s to the 1970s. Such movements arose throughout the world. During the 1960s, people rallied for this agenda in the United States, France, the United Kingdom, and even in New Zealand. India, conversely, tested a nuclear device in 1974, at the known Pokhran-I test (or "Smiling Buddha"), but did not face such grassroots uprisings. In this sense, this research design applied a deductive congruence analysis built on a bibliographical review. A case study on the Indian context tested previously elaborated the main hypotheses. It was inferred that this phenomenon was caused by four elements: (a) few possibilities to public participation; (b) scant available information on nuclear policy; (c) lack of a political schism between national elites and civil society on this topic; and at last (d) geopolitical dynamics.

Keywords: India; Social Movements; Nuclear Proliferation;

Resumo

Este artigo pretende explicar a falta de movimentos antinucleares robustos na Índia durante um período que vai desde os anos 1950 até aos anos 1970. Tais movimentos surgiram em todo o mundo. Durante os anos 60, as pessoas mobilizaram-se para esta agenda nos Estados Unidos, França, Reino Unido, e mesmo na Nova Zelândia. A Índia, por outro lado, testou seu dispositivo nuclear em 1974, no conhecido teste de Pokhran-I (ou "Smiling Buddah") mas não enfrentou uma contestação popular sobre tal matéria. Neste sentido, a presente pesquisa teve como objetivo aplicar uma análise de congruência dedutiva construída com base numa revisão bibliográfica. Um estudo de caso sobre o contexto indiano testou hipóteses previamente elaboradas. Foi inferido que este fenômeno foi causado por quatro elementos: (a) poucas possibilidades de participação pública; (b) pouca informação disponível sobre política nuclear; (c) falta de cisma político entre as elites nacionais e a sociedade civil sobre este tema; e, por fim, (d) dinâmica geopolítica.

Palavras-chave: India; Movimentos Sociais; Proliferação Nuclear;

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Introduction

International relations studies on nuclear proliferation usually address geopolitical dynamics. These analyses aim at providing a valid explanation as to why states pursue nuclear weapons. Such research designs revolved around disputes among states or elites' decisions on geopolitical issues. Atomic warheads were, indeed, revolutionary to security-related issues. Such a weapon enabled unprecedented possibilities to annihilate a given national rival (ARON, 1965; JERVIS, 1989; KISSINGER, 2017; MORGENTHAU, 2003). Not only did many states set up national policies to develop such a weapon during the Cold War, but also rules were set to curb their proliferation (GADDIS, 1992; 2006; KISSINGER, 2017). In this sense, nuclear weapons became a relevant aspect to international relations studies due to their military role (DEUDNEY, 2014; GADDIS, 1992; JERVIS, 1989; MEARSHEIMER, 1984; MORGENTHAU, 2003).

Hence the lion's share of studies scrutinizes either systemic-level dynamics that led nuclear proliferation (CARPES 2013; JERVIS, 1989; MORGENTHAU, 2003; WALTZ, 1981) or decision-making process related to very closed political-military elites (ALLISON, 1971; KISSINGER, 2019; PATTI, 2018). Once mainstream strands assumed that international politics was a field that understands states as units of analysis (IKENBERRY, 2011; MEARSHEIMER, 2001; WALTZ, 1979; WENDT, 1999), important nuclear proliferation-related topics are left unobserved. In the international relations scholarship, few studies scrutinized nuclear issues by different lenses (GILADY, 2018; HYMANS, 2006; PERKOVICH, 2001; LARSON; SHEVCHENKO, 2014). However, even these authors take into account mainly bureaucratic actors. Civil society had played, therefore, a marginal role in this context according to these assumptions.

If the analytical level of abstraction were reduced to social dynamics, some relevant issues could be addressed more appropriately. It could refine existing knowledge on nuclear proliferation. Some scholars, for example, scrutinized pacifist social movements against atomic warheads during the Cold War (CORTRIGHT, 2014; HARVEY, 2014; MEYER, 1999; NEHRING, 2013; ROCHON, 2014; WITTNER, 1998; 2009). These studies not only analyzed the repertoire and aims of these movements but also set some case studies to infer whether they were successful or not in their claims to national administrations. They assumed antinuclear movements as units of analysis to provide a satisfactory understanding of how contextual causal forces interacted with these actors. In this, these scholars provided a refined analysis of the role played by civil society in a topic considered an only-military-and-diplomatic elites' matter (CORTRIGHT, 2014).

These authors, nonetheless, addressed mainly antinuclear movements in the United States, New Zealand, and Western Europe during the 1950s and 1960s (BURKETT, 2010; MEYER, 1999; NEHRING, 2013; WITTNER, 1998). The nuclear agenda became a transnational issue that sparked not only social movements but also international networks among them (KIRCHHOF; MEYER, 2014). Civil society, hence, was a relevant actor in Cold War studies. Nuclear proliferation, for example, was a topic tackled by pacifist groups that organized rallies in 1968 (WITTNER, 1998). Many societies feared global annihilation once news reported disintegration of Pacific islands or the risks of exposition to radioactive elements (ABRAHAM, 2006; SURI, 2009; WITTNER, 1998). Studies on social movements in the late 1960s, describe the existence of antinuclear movements aimed to challenge governmental decisions on this topic. Hence this context also plays a role within geopolitical issues. Once these states engaged in nuclear policies, it is relevant to grasp how local societies coped with it.

However, nuclear policies were not restricted to the United States, New Zealand, and Western Europe. In 1968, for example, the United Nations opened the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) for signatures. The entry into force of this treaty was in 1970. This agreement was considered the most important global mechanism to inhibit the use of atomic energy sources for military purposes. It also empowered the International Atomic Energy Agency, established in 1957, to monitor signatory countries (LIMA, 2013; PAUL; SHANKAR, 2014; STUENKEL, 2010). In this sense, the NPT set legal and moral hurdles against atomic proliferation during a period when Third World countries were considering to go nuclear (SCHEINMAN, 1989).

India is a typical case of Third World country which had developed nuclear ambitions (ABRAHAM, 2014; CARPES, 2013; GABRIEL, 2019; PAUL, 2000; PERKOVICH, 2001). It performed an explosion of a nuclear device in 1974 (PATTI, 2018). Different from countries such as South Africa (ASUELIME; ADEKOYE, 2016), the local population, at least, acknowledged the national nuclear policy after this explosion. Furthermore, this country refused to join the NPT in order to sustain national nuclear ambitions.

The lack of robust antinuclear movements[1] there is still a conundrum. Although India hosted offices from transnational institutions and Gandhians organizations developed conventions in 1962 against nuclear proliferation, they were rickety events in comparison to their peers from the First World (WITTNER, 2009). This essay, hence, aims to find the reasoning behind the absence of consolidating antinuclear movements in India. It is crucial to evaluate both contextual and geopolitical causal drivers (TANNENWALD, 1999). In this sense, this research proceeds with a qualitative methodology based upon a case study of India during a given period: from the 1950s to the 1970s. These years represented a moment when several groups blossomed in the First World as well as New Delhi reasserted its interests on sustaining nuclear options (ABRAHAM, 2014; WITTNER, 1998).

Such research hinges on a deductive congruence analysis. Before addressing the Indian context, it is important to analyze the existing bibliography on antinuclear movements. Even if the lion's share of these studies revolved around different countries, knowing the contextual conditions that sparked these groups serves to the purpose of scrutinizing if India had similar aspects. Hence hypotheses are built by reviewing the literature on antinuclear movements. Then, these assumptions are assessed taking into account sources related to Indian social and geopolitical aspects.

This essay proceeds as follows: (i) a bibliographic review is employed to draw some hypotheses for the research question. Here, the aim is to understand which contextual variables allowed the development of such movements as well as which hampered their activities. This study hangs onto theoretical explanations of social movements and their political opportunities. (ii) A case study of the Indian social and diplomatic contexts. This step hinges on attempts to test previous hypotheses. Both primary and secondary sources were assessed to produce valid inferences. Furthermore, data from databases, such as V-Dem and Correlates of War, were also collected to triangulate sources with quantitative shreds of evidence. (iii) A report of the conclusion drawn following the theoretical interpretation of data collected. In this sense, this essay aims to provide some inferences to refine this topic on international relations literature. Such a study refines the existing understands of Indian foreign policy during the Cold War.

The literature on antinuclear movements

Methodological caveats

The analyzed period comprehends the 1950s to the 1970s. During these years, many pacifist movements arose. The existing literature considers such a relevant moment to scrutinize antinuclear movements (MEYER, 1993; NEHRING, 2013; WITTNER, 1998). Before evaluating these actors, it is crucial to bear in mind some methodological caveats once this is a qualitative study. Firstly, hypotheses were built by analyzing the following states: The United States, the United Kingdom, France, and New Zealand. The existing literature considers that in these countries robust antinuclear movements were sparked. That is, these are considered typical cases in terms of countries where such groups arose. Hence, these states were selected due to the considerable amount of data available. In this sense, contextual causal forces that either triggered or hampered these groups' ambitions were assessed to draw some hypotheses. This phase is a sort of road map to guide the in-depth investigation of India.

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[1] This concept is operationalized as social agents that set a political agenda aimed to curb nuclear proliferation in a given country. The lack of robustness means that they did not enjoy success to persuade decisionmakers due to a restricted available repertoire of actions and contextual elements.

Secondly, these hypotheses not only took into consideration social movements' characteristics and repertoires but also assumed some contextual aspects. Such a methodological design relied on theoretical frameworks about both social movements and foreign policy. Once this study attempts to provide a valid explanation for the lack of consolidated antinuclear movements in India, these propositions were assessed in order to unveil the causes. This research design does not deal with the logic of counterfactual. That is, a given outcome occurs only if a variable manifested the same value both in India and in the First World. The ultimate aim here was to define a set of causal drivers taking into account both the theoretical explanations and data collected during the case study. This study did not seek to apply a quantitative analysis to measure the value of each manifested variable.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1	Antinuclear movements arose where civil society participation was robust, and the context of social movements engagement lies at the heart of this debate.

Source: Organized by the authors using different types of data.

During the 1960s, many groups stood for civil rights, environmental issues, anticolonial claims, and pacifist purposes (HOBSBAWN, 1995; MARWICK, 2011; SURI, 2009). This phenomenon was observed in several states. Such a historical period could be grasped as a political opportunity for changes because different streams allowed civil society groups to challenge historical instances in cultural, political, diplomatic, and economic terms (MARWICK, 2011; MEYER, 1993; TARROW, 1988). It created a remarkable juncture for civil society activism due to geopolitical and domestic political reasons (SURI, 2009). For example, Inglehart (1977) claimed that, in advanced industrial societies, it triggered several riots due to the Vietnam war, social issues, and military-led crisis. In this sense, universities, churches, labor unions, non-governmental organizations, and left-wing parties challenge national elites' decisions.
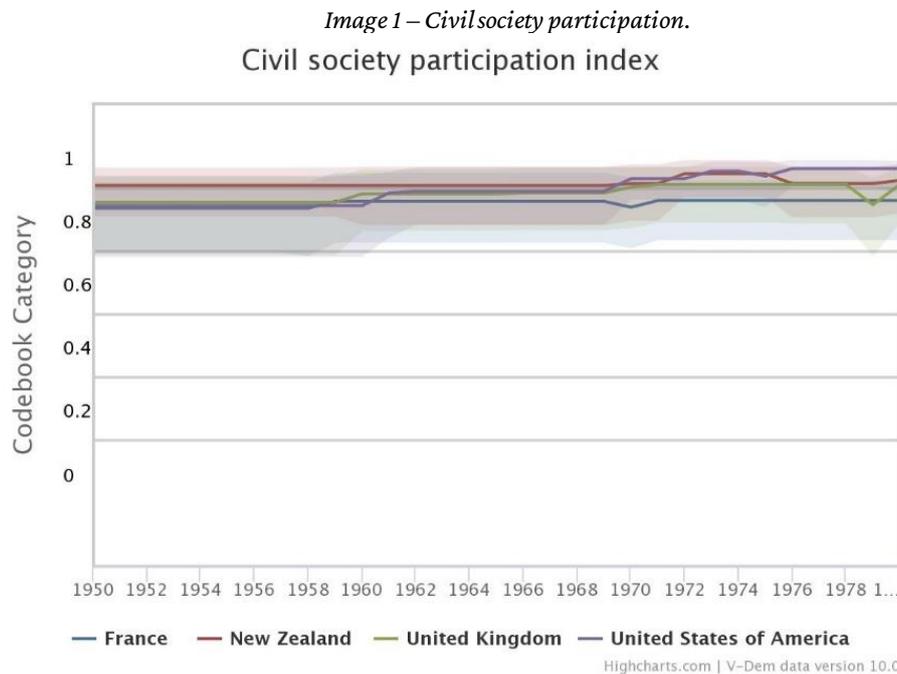
Despite repressive governmental responses, social movements assumed more assertive instances during the Cold War. Both in Washington, London, and Wellington, antinuclear movements coped with many hurdles. As such what had been done with other groups, national elites attempted not only to suppress their actions but also to spread throughout local citizens an awareness against them. They were linked to socialist movements. Hence these actors would be fifth-columns who sought to disarray local defensive policies and political systems (NEHRING, 2013; WITTNER, 1998).

The pluralist analytical strand advocated this phenomenon occurred in countries where political institutions enabled such a competition between rival conceptions. These authors, in this sense, claimed social movements could be considered interest groups once they attempt to influence the policymaking process in such a democratic polity (MEYER, 1993; TRUMAN, 1951). The previous literature would have found more systematically antinuclear movements in states such as the United States and New Zealand because they held, at least officially, institutions that lure people to organize groups to demand political changes. Such a context did not take into consideration institutional hurdles imposed on some groups which rallied against national administrations. This idea revolves around the structural incentives to mobilization; that is, whether groups receive incentives or not to pursue their collective interests and ideals.

Furthermore, such a political context matter because antinuclear instances were not only by specific groups but also social movements that advocated for different issues also endorsed this campaign. Both in the United Kingdom and the United States, women's rights groups, and environmentalists stood for denuclearization (NEHRING, 2017; WITTNER, 1998). The Greenpeace and the Voice of Women were cases of movements that assumed antinuclear positions (WITTNER, 1998).

According to the V-Dem index of civil society participation, these four countries, where the previous literature found antinuclear movements, had been consolidating a culture of people involvement. On a scale from 0 (least active civil

society) to 1 (most active civil society), these countries scored considerable values during the analyzed period. This index is composed of multiple dimensions estimated from a Bayesian factor analysis of elements such as gender participation, national variables, the role played by civil society organizations in decisionmaking processes. Image 1 illustrates this context.

Image 1 – Civil society participation.

Sources: Generated by the authors using data from the Varieties of Democracy (V-DEM, 2020a).

Hypothesis 2	Antinuclear arose where people were aware of their state's nuclear ambitions.

Source: Organized by the authors using different types of data.

Cold War was a period when people feared nuclear proliferation because of their awareness of how it could jeopardize their lives. In this sense, civil society played a relevant role to constrain decisionmakers in terms of escalating national military-related atomic programs. Such bottom-up pressure aimed to refrain states to build warheads by setting normative hurdles (TANNENWALD, 2005). In countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, the local population was aware of national nuclear ambitions. These countries were among the most active members of nuclear states. Likewise, in New Zealand inhabitants attempted to curb nuclear proliferation taking into account that their states joined alliances with nuclear countries (WITTNER, 2009).

The international press reported their tests in the Pacific islands. The Cuban Missile Crisis, in 1962, scared several societies once the world was on the brink of a nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union (ALLISON, 1971; GADDIS, 2006). Likewise, people cast their minds back to the appalling scene observed in 1945 when Washington detonated two atomic bombs in Japan. Furthermore, disasters related to nuclear energy (e.g., Three Mile Island episode in 1979) enhanced popular pressures against atomic policies.

Therefore, awareness of people on nuclear issues is a crucial variable. States that joined military alliances during the Cold War suffered pressure from their societies. A "nuclear taboo" was normatively built once these warheads became a source of threat to global society (TANNENWALD, 2005).

In countries where people were aware of national nuclear policies, it would be easier for social movements not only to arise but also to share some knowledge with their peers from abroad. International advocacy organizations were

set. For example, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND) was based, during the 1960s, in many states, such as the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (WITTNER, 1998). Once information about the risks of nuclear proliferation was spread throughout these states, these movements were able to strengthen their position. Their repertoires included: mass protests questioning military investments when some countries faced rampant social issues, petitions, lobbying, spreading the news on nuclear issues, and debating these subjects with scientists and politicians (NEHRING, 2013; WITTNER, 2009).

Hypothesis 3	Domestic politics and geopolitics interfere on antinuclear movements.

Source: Organized by the authors using different types of data.

Antinuclear movements were influenced by two contextual variables: (a) divergence perspectives of national administration foreign policy; and (b) geopolitical configurations. The existing literature claimed such aspects were crucial to understanding the configuration of these groups (MEYER, 1993; WITTNER, 1998).

In terms of foreign policy, antinuclear movements were more assertive when they stood against their national administration. If people opposed a national nuclear policy, these groups developed more activities to challenge this scenario. Such a civil society engagement is observed where people believe that their policymakers were not committed to nuclear disarmament. Tilly (2020) claimed, in this sense, that social movements assume naturally a conflictive instance towards the governmental bureaucracy. Hence these groups arose when local citizens did not agree with national nuclear policies.

Nevertheless, when administrations advocated for nuclear disarmament, these groups usually reduce their assertiveness (MEYER, 1993; WITTNER, 1998). In the United States and the United Kingdom, diplomatic measures towards setting some rules to ban atomic tests were grasped as achieved goals by these movements. For example, when Labor Parties were elected, during the scrutinized period, in London and Wellington, people assumed that these administrations were more prone to set reticent perspectives on nukes (CLEMENTS, 2015; WITTNER, 1998). Hence antinuclear agenda was set aside to congregate efforts in different areas such as contesting Vietnam War or human rights (WITTNER, 2009). The détente between Washington and Moscow was period when nuclear movements faded away because people believed that these superpowers would have assumed rational instances so a nuclear hecatomb would seem less reasonable (KISSINGER, 2017; WITTNER, 2009).

Such a geopolitical issue "closed a window of opportunity" in terms of moving forward in new regulations to nuclear technologies (MEYER, 1993). People became less anxious once Washington and Moscow refrained from their military-led competition during the 1970s. Likewise, the entry into force of the NPT was considered an important step towards nuclear disarmament. However, these dynamics did not achieve the aim entirely.

For the sake of the discussion, Article IX of the NPT was the most controversial aspect. It considered a nuclear state only countries that had manufactured and exploded their devices before January 1st, 1967 (PAUL; SHANKAR, 2014). Only five states (i.e., China, France, United Kingdom, the United States, and the Soviet Union) therefore were allowed to hold nuclear weapons, although they were encouraged to dismantle their arsenals by themselves (STUENKEL, 2010). Meanwhile, the rest of the world was completely denied to pursue this sort of armament. Also, the transference of nuclear material and technology-related became gradually more restricted. Instead of a non-proliferation milestone, Third World countries considered this a global acceptance of a hierarchy among states (BETTS, 1979; KAPUR, 1980; LARSON; SHEVCHENKO; 2014; PAUL, 2000).

Antinuclear movements occurred in states where the national elite was not able to lure people into the idea that nukes represent safeness, that here represent our hypotheses 4. An international relations' strand called realism advocates that perceived threats from neighboring states or changes in the global balance of power spark atomic plans because the

world system is supposedly an anarchic structure where countries fight for their existence (KISSINGER, 2017; MEARSHEIMER, 2001; PAUL, 2000; WALTZ, 1979). Nuclear weapons, therefore, provided a deterrence strategy to states or were the *ultima ratio* to safeguard their national sovereignty (MARTIN, 2013). In this sense, this theoretical framework does not embody normative interests.

At this point, these movements had had rickety capabilities in some countries because elites would have persuaded the population by claiming geopolitical reasons. Elites' narrative employs cultural and historical issues to demonstrate to the people the reasoning behind nuclear policies. In countries where regional rivals went nuclear, reveals more difficult to spread awareness against atomic warheads. Even if the lion's share of people assumed pacifists' instances, international variables impact on their assumptions. Hence nukes became a matter of survival. This context revolved around the concept of perception of threat. It is operationalized as a causal driver that leads states to adopt measures to safeguard its sovereignty. That is, regional disputes usually constitute rivalry relationships in a sense that states have to improve their defensive strategies.
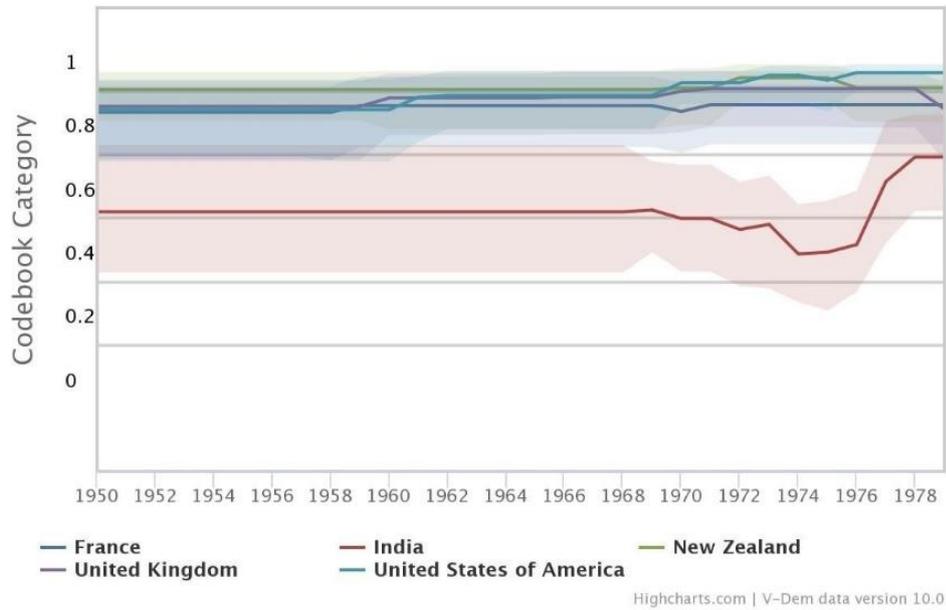
India and the antinuclear movements in the Cold War

The year of 1968 in India is not as documented as events that occurred in the advanced capitalist centers. Local cultural traditions motivated many western citizens to pursue different lifestyles (e.g., the Beatles traveled to India, in 1968, to study meditation). Local leaders inspired social movements around the world – for example, Mahatma Gandhi (NEHRING, 2016; SURI, 2009). Indeed, there were some social agitations during the analyzed period. New Delhi was requested to sustain its sovereignty. In 1961, Indian troops, for example, expelled Portuguese authorities out of Goa (MALONE, 2011). Since its independence in 1947 to 1968, India had already waged two wars against Pakistan (1947-1948/1965) and one with China in 1962 (PANT; JOSHI, 2016).

Social issues triggered some local rebellions against authorities. Inequalities were widespread throughout India. Unemployment, social exclusion of lower-caste communities, and land distribution were sources of agitation (MALONE, 2011). Political turmoil was spread across the nation once 1.7 million railway workers set a strike in 1974. A group called "J.P. Movement" paralyzed the Bihar state, requiring more efficient public policies (PERKOVICH, 2001). Communist Party of India and some scholars endorsed grassroots uprisings. Rural inhabitants, also, complained against some regional political dynamics. In this, the Naxalite organization was founded in 1967. This left-wing movement organized armed incursion against landlords, bureaucratic offices, and Indian rangers. It claimed to fight against unequal land distribution and governmental oppression in some regions such as West Bengal (BENDFELT, 2011; DASH, 2006; HARRIS, 2010).

However, non-proliferation issues were not among these claims (ABRAHAM, 2009). This essay, therefore, set an in-depth investigation to evaluate whether hypotheses elaborated have the inferential potential for explaining such a phenomenon. To the extent that Indian social engagement in public policies is debated, in comparison to the given countries compared, scored considerably lower values in the V-Dem index on social participation during decision-making processes. During the very end of the scrutinized period, Indian increased their score. Image 2 illustrates such a finding.
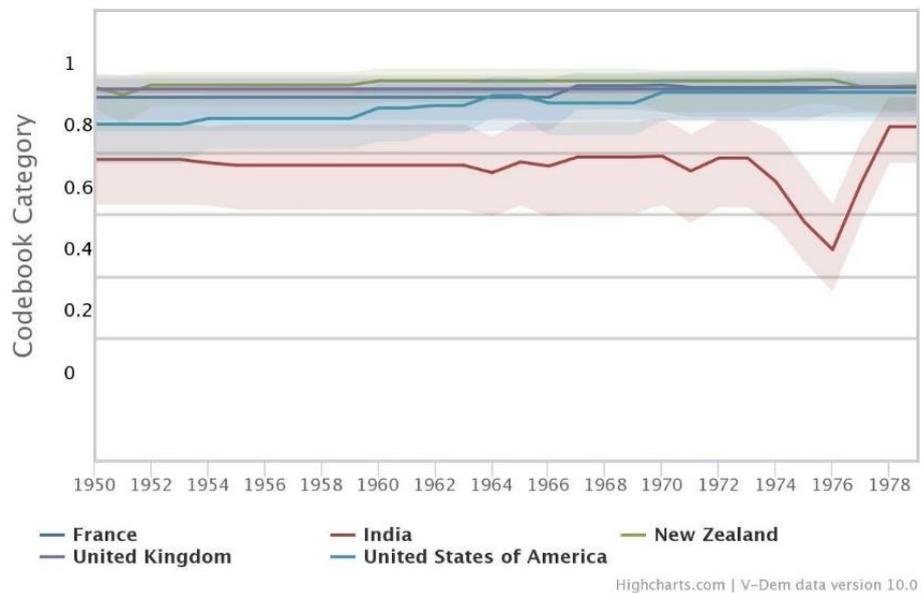
Image 2 – India and Civil Society Participation.

It is important to triangulate these data with another V-Dem variable: core civil society. It revolves around how robust were grassroots organizations in terms of autonomy from the state. This measure shows whether local citizens could seize opportunities to pursue their political and civic goals (V-DEM, 2020b). Image 3 demonstrates that the Indian context was considered the less robust (closer to value 0) than other states assessed here.

Image 3 – Core Civil Society.

To the extent that the Indian context offered fewer incentives than other countries to social movements, the confidence on (hypothesis 1) was increased. Local citizens assumed more assertive actions towards social issues. Nuclear proliferation was not among the core of the protestors' agenda. Unlike advanced capitalist centers, this society had not attained a sense of economic and physical security that enables a claim for such a post-materialist subject (INGLEHART, 1977). In this sense, just the local elite could focus exclusively on this topic. Generally, people were fighting for better public policies to reduce poverty, famine, and amelioration of social conditions.

World Bank index on poverty headcount ration at US$1.90 has evaluated India since 1977. At this moment, 61.6% of Indians faced such economic hardship. In the United States, the United Kingdom, and France these percentages revolved around 0.5% to 1% of the local population (WORLD BANK, 2020). Furthermore, Washington worsened this context when it restricted the supply of grains shipment for New Delhi related to the Food for Peace program in 1966 (MALONE, 2011). The White House responded to India's diplomatic instances against the Vietnam War. Such a geopolitical movement affected Indian amounts of available food once this state relied heavily on the United States foreign aid (MALONE, 2011).

On the hypothesis 2, the Ministry of External Affairs reduced public accountability on foreign affairs once they maintained a sort of monopoly on information (MALONE, 2011). During the Cold War, there were some debates in the Parliament on international issues. However, many data were classified. On nuclear issues, for example, Indian leaders (e.g., Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi) preferred to restrict the decision to a close elite composed of bureaucratic officials and personal advisors (PERKOVICH, 2001; SINGH, 2019). Despite Indian demonstrated, in surveys done in 1958, reticence on the build of atomic bombs (WITTNER, 2009), indigenous antinuclear movements were not able to access sources of information once the government retained them. Furthermore, the nuclear policy was not discussed during electoral seasons so that it was marginalized at the expense of Pakistan- and China-related issues (PERKOVICH, 2001).

Likewise, Indian elites usually advocated against nuclear weapons. Gandhi was a worldwide known pacifist leader. Nehru considered that India played a moral role in leading pacifists discussing (FREY, 2009; SINGH, 2019; WITTNER, 2009). He strengthened Indian ties to global pacifist networks by endorsing institutions that organized the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs (KRAFT; NEHRING; SACHSE, 2018). Indira Gandhi described nukes eradication as a topic among New Delhi's foreign affairs priorities (GANDHI, 1972). Unlike Washington, London, Paris, or Wellington, New Delhi strongly assumed antinuclear diplomatic positions.
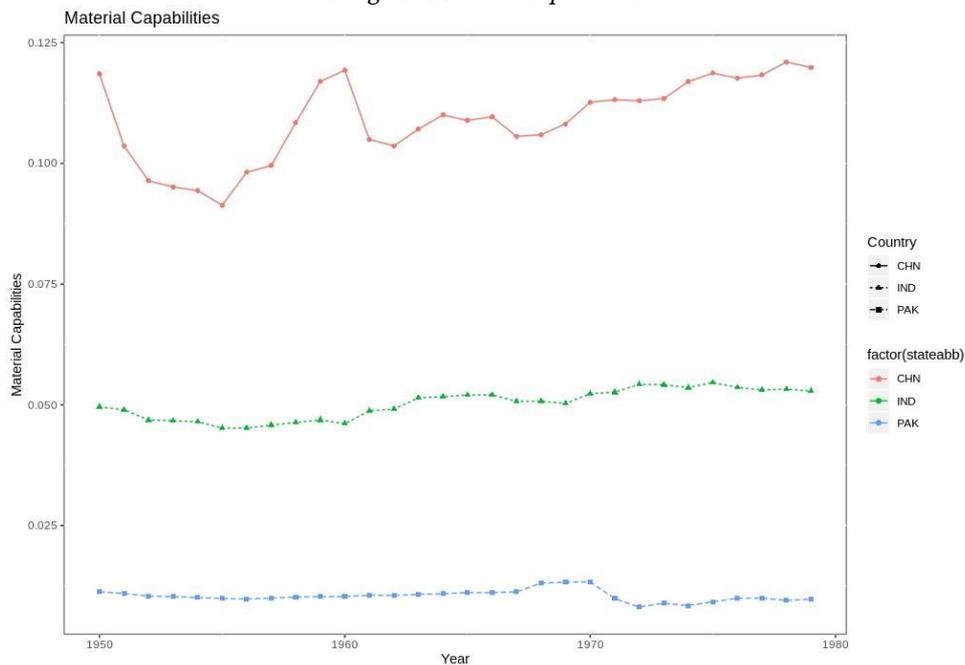
Likewise, India maintained a national nuclear policy. It was possible due to its ambiguous nature. Once the Indian elite advocated for atomic disarmament, it also sustained a Third World perspective. Whereas New Delhi developed a nuclear policy claim peaceful purposes, it also stated that great powers could not prevent such a national issue because their non-proliferation rules were colonial traps aimed to freeze global power (AYRES, 2017; MALONE, 2011; SINGH, 1998). Likewise, such a geopolitical context was seized by Indian elites to spread national awareness of national pride. Nuclear researches were related to technological development thereby, India supposedly needed to progress on this topic. As a Third World state, this country should have the same rights granted to great powers. This "one world" idea enabled this pragmatic strategy to pursue nuclear devices while advocating for peaceful issues (ABRAHAM, 2014; FREY, 2009; PANT, 2011). Pro-bomb lobbies were able to act without huge protests against their interests (PERKOVICH, 2001). Hence the confidence on (hypothesis 3) was also increased.

Finally, India faced geopolitical tensions with neighbors. China tested a nuclear device in 1964 (STUENKEL, 2010). International rules accepted the Chinese program in the NPT. In this sense, this New Delhi's geopolitical rival was able to manage a cutting-edge military-related technology. Once India waged regional wars due to territorial sovereignty, some authorities claimed a nuclear option should be left open (JOSHI; O'DONNELL, 2018; PANT, 2011; PERKOVICH, 2001). The realist hypothesis, in this sense, unveils a relevant aspect to explain this context. People were exposed to international threats from the neighborhood. Neither the United States, nor New Zealand, nor the United Kingdom faced such a context.

France, for example, set an independent foreign policy, during Charles De Gaulle's administration (1959 -1969) to pursue pragmatic diplomatic ties with Washington and Moscow (GADDIS, 2006; HOBSBAWN, 1995; KISSINGER, 2017).

Thus, India was exposed to a context of international rivalry. It was the only case analyzed to have waged war against regional powers – which, also, carried nuclear weapons. Leaving the nuclear option open could be also grasped as a defensive strategy. Correlates of War database demonstrated the dimensions of such a geopolitical competition in Asia during the Cold War. A variable called Composite Indicator of National Capability (CINC) takes into account six dimensions: total population, urban population, iron, and steel production, energy consumption, military expenditure and personnel (CORRELATES OF WAR, 2020). The closer to 0.125 a country scores, the stronger it is. Plotting the image 4 on South Asia illustrates this scenario of rising tension. China systematically scored values considerably higher than India.

Image 4 – Material Capabilities.

Sources: Generated by the authors using data from Correlates of War (2020).

Conclusion

The analytical model proved efficient to unveil the causes of the lack of antinuclear movements in India during the scrutinized period. India presented both divergent social dynamics and geopolitical issues from the other countries analyzed by the lion's share of existing literature. This phenomenon, hence, hanged onto explanations from different levels of abstraction. On structural aspects, regional rivalries increased national perceptions of threat. Since principally China was threatening India at its regional security frame, in a cold war context, antinuclear movement engagement was changed into the narrative that nuclear development strengthening could be something positive to India. Concomitantly, New Delhi advocated for moral issues related to nuclear disarmament. In this sense, domestic issues similarly were affected once nuclear policies were cored into very few decisionmakers. It must be said that the period produced fewer opportunities to get access to information and documents about nuclear theme, something that could allow narratives approaching civil society from state data, as we argued, was not seen as a thing to be done by the political elite from India due to its ambiguous nature.

The scant amount of information available to civil society reduced accountability. In a society impoverished by a lasting colonial past, economic, and wartime crises, also, people have a penchant for claiming for materialistic issues (i.e.,

basic needs). The nuclear agenda, in this sense, was observed, more assertively, in countries such as France and the United Kingdom. Therefore, it was inferred that this phenomenon was caused by four elements: (a) few possibilities to public participation; (b) scant available information on nuclear policy; (c) lack of a political schism between national elites and civil society on this topic; and (d) geopolitical dynamics.

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