

**Politics & The Bomb:
Exploring the Role of Epistemic Communities
in Nuclear Non-Proliferation Outcomes.**

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ABSTRACT

The role of epistemic communities in influencing policy formulation is underexplored in International Relations theory in general and in nuclear non-proliferation studies in particular. This thesis explores how epistemic communities – groups of experts knowledgeable in niche issue areas – have affected nuclear non-proliferation policy formulation in two important and under-studied cases: the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials (ABACC) and the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) Program. It demonstrates that applying an epistemic community approach provides explanatory power heretofore lacking in explanations of these cases' origins.

The thesis applies the epistemic community framework to non-proliferation, using Haas' (1992) seminal exploration of epistemic communities in the context of natural scientific and environmental policies. Specifically, it analyses the creation and successful implementation of ABACC and the CTR Program, which, respectively, verified the non-nuclear weapon status of Argentina and Brazil and facilitated the denuclearisation of Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine. These cooperative nuclear non-proliferation agreements are shown to be the result of a process involving substantial input and direction from experts constituting epistemic communities.

The thesis explores the differences in the emergence, composition, and influence mechanisms of the epistemic communities behind ABACC and the CTR Program. It reaches the conclusion that understanding the role of an epistemic community in non-proliferation policies leads to the possibility of creating more effective non-proliferation policies in the future.