

The resonance of the humanitarian initiative in the United States and the United Kingdom: A comparative analysis

Francisca Seele
Intern Research Group International Politics
University of Antwerp
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Introduction

Nuclear disarmament has proven to be a difficult and highly-debated topic for the international community. To achieve nuclear arms reduction, various international treaties have been set up to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, as well as to facilitate disarmament. While a clear majority of states argue that efforts must be made towards nuclear disarmament, there is no consensus on the way this should happen. Because of conflicting opinions and interests between states, particularly between nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states, nuclear disarmament seems to have reached a stalemate. This can mainly be attributed to the nuclear weapons states, who – with a combined stockpile of over 14.900 nuclear weapons – have been slow to implement effective disarmament measures as stipulated in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).¹ Moreover, the failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference serves as evidence for the strained negotiations on nuclear disarmament on the side of nuclear weapon states.² Dissatisfied with the current system of nuclear arms reduction, a movement has risen to challenge these disarmament mechanisms: the humanitarian initiative.

The humanitarian initiative was established in 2010, with governments, the international Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, various United Nations agencies, and non-governmental organizations working together to “reframe the debate on nuclear weapons.”³ Rather than concentrating on the security centered aspects of nuclear weapons, the humanitarian initiative strives to shift the focus towards the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapon detonations. In addition, the humanitarian initiative concentrates on society and the individual, as opposed to a state centered approach. By emphasizing the possible effects of nuclear weapons on health and the environment, the movement is trying to give new impetus to nuclear disarmament.⁴ The initiative has quickly attracted a large following, with state engagement steadily increasing throughout the years. Arguably its biggest accomplishment thus far has been the adoption of UN Resolution L41 during a meeting of the First Committee of the UN General Assembly. Accepted by a vote of 123-38, with 16 member states abstaining, the United Nations called for a “Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding

¹ “World Nuclear Weapon Stockpile,” Ploughshares Fund, last modified March 2, 2016, <http://www.ploughshares.org/world-nuclear-stockpile-report>.

² Richard Norton-Taylor, “Nuclear disarmament? Forget it,” *The Guardian*, last edited June 2, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/defence-and-security-blog/2015/jun/02/nuclear-disarmament-forget-it>.

³ “Humanitarian Initiative,” ICAN, accessed March 23, 2017, <http://www.icanw.org/campaign/humanitarian-initiative>.

⁴ Alexander Kmentt, “The development of the international initiative on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons and its effect on the nuclear weapons debate,” *International Review of the Red Cross* 97, no.899 (2015): 683.

Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards their Total Elimination.”⁵ Following the outcome of this Resolution, negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty have commenced in 2017.

Notably absent from these negotiations are the nations actually in control of nuclear disarmament, namely the nuclear weapon states, as well as the majority of their allies. States that possess these weapons, such as the United States and the United Kingdom, have refrained from endorsing the agenda of the humanitarian initiative, favoring their own step-by-step approach.⁶ The humanitarian initiative, as well as others that promote nuclear disarmament, do however make an effort to pressure the nuclear weapon states into implementing effective measures towards nuclear disarmament. As mentioned before, the humanitarian initiative strives to change the discourse surrounding nuclear weapons, concentrating on society and the individual, in an attempt to influence nuclear policy. This thesis sets out to examine in what context the humanitarian initiative has the largest chance of resonating with the public, with the United States and the United Kingdom as case studies. This leads us to the main question of this thesis:

What are the chances of the humanitarian initiative catching on in the United States and the United Kingdom?

Using theories on framing and resonance, this thesis will analyze the rhetorical frame created around nuclear weapons by the humanitarian initiative, and in what context this frame has the highest chance of resonating with the public. The project will specifically concentrate on the United States and the United Kingdom as the humanitarian initiative appears to apply the same rhetoric to both these countries, with seemingly different results. It appears improbable that the humanitarian initiative will have a significant impact on American public opinion and politics, while its views and concepts are arguably making its way into British public opinion and politics.

Extensive research has been carried out on the topics of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, framing, and the influence of pressure groups on policy. In addition, the humanitarian initiative and its aim to reframe the debate on nuclear disarmament have also been examined by various scholars. Research on the humanitarian initiative is predominantly descriptive in nature, with multiple authors adding a prescriptive layer to further the cause of nuclear disarmament. For instance, in her article “Changing the discourse of nuclear weapons: The humanitarian initiative,” Elizabeth Minor examines the global discourse on nuclear weapons, as well as the progress of the humanitarian

⁵ “United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards Their Total Elimination,” United Nations, accessed March 27, 2017, <https://www.un.org/disarmament/ptnw>.

⁶ John Borrie, “Humanitarian reframing of nuclear weapons and the logic of a ban,” *International Affairs* 90, no.3 (2014): 626.

initiative, before outlining how the humanitarian initiative should move forward to generate more results.⁷ Ambassador Alexander Kmentt outlines the origins of the movement as well, while also pushing for “urgent and determined action away from reliance on nuclear weapons” in his research.⁸ John Borrie, chief of research at the United Nations Institute for Disarmament, provides a more analytical approach to the workings of the humanitarian initiative.⁹ Borrie uses theories on framing to examine the strategic processes involved in the reframing efforts of the humanitarian initiative. This thesis will further explore this angle, incorporating various theories on framing and resonance.

This thesis aims to add a new dimension to existing scholarship on the humanitarian initiative by examining in which context the movement has a larger chance of resonating with the public. By researching this, this thesis will provide an insight into whether the humanitarian initiative can hypothetically catch on in the United States and the United Kingdom. Moreover, this thesis will identify which factors can contribute to the resonance and possible success of the humanitarian initiative in general. The first chapter will construct the theoretical framework, identifying the key concepts and theories that relate to the use of framing. The second chapter will then define the methodology used for this thesis. The third chapter will present a study on the process of framing by different elements of the humanitarian initiative. Subsequently, the fourth and fifth chapter will discuss how various factors in the United States and the United Kingdom explain differences in the chance of resonance in both countries.

⁷ Elizabeth Minor, “Changing the discourse on nuclear weapons: The humanitarian initiative,” *International Review of the Red Cross* 97, no.899 (2015): 711; 730.

⁸ Kmentt, “The development of the international initiative,” 709.

⁹ Borrie, “Humanitarian reframing,” 625-646.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework

Framing

Framing can be described as constructing how participants and outsiders should view an issue or situation. It is the way “participants characterize, label, and categorize a particular episode of collective action.”¹⁰ Moreover, framing is “an active, processional phenomenon that implies agency and contention at the level of reality construction.”¹¹ Social movement organizations, such as the humanitarian initiative, use framing to encourage collective action.¹² Being able to influence the perception of the audience of the frame is a powerful tool that can be used for support or mobilization.¹³ For example, during his presidency, George W. Bush framed “the country’s situation in terms of terrorism/homeland security,” while Democrats responded by “increasingly framing the country in terms of the economy,” in order to increase support.¹⁴ Another example is the framing of the conflict in Colombia. The FARC framed the conflict as being about poverty, with the organization fighting against the skewed distribution of wealth. In contrast, the Colombian government accused the FARC of being a terrorist organization as opposed to them being guerrillas. President Uribe actively used language and the label ‘terrorism’ “to avoid giving legal protection or conferring a specific legal status” to the group, as well as to gain support for his presidency.¹⁵

Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, drawing on an extensive number of sources, have mapped different theories on framing in their article “Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment.” The scholars discuss the processes of framing, as well as different elements that contribute to a frame’s resonance. The theories constructed and identified by Benford and Snow will form the basis of the theoretical framework of this thesis. The authors argue that a frame can be identified by three core framing tasks: diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing. These tasks are derived from the principle that “collective action frames are constructed in part as movement adherents negotiate a shared understanding of some problematic condition or situation they define as in need of change, make attributions regarding who or what is to blame, articulate an

¹⁰ Charles King, “Power, Social Violence, and Civil Wars,” in *Leashing the Dogs of War: Conflict Management in Divided Worlds*, eds. Chester A. Crocker, Fen O. Hampson, and Pamela R. Aall (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2007), 118.

¹¹ Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow, “Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 26, no.1 (2000): 614.

¹² Borrie, “Humanitarian Reframing,” 636.

¹³ Benford and Snow, “Framing Processes,” 619.

¹⁴ James N. Druckman, “What’s It All About? Framing in Political Science,” in *Perspectives on Framing*, ed. Gideon Keren (New York: Psychology Press, 2011): 290-292.

¹⁵ Guillermo Ojalora Lazano and Sebastian Machado, “The Objective Qualification of Non-International Armed Conflicts,” *Amsterdam Law Forum* 4, no.1 (2012): 60-61.

alternative set of arrangements, and urge others to act in concert to affect change.”¹⁶ The first core framing task, diagnostic framing, entails the identification of the problem, including identifying its source and the culpable agents. The second core framing task, prognostic framing, “involves the articulation of a proposed solution to the problem, or at least a plan of attack, and the strategies for carrying out the plan.”¹⁷ The third core framing task, motivational framing, can be defined as “a ‘call to arms’ or rationale for engaging in ameliorative collective action, including the construction of appropriate vocabularies of motive.”¹⁸ In short, it provides agency.

Take for example the war in Afghanistan, officially called Operation Enduring Freedom. The motives behind this operation have been subject of discussion among scholars, but president Bush framed this operation as a moral war of liberation.¹⁹ As a part of diagnostic framing, Bush identified Al Qaeda and the Taliban as the main adversaries in the conflict in speeches aimed at the American people. Bush essentially identified three main problems which he attributed to these actors: radical and evil beliefs formed a threat to the outside world, crimes were being committed against the Afghan population, and they presumably wanted to acquire or already possessed weapons of mass destruction.²⁰ Then, for each of these problems, Bush proposed solutions, which is part of prognostic framing. For example, to stop the crimes that were being committed against the Afghan population, he advocated removal of the regime, installation of a new government, and humanitarian aid.²¹ Finally, the third core framing task, motivational framing, is also present in his speeches. Among other things, the president called for Americans to dedicate two years of their lives to serve the United States.²² To give the people a rationale for joining his cause, Bush made them aware of their duties towards the United States, freedom, the world, and history.²³ And with these three core framing tasks, Bush created a version of reality with the aim of getting support from the American people for Operation Enduring Freedom.²⁴ This example is of course a simplified version of events, but it clearly illustrates what the core framing tasks entail.

¹⁶ Benford and Snow, “Framing Processes,” 615.

¹⁷ Ibidem, 616.

¹⁸ Ibidem, 617.

¹⁹ Hassan Oz, *Constructing America’s Freedom Agenda for the Middle East: Democracy or Domination* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), 11; John Ikenberry, “America’s Imperial Ambition,” *Foreign Affairs* 81, no.5 (2002): 56.

²⁰ “Selected Speeches of President George W. Bush: 2001-2008,” White House Archives, accessed April 17, 2017, https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/bushrecord/documents/Selected_Speeches_George_W_Bush.pdf: 66-68; 86.

²¹ Ibidem, 86-87.

²² Ibidem, 111.

²³ Ibidem, 71; 99; 107; 111.

²⁴ Note: this paragraph contains similarities with an earlier research paper. Francisca Seele, “Framing the Fight for Freedom: An analysis on the frame that was created by President George W. Bush around Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, 2001-2002” (unpublished research paper, Utrecht University, 2014).

According to Benford and Snow, collective action frames have various variable features, which include “problem identification and direction or locus of attribution; flexibility and rigidity; inclusivity and exclusivity; interpretive scope and influence; and degree of resonance.”²⁵ In this thesis, the main focus will be on the degree of resonance, as it is “relevant to the issue of the effectiveness or mobilizing potency of proffered framings, thereby attending to the question of why some framings seem to be effective or ‘resonate’ while others do not.”²⁶

Resonance

The resonance of a frame can be examined on the basis of two factors, namely the credibility of a frame, and its relative salience.²⁷ Benford and Snow describe credibility as a function of “frame consistency, empirical credibility, and credibility of the frame articulators or claimsmakers.”²⁸ The level of frame consistency depends on how the “beliefs, claims, and actions” of the framing actor correspond to each other.²⁹ Whether a frame has empirical credibility depends on how this frame corresponds to current events in the world. The third element that contributes to frame credibility is the credibility of the frame articulator. Benford and Snow argue that “hypothetically, the greater the status and/or perceived expertise of the frame articulator and/or the organization they represent from the vantage point of potential adherents and constituents, the more plausible and resonant the framings or claims.”³⁰

The second factor, relative salience, refers to the importance of the frame, or how much it stands out in people’s lives. This concept has three aspects as well: “centrality, experiential commensurability, and narrative fidelity.”³¹ According to Benford and Snow, “centrality has to do with how central the beliefs, values, and ideas associated with movement frames are to the lives to the targets of mobilization.”³² In other words, centrality refers to how much importance the audience gives to the subject. The element of experiential commensurability looks at whether the frame is “congruent or resonant with the personal, everyday experiences of the targets of mobilization.”³³ Finally, with the idea of narrative fidelity, the frame is placed in a nation’s cultural context. The more the frame fits in a nation’s cultural narrations, myths, and/or ideologies, the greater its salience. Taken together, these factors can hypothetically predict how an audience will respond to a frame.

²⁵ Benford and Snow, “Framing Processes,” 618.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, 619.

²⁷ *Ibidem*.

²⁸ *Ibidem*.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, 620.

³⁰ *Ibidem*.

³¹ *Ibidem*, 621.

³² *Ibidem*.

³³ *Ibidem*.

To exemplify these theories, one can again look at the example of Operation Enduring Freedom, specifically between 2001 and 2002. First, there was frame consistency. For example, Bush claimed that military action was needed to eliminate the threat of Al Qaeda and the Taliban. The United States military then attacked both parties, and an interim government was elected to replace the Taliban regime.³⁴ The action corresponded to the claim. In addition, the frame had empirical credibility. Bush claimed that terrorists posed a threat to the United States, which corresponded to then-current events. The 9/11 attacks were fresh in people's minds, but there was also a series of anthrax letters that were sent out to the media and politicians, which was related back to Muslim extremism.³⁵ Moreover, the frame articulator was arguably a credible actor. The president of the United States is head of state, head of government, and commander-in-chief of the United States. As president, Bush most certainly had status, and he had the overwhelming support of Congress immediately after the 9/11 attacks. With regards to centrality, a Gallup poll from October 2001 shows that terrorism formed a main concern for the American people after 9/11."³⁶ In addition, the frame was resonant with personal, everyday experiences of mobilization, for example through the reinforcement of safety measures, such as intensified airport security. Lastly, the frame had narrative fidelity, as the frame created by Bush strongly hinges on the expansion of American ideals, which is a recurrent theme in the history of the United States.³⁷

Current state of research

Benford already researched the process of framing with regards to the nuclear disarmament movement in the early 1980s, the results of which he published in his 1993 article "Frame Disputes within the Nuclear Disarmament Movement."³⁸ His observations bear a striking resemblance to the current debate surrounding the topic, as he states that "for disarmament adherents, nuclear weapons represent a threat to life, while for the movement opponents the same object represent security from an attack by an enemy state or 'evil empire.' Each side attempts to counter the version of reality espoused by the other."³⁹ Benford specifically focused his research on frame disputes within the

³⁴ "Afghanistan Country Profile," BBC News, last edited March 8, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-12011352>.

³⁵ "Terrorism 2000-2001," Federal Bureau of Investigation, accessed April 17, 2017, <https://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/terror>.

³⁶ David W. Moore, "Terrorism Most Important Problem, But Americans Remain Upbeat," Gallup Inc, last edited October 18, 2001, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/4996/terrorism-most-important-problem-americans-remain-upbeat.aspx>.

³⁷ Anders Stephanson, *Manifest Destiny: American Expansion and the Empire of Right* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1996), 18; 28; 61.

³⁸ Robert D. Benford, "Frame Disputes within the Nuclear Disarmament Movement," *Social Forces* 71, no.3 (1993): 679.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, 680.

nuclear disarmament movement, concentrating on disagreements among the twelve organizations about their framing activities.

In a more recent study, Borrie researched the framing activities of the humanitarian initiative. Borrie first compares efforts on nuclear disarmament to campaigns against cluster munition and anti-personnel mines. Then, notably drawing on theories by Benford and Snow, the author examines different reframing processes, particularly “frame bridging, amplification, extension and transformation.”⁴⁰ One of the main challenges Borrie identifies is lack of a clear, emergent goal for the humanitarian initiative, and that the humanitarian initiative does not yet have the support of many states to reach the long-term goal, which is a nuclear weapons ban. However, it is now clear that since the publication of Borrie’s article in 2015, the humanitarian initiative has been able to keep momentum for its cause. A clear, emergent goal has been set up in the form of the negotiations for a weapons ban, and a great number of countries have voiced their support for these negotiations. Other conclusions address how framing at the time was aimed primarily at non-nuclear weapons states, and that nuclear weapon states must get involved to achieve the goals of the humanitarian initiative.⁴¹ With these development in mind, the subsequent chapters will research how the humanitarian initiative is now projecting its frame onto the United States and the United Kingdom, and what its chances of catching on in these countries are.

⁴⁰ Borrie, “Humanitarian Reframing,” 636.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, 645.

Chapter 2: Methodology

Research design

To identify the conditions under which the humanitarian initiative will likely gain support from a state's populace, and more specifically, whether the movement will be able to catch on in the United States and the United Kingdom, this research will utilize both a document analysis and a case study methodology. The methods used to answer the main question are qualitative in nature, and this thesis can be classified as descriptive and explanatory. The first phase of this research, a document analysis, will determine the frame of the humanitarian initiative, and whether this frame meets the theoretical conditions that would hypothetically increase its chance of success. The frame of the humanitarian initiative is the independent variable in this research, as are the frame consistency and empirical credibility of this frame. The second phase of this research will examine, using a comparative case study, which additional conditions a country is required to have to increase the resonance of this frame. This phase will therefore examine the mediating variables. Both the frame of the humanitarian initiative, and the national context in which it is projected, are necessary variables to increase resonance.

The United States and the United Kingdom were specifically chosen for the comparative case study for a variety of reasons. The United Kingdom is generally argued to be the first of the current nuclear weapons states to possibly carry through with nuclear disarmament. If the United Kingdom will indeed be the first to disarm, it is thought that this may then cause a snowball effect, prompting disarmament in more nuclear weapon states. An analysis on whether the humanitarian initiative can catch on in this country is therefore arguably most relevant at this moment in time. Then, from a methodological standpoint, a comparative analysis between these the United States and the United Kingdom allows for an in depth look at different variables that contribute to the degree of resonance of a frame. The countries are similar on various levels, and differ mainly with regards to the variables that are relevant for this research. For instance, comparing democracies to non-democracies requires a higher level of abstraction, as the object of study is less functionally equal across cases.⁴² Other similarities between cases also contribute to its functional equivalence, such as the degree of press freedom. From this methodological point of view, the United Kingdom is more similar to the United States and France, than to other nuclear weapons states such as Russia or China. Finally, from a more practical

⁴² Peter Mair, "Concepts and concept formation," in *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective*, ed. Donatella della Porta and Michael Keating (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008): 184-185.

perspective, language limitations on my behalf mean that the United States and the United Kingdom would be the most logical countries to select as case studies. As part of this research involves analyzing, for example, the media, thorough knowledge of the language of the selected countries is imperative.

The actors

The frame articulator is the actor that projects its views or the views of the organization it represents, in this case the humanitarian initiative, onto a target audience in hopes of mobilizing them into supporting its cause. State interest in the objectives of the humanitarian initiative has been growing steadily in the previous years. In 2010, states expressed their “deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons” in the final document of the review reference of the NPT. In 2013 and 2014, four international conferences have been organized to discuss the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. The last of these conferences, which was hosted in Vienna, saw delegates from 158 countries participating. Moreover, this conference brought forward the so-called Humanitarian Pledge, now endorsed by 127 states, which stresses the need to fill the “legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.”⁴³ In addition, various more joint statements have been delivered and endorsed within the frameworks of the NPT and the United Nations.⁴⁴

Apart from states, there is also a substantial body of organizations and agencies involved with the humanitarian initiative. A significant non-state actor is the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), which has played an active part in the various activities of the humanitarian initiative. Then there is also ICAN, or the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. ICAN is one of the bigger players with regards to the humanitarian initiative. It describes itself as “a coalition of non-government organizations in one hundred countries advocating for a strong and effective nuclear weapons ban treaty,” and claims to have 440 partners in these countries.⁴⁵ In line with the humanitarian initiative in general, ICAN is “focused on mobilizing civil society around the world to support the specific objective of negotiating a global nuclear weapon ban treaty.”⁴⁶ At the time of

⁴³ “Humanitarian Pledge Document,” Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, accessed April 25, 2017, https://www.bmeia.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Zentrale/Aussenpolitik/Abruestung/HINW14/HINW14vienna_Pledge_Document.pdf.

⁴⁴ Minor, “Changing the discourse,” 715

⁴⁵ “Humanitarian Initiative,” ICAN.

⁴⁶ “Structure and People,” ICAN, accessed May 1, 2017, <http://www.icanw.org/campaign/structure-and-people>.

writing, ICAN lists twenty organizations as its partners in the United States, and eighteen in the United Kingdom.⁴⁷ However, the size, reach, and activity of these organizations strongly vary.

Finally, there is a group of individuals that carries out the message of the humanitarian initiative, and nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in general. For example, there are scientists and academics who voice their opinions through articles and at conferences, but also people from the entertainment industry.⁴⁸

To limit the scope of this research, this thesis will specifically focus on a series of documents, people, and organizations that all represent the ideas of the humanitarian initiative. The frame articulators or actors therefore include the signatories of the Humanitarian Pledge and UN resolution 41; the Council of Delegates of the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement who, in 2011, adopted a resolution on nuclear disarmament; ICAN; Elizabeth Minor, ambassador Alexander Kmentt, and Richard Slade, Robert Tickner, and Phoebe Wynn-Pope, who have published articles in ICRC's *International Review of the Red Cross*; and at the local level Pax Christi UK and Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in the United Kingdom, and Physicians for Social Responsibility in the United States.

The target audience

In this thesis, the focus is on the resonance of the humanitarian initiative in the United States and the United Kingdom. As the movement aims to influence the public in the United States and the United Kingdom, civil society in these countries will be regarded as the target audience of the framing activities of the humanitarian initiative. This is evidently a broad group of people, which brings along a risk of generalization. But as the main question revolves around influencing public opinion in these countries, and not about influencing specific groups in society, this will not necessarily be a limitation. As discussed previously, there has not been a great deal of research carried out on the topic of the resonance of the humanitarian initiative in the United States and the United Kingdom. By offering a relatively broad analysis, this thesis aims to provide a more comprehensive overview. Further research can then concentrate more on specific groups.

The more elite groups in the United States and the United Kingdom, such as the governments and think tanks, will not be the focus of this thesis. While the humanitarian initiative targets both civil society as well as policymakers, a substantial effort goes into the former, as it is the intention of the humanitarian initiative to influence public opinion and facilitate change with a bottom up approach.

⁴⁷ "Partner organizations," ICAN, accessed May 29, 2017, <http://www.icanw.org/campaign/partner-organizations/>.

⁴⁸ "ICAN Resolved to Ban Nukes," Toward a Nuclear Free World, last edited March 3, 2013, <http://www.nuclearabolition.info/index.php/7-ican-resolved-to-ban-nukes>.

Its efforts to reframe the debate are predominantly focused on civil society, and it is from this perspective that this thesis will do so as well. It might, however, be interesting for further research to analyze the elite. The research would then likely not examine theories on framing and resonance, but shift towards questions on the (strategic) interests of policymakers, among others.

Data collection method

The research will be carried out by analyzing a combination of primary and secondary sources. To analyze the framing activities of the humanitarian initiative, a selection of primary sources brought forward by the actors will be examined. Specific documents that will be used are UN Resolution L41, the Humanitarian Pledge, and the 2011 Resolution 1 by the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement. Furthermore, articles published in ICRC's *International Review of the Red Cross* issue on "The human cost of nuclear weapons" will be used as well. Finally, this thesis will also assess the framing activities through official communication channels of ICAN, Pax Christ UK, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and Physicians for Social Responsibility.

Regarding the resonance of the frame, this thesis will analyze, among other sources, scholarly articles, the media, opinion polls, and surveys. Polls and surveys from, among others, Gallup and YouGov will be assessed to research people's values and beliefs regarding nuclear weapons. Furthermore, for an overview of the policy agendas of political parties in the United States and the United Kingdom, their respective manifestos will be consulted. Other secondary sources include pieces on nuclear disarmament in general, and the humanitarian initiative in particular. In addition, secondary sources that examine framing and resonance are included as well.

Chapter 3: Framing – Arguments for a Humanitarian Approach

Diagnostic framing

The first core framing task is diagnostic framing. This entails identification of the problem, identifying the source of the problem and the culpable agents. As its name reveals, the humanitarian initiative argues that the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons constitute the main problem.⁴⁹ The very existence of nuclear weapons is the source of this problem.⁵⁰ Reliance on theories such as deterrence, as well as current nuclear disarmament mechanisms contribute to this problem.⁵¹ Furthermore, the narrative of the humanitarian initiative seems to portray nuclear armed states as the actors that should be blamed for the persistence of the problem, although the initiative is less inclined to state this.⁵² This becomes clear in official documents, through official communication channels, and in articles of proponents of the humanitarian initiative.

In 2011, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent organizations adopted a resolution aimed at the elimination of nuclear weapons. Moving beyond a state and security-centered approach, the Council of Delegates identifies the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons as the main issue in this resolution. It states that the Council of Delegates is “*deeply concerned* about the destructive power of nuclear weapons, the unspeakable human suffering they cause, the difficulty of controlling their effects in space and time, the threat they pose to the environment and to future generations and the risks of escalation they create.”⁵³ The Council stresses that there would be no “adequate humanitarian response capacity” to the use of nuclear weapons, emphasizing the “serious implications (...) for humanitarian assistance activities and food production over wide areas of the world.”⁵⁴

The Humanitarian Pledge shows a similar approach. The pledge states, among other things, that victims of nuclear weapon explosions and nuclear testing have experienced “unacceptable harm,” and that “no national or international response capacity exists that would adequately respond to the human suffering and humanitarian harm that would result from a nuclear explosion in a populated

⁴⁹ “Council of Delegates 2011: Resolution 1,” International Committee of the Red Cross, last edited November 11, 2011, <https://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/resolution/council-delegates-resolution-1-2011.htm>.

⁵⁰ “Humanitarian Pledge Document,” Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs.

⁵¹ Kmentt, “The development of the international initiative,” 705-709.

⁵² “Positions on the ban negotiations,” ICAN, accessed May 4, 2017, <http://www.icanw.org/why-a-ban/positions/>.

⁵³ “Council of Delegates 2011: Resolution 1,” International Committee of the Red Cross.

⁵⁴ *Ibidem*.

area.”⁵⁵ Moreover, the pledge argues that a nuclear weapon detonation can potentially threaten “the survival of humanity,” and that “it is in the interest of the very survival of humanity that nuclear weapons are never used again, under any circumstance.”⁵⁶ It is evident that, in this document, the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons are presented as the main problem in the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation debate. In addition, the source of the problem is also implicitly stated: “the risk of nuclear weapons use with their unacceptable consequences can only be avoided when all nuclear weapons have been eliminated,” making it clear that the existence of nuclear weapons themselves is the source of the problem.⁵⁷

Finally, Resolution L41 on the multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations also stresses its concern for the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, as it includes the following two sentences: “*Deeply concerned* about the catastrophic consequences of any use of nuclear weapons,” and “*Deeply concerned also* about the risks related to the existence of nuclear weapons.”⁵⁸ The document also expresses its discontent with the current disarmament mechanisms, stating that the General Assembly is “*Mindful* of the absence of concrete outcomes of multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations within the United Nations framework for two decades.”⁵⁹

With a complete issue on “The human cost of nuclear weapons,” ICRC’s *International Review of the Red Cross* provided a platform for “survivors, journalists, writers, lawyers, humanitarian practitioners and other experts, to examine the human cost.” All articles in this 2015 issue mirror the arguments that have been covered in the previous section, albeit in a more extensive manner. For instance, ambassador Kmentt argues that nuclear weapons lack legitimacy and are immoral.⁶⁰ The ambassador counters theories on deterrence and security, denounces the current disarmament mechanisms, and criticizes the nuclear weapon states and the umbrella states as they “bank on the assumptions” of deterrence.⁶¹ Slade, Tickner, and Wynn-Pope bring up the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to illustrate the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. In addition, they challenge strategies and theories such as the mutual assured destruction doctrine (MAD), discuss the “vagueness” of the NPT, and argue, as many others do, that nuclear weapons are in violation of

⁵⁵ “Humanitarian Pledge Document,” Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁸ “United Nations Conference,” United Nations.

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁰ Kmentt, “The development of the international initiative,” 706-707.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, 705-709.

international humanitarian law.⁶² As is the case with the official documents, the articles show restraint in naming culpable agents.

ICAN shares its message and opinions in a less diplomatic fashion. On its website, the organization argues that the basic principle underpinning the humanitarian initiative is that “the catastrophic, persistent effects of nuclear weapons on our health, societies and the environment must be at the centre of all public and diplomatic discussions about nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.”⁶³ Moreover, the organization provides a list of unsupportive states who “either voted against the UN resolution or have otherwise shown a serious lack of commitment to nuclear disarmament.”⁶⁴ ICAN executive director Beatrice Fihn has also been vocal about those countries that boycott the negotiations on a Weapons Ban Treaty, for instance making the following remark: “It is disappointing to see countries with strong humanitarian records standing with a government which threatens a new arms race,” with the latter referring to the United States.⁶⁵

There are several nuclear disarmament organizations active in the United Kingdom that support the cause of the humanitarian initiative. For example, Pax Christi UK and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, who are listed as ICAN partners. On its website, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament states that “nuclear weapons have no legitimate purpose; nor would their use be legal due to civilian casualties being unavoidable. They are also genocidal and utterly immoral.”⁶⁶ Furthermore, the organization also claims that “as long as there are nuclear weapons in the world there is always the danger they will be used, whether by accident or intention.”⁶⁷ Pax Christi addresses the humanitarian consequences as well, as can be read in the following paragraph from their statement on the Nuclear Weapons Ban Negotiations:

Nuclear Weapons are instruments of ultimate violence. Our planet has no place for weapons of such terror and mass destruction. For anyone to possess them takes a toll on everyone’s humanity. Their presence in an era of increasing interdependence is an affront to human dignity. Nuclear weapons are designed to cause catastrophic humanitarian consequences and their use, under any circumstances, is unjustifiable and unthinkable.⁶⁸

⁶² Richard Slade, Robert Tickner, and Phoebe Wynn-Pope, “Protecting humanity from the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons: Reframing the debate towards the humanitarian impact,” *International Review of the Red Cross* 97, no.899 (2015): 732; 737; 751.

⁶³ “Humanitarian Initiative,” ICAN.

⁶⁴ “Positions on the ban negotiations,” ICAN.

⁶⁵ Michelle Nichols, “U.S., Britain, France, others skip nuclear weapons ban treaty talks,” Reuters, March 27, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-nuclear-un-idUSKBN16Y1QI>.

⁶⁶ “Global Abolition,” *Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament*, accessed May 7, 2017, <http://www.cnduk.org/campaigns/global-abolition>.

⁶⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁸ “Nuclear Weapons Ban Negotiations: Four Calls to Governments for a Human-Centered Treaty,” Pax Christi, last edited March 2017, http://www.paxchristi.net/sites/default/files/170227_statement_nuclear_weapons_ban_negotiations_-_draft_for_editing.pdf.

In the campaigns of both organizations, the government of the United Kingdom is targeted as the culpable agent.

ICAN lists several American organizations as partners on its website as well, which are all relatively limited in size and reach. One of the larger partners on the list is the organization Physicians for Social Responsibility. This organization presents the same message as discussed before, as it states that any use of nuclear weapons would have catastrophic consequences for humanity.⁶⁹ Regarding the culpable agent, this organization focuses mainly on the United States, as they mention accidents with nuclear weapons that happened in the United States, as well as plans of the country to “upgrade and expand the capability of the nuclear arsenal.”⁷⁰

Prognostic framing

The second core framing task is prognostic framing. As stated before, this “involves the articulation of a proposed solution to the problem, or at least a plan of attack, and the strategies for carrying out the plan.” The main solution proposed by the humanitarian initiative is evidently to prohibit and fully eliminate nuclear weapons.⁷¹ The strategy to achieve this is through a Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty and by strengthening the nuclear taboo.⁷² Moreover, reframing the debate is a means of strengthening this taboo, which is done through education and by raising awareness, among other things.⁷³ The documents and other cited sources in this analysis are themselves therefore part of this strategy. In addition, civil society is encouraged to pressure policymakers into supporting the negotiations on the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty, especially at the local level.⁷⁴

The proposed solution to the problem of the humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons is stated clearly in the official documents that were cited in the previous section. For example, the 2011 resolution of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement lists a comprehensive plan to facilitate disarmament through prohibition. In addition, the movement calls upon its branches to raise awareness among civil society, and to pressure policymakers.⁷⁵ The

⁶⁹ “Nuclear Weapons,” Physicians for Social Responsibility, accessed May 7, 2017, <http://www.psr.org/nuclear-weapons/get-involved.html?referrer=http://www.psr.org/nuclear-weapons/>.

⁷⁰ Ibidem.

⁷¹ “Council of Delegates 2011: Resolution 1,” International Committee of the Red Cross.

⁷² For more information on the nuclear taboo, see: Nina Tannenwald, *The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons Since 1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁷³ “Council of Delegates 2011: Resolution 1,” International Committee of the Red Cross.

⁷⁴ “Campaign for ban on nuclear weapons,” Pax Christi, accessed May 8, 2017, <http://paxchristi.org.uk/campaigns/security-disarmament/nuclear/campaign-for-un-treaty-to-ban-nuclear-weapons/>.

⁷⁵ “Council of Delegates 2011: Resolution 1,” International Committee of the Red Cross.

Humanitarian Pledge also presents the solution to the problem, as well as the strategies that should be utilized. In the document it is argued that nuclear weapons should never be used again, and its signatories pledge to spread awareness to “promote the protection of civilians against risks stemming from nuclear weapons.”⁷⁶ In addition, all states should renew their commitment to “existing obligations under article VI” of the NPT, and the “legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons” should be addressed, the latter proposal essentially hinting at a Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty.⁷⁷ Finally, the signatories pledge to make an effort to “stigmatise, prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons” in cooperation with other parties, with stigmatization being part of strengthening the nuclear taboo. Resolution L41 proposes the most concrete measures to solve the problem of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and the legal gap regarding the prohibition and existence of these weapons. By deciding on organizing a conference to negotiate a Weapons Ban Treaty, the United Nations very explicitly bring forward a tangible strategy.⁷⁸

Ambassador Kmentt argues that there should be a “serious, determined and urgent discussion” on creating a “legal framework for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons.”⁷⁹ Moreover, strengthening the taboo against nuclear weapons would support the disarmament and non-proliferation argument of the humanitarian initiative.⁸⁰ The author discredits current nuclear weapon theories and addresses the need to reframe the debate, and by doing so, he himself plays an active role in the reframing efforts: He is carrying out the strategy while proclaiming the need to carry out this strategy. Minor follows the same approach. The author claims that a “treaty banning nuclear weapons, around which momentum is gathering, would be an achievable, legally coherent and logical next step developing from the initiative.”⁸¹ Furthermore, she underscores the effectiveness of framing the debate, but argues that “further activity is needed” for the humanitarian initiative to reach its goals.⁸² Again, the author helps the movement by arguing for a shift in the debate towards the humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons. This is also the case with Slade, Tickner, and Wynn-Pope, who examine how the humanitarian initiative “has reframed the nuclear weapons debate away from the traditional realm of State security, deterrence and military utility, and towards the grim reality of the humanitarian impacts that would confront humankind if nuclear weapons were ever used again.”⁸³

⁷⁶ “Humanitarian Pledge Document,” Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs.

⁷⁷ Ibidem.

⁷⁸ “United Nations Conference,” United Nations.

⁷⁹ Kmentt, “The development of the international initiative,” 708.

⁸⁰ Ibidem, 709.

⁸¹ Minor, “Changing the Discourse,” 711.

⁸² Ibidem, 730.

⁸³ Slade, Tickner, and Wynn-Pope, “Protecting humanity,” 732.

ICAN is evidently also a proponent of a Weapons Ban Treaty as a solution to eliminate nuclear weapons. Accordingly, prohibition and elimination are the solution, while strengthening global norms against nuclear weapons as well as negotiations on the prohibition of nuclear weapons are strategies to reach this solution.⁸⁴ In addition, ICAN's strategy is to work with civil society to achieve this, and it has a hands-on approach as they, for example, "organize global days of action, hold public awareness-raising events, and engage in advocacy at the United Nations and in national parliaments."⁸⁵

Pax Christi UK's solution to the humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons is also to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons. Their strategy to achieve this involves campaigning for a Nuclear Weapons Ban and educating the public. For instance, the organization has leaflets, sends out newsletters, and employs school speakers to spread the message. In addition, they call upon the public to contact parliamentarians who have not yet signed up to support a Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty.⁸⁶ The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament proposes such concrete measures as well. The organization states that pressure on the government of the United Kingdom to join the negotiations should be increased, and they aim to include the public to strengthen their campaigns.⁸⁷ In the United States, Physicians for Social Responsibility shares a similar message, as they campaign for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. They want help reach this goal by using the public to educate their community and pressure their government representatives.⁸⁸

Motivational framing

The third and final core framing task is motivational framing. Regarding the humanitarian initiative, the argued reason to support the cause is that it is in everyone's interest, as any use of nuclear weapons could have catastrophic consequences for all of humanity.⁸⁹ Moreover, a motive for states in particular is that it is their responsibility to join the cause.⁹⁰ Concerning a 'call to arms,' the frame articulators directly appeal to states and other participants to support the humanitarian initiative. This has become clear in the previous sections, and will be further addressed in the following paragraphs.

⁸⁴ "The case for a ban treaty," ICAN, accessed May 8, 2017, <http://www.icanw.org/why-a-ban/the-case-for-a-ban-treaty/>.

⁸⁵ "Campaign overview," ICAN, accessed May 8, 2017, <http://www.icanw.org/campaign/campaign-overview/>.

⁸⁶ "Campaign for ban on nuclear weapons," Pax Christi.

⁸⁷ "Global Abolition," Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

⁸⁸ "Get Involved!" Physicians for Social Responsibility, accessed May 8, 2017, <http://www.psr.org/nuclear-weapons/get-involved.html>.

⁸⁹ Slade, Tickner, and Wynn-Pope, "Protecting humanity," 752.

⁹⁰ "Humanitarian Pledge Document," Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs.

The cited official documents explicitly appeal to states to fully commit to current disarmament and non-proliferation measures, as well as to fill the legal gap regarding prohibition and elimination. The Humanitarian Pledge adds to this that “all states share the responsibility to prevent any use of nuclear weapons.”⁹¹ The Red Cross and Red Crescent movement appeals to its own components as well, calling upon them to engage with civil society and the government. In Resolution L41, the signatories encourage “all Member States to participate in the conference,” and it welcomes “the efforts by all Member States, international organizations and civil society to continue to enrich the discussions” on how to further the discussions on nuclear disarmament negotiations.⁹²

The selected articles in ICRC’s *International Review of the Red Cross* are less inclined to directly appeal to states, organizations, or civil society to join the cause of the humanitarian initiative. However, the articles do provide motives to support the humanitarian approach, which evidently include the reasoning that all of humanity could be affected. Ambassador Kmentt argues that the humanitarian focus “should be seen as a wake-up call and as an issue that unites the international community into urgent and determined action away from a reliance on nuclear weapons.”⁹³ Minor argues that it is important to further the humanitarian initiative and the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty by emphasizing that the movement now has momentum, which “must be channeled into action.”⁹⁴ She claims that a Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty is the next logical step, stresses that there is an opportunity for change, and states that it “is achievable, legally coherent and a logical development.”⁹⁵ Slade, Tickner, and Wynn-Pope argue that the focus on the humanitarian consequences has “so compellingly (...) demonstrate[d] why these weapons are of concern to us all,” and that “now is the time” to protect humanity.⁹⁶ ICAN appeals to its audience to take action as well, reasoning that one can “be a part of history!”⁹⁷ Furthermore, ICAN encourages its followers to “sign up to be a part of the campaign,” to “get your government on board,” as well as to donate.⁹⁸

Pax Christi UK, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and Physicians for Social Responsibility all directly appeal to their followers to support the cause. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament asks its followers to “lobby your MP about the global ban” and argues that it “is more important than ever

⁹¹ Ibidem.

⁹² “United Nations Conference,” United Nations.

⁹³ Kmentt, “The development of the international initiative,” 709.

⁹⁴ Minor, “Changing the Discourse,” 730.

⁹⁵ Ibidem.

⁹⁶ Slade, Tickner, and Wynn-Pope, “Protecting humanity,” 752.

⁹⁷ “Humanitarian Initiative,” ICAN.

⁹⁸ “The Campaign,” ICAN, accessed May 9, 2017, <http://nuclearban.org/the-campaign/>.

to increase the pressure on the government.”⁹⁹ Pax Christi UK asks its audience to directly pressure the UK government as well.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, the organization provides its followers with a motive as to why they should support them, arguing that one should be “on the right side of history,” and that as “people of faith, we do not accept that there can ever be circumstances in which it is permissible to commit mass murder or to deliberately target whole cities full of innocent civilians.”¹⁰¹ Physicians for Social Responsibility requests a similar action, by asking its followers to “please write or call your U.S. Senators and tell them to stop the new nuclear arms race.”¹⁰² Moreover, the organization states that they need “your help to be a leader in your community” to spread awareness.¹⁰³

Arguments against a humanitarian approach

It must be emphasized that the humanitarian initiative is indeed presenting a frame, and not merely stating the objective truth. The movement actively uses language to gain support for its cause, aiming to erode support for other frames around the topic. The fact that the humanitarian initiative is presenting the situation in a certain way, and that the situation can be viewed upon from different perspectives as well, becomes clear when examining other frames.

Alternative frames predominantly highlight the security aspects of nuclear weapons. For example, regarding a Weapons Ban Treaty, United States ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley recently underscored the strategic need for nuclear weapons: “In this day and time we can’t honestly say we can protect our people by allowing the bad actors to have them and those that are good, trying to keep the peace and safety, not to have them.”¹⁰⁴ Haley specifically referred to the heightened tensions between the United States and North Korea, arguing that realistically, the latter would not be willing to give up its nuclear capability.¹⁰⁵ Heather Williams also argues that state security must not be overlooked in this debate. The author states that “ignoring security concerns in order to prioritise ethics ignores states’ responsibility in international affairs and their ability to influence events.”¹⁰⁶ Moreover, she argues that “an ethical approach must account for both consequences and security concerns.”¹⁰⁷ Noteworthy is Williams’ assessment of the humanitarian initiative, and its aim to implement a Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty, as she states that “a ban is not the

⁹⁹ “Global abolition,” Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

¹⁰⁰ “Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty 2017,” Pax Christi, accessed May 9, 2017, <http://paxchristi.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/2017-NCPO-Nuclear-Ban-briefing-VF-ed.pdf>.

¹⁰¹ Ibidem.

¹⁰² “Nuclear Weapons,” Physicians for Social Responsibility.

¹⁰³ Ibidem.

¹⁰⁴ Michelle Nichols, “U.S., Britain, France, others skip nuclear weapons ban treaty talks.”

¹⁰⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁰⁶ Heather Williams, “Why a Nuclear Weapons Ban is Unethical (For Now),” *The Rusi Journal* 161, no. 2 (2016): 41.

¹⁰⁷ Ibidem.

true objective for many states involved in the initiative; rather, they are merely expressing frustration with lack of progress in other disarmament forums.”¹⁰⁸ While constructing her argumentation and frame, she is actually countering the frame of the humanitarian initiative.

Another argument that is often used is that nuclear weapons do not threaten the survival of the state, but rather safeguard it. Air Force Generals Dave Goldfein and Robin Rand, for example, argue that these weapons are a “critical tool of world peace.” They point out that “Since the advent of the nuclear age, the great wars that so ravaged the globe during the first half of the 20th century are no more.”¹⁰⁹ This reasoning is shared by Bruno Tertrais, who argues that “nuclear weapons have been effective war-prevention tools.”¹¹⁰ Tertrais refers to the absence of major conflict in the past 70 years, he states that countries with nuclear weapons have never been invaded, and he argues that “no country covered by a nuclear guarantee has ever been the target of a major State attack.”¹¹¹ There are many other arguments in support of nuclear weapons, as there are arguments against them. There are people and organizations that do not support the humanitarian initiative, but promote a different approach, or promote no disarmament at all. The humanitarian initiative consciously highlights only certain aspects, thereby framing the situation.

¹⁰⁸ Ibidem, 39.

¹⁰⁹ Dave Goldfein and Robin Rand, “Why the U.S. Is Right to Invest in Nuclear Weapons,” Politico, last edited May 12, 2017, <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2017/05/12/why-the-us-is-right-to-invest-in-nuclear-weapons-215132>.

¹¹⁰ Bruno Tertrais, “In Defense of Deterrence: The Relevance, Morality and Cost-Effectiveness of Nuclear Weapons,” *Proliferation Papers* no.39 (2011): 9.

¹¹¹ Ibidem, 9-10.

Chapter 4: Resonance – The Frame’s Credibility

Both the governments of the United States and the United Kingdom have spoken out against the humanitarian initiative and the need to facilitate prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons through a Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty.¹¹² To change their stance, the humanitarian initiative appeals to these countries and their citizens to come into action against nuclear weapons, as assessed in the previous chapter. The humanitarian initiative uses framing to raise awareness among its followers and strengthen the nuclear taboo, as well as to mobilize the audience into raising awareness themselves, and putting pressure onto policymakers. This chapter sets out to examine whether these framing activities have a chance of mobilizing followers in the United States and the United Kingdom. Using various factors to measure the degree of resonance in both countries, it will become clear in which context the humanitarian initiative hypothetically has a higher chance of catching on.

Frame consistency

The first factor that can account for a variation in the degree of resonance is frame consistency, which can be approached in two ways. First, one can examine whether the claims and beliefs of the frame articulator are consistent, or whether they are contradictory. Second, one can look at whether the claims and beliefs on the one side, and the actions on the other, match up.¹¹³ In this thesis, frame consistency is not regarded as a variable factor that can explain differences between the United States and the United Kingdom, as roughly the same frame is projected onto both countries. The inclusion of local organizations does not alter this approach, as all three organizations examined in this thesis share a similar message.

The actors discussed in this thesis share the same central message: the humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons are catastrophic and unacceptable, and these weapons should therefore be prohibited and eliminated. Moreover, the majority of these actors also agree on various other issues related to this problem, as well as solutions for these issues. For example, current disarmament mechanisms do not suffice to protect humanity from these humanitarian consequences, and theories such as deterrence are flawed. Solutions include, but are not limited to, raising awareness

¹¹² Alicia Sanders-Zakre and Steven Pifer, “Big Debates at U.N. nuclear weapons ban treaty negotiations,” Brookings, accessed May 9, 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2017/04/12/big-debates-at-u-n-nuclear-weapons-ban-treaty-negotiations/>; Minor, “Changing the Discourse,” 720.

¹¹³ Benford and Snow, “Framing Processes,” 620.

and pressuring policymakers into change. While there are differences in the messages of humanitarian initiative, these do not detract from the frame consistency. The participants all work towards the same goals, and in doing so, their claims and beliefs are not contradictory, but complement each other.

The next step is to look at whether these claims and beliefs correspond to the actions of the humanitarian initiative. The most prominent feat of the movement is arguably the start of negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty. The movement claims and believes that prohibiting and eliminating nuclear weapons is the solution to the problem of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, and this directly corresponds to their action to push for negotiations on this treaty.

The movement's ideas and actions match up at different levels as well. In its 2011 resolution, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement called upon all branches of the organization to engage with civil society and policymakers to raise awareness on the topic of the humanitarian consequences and the need for prohibition and elimination.¹¹⁴ Four years later, in 2015, ICRC's *International Review of the Red Cross* has indeed functioned as a platform for proponents of the movement to spread knowledge and raise awareness. Moreover, in this same resolution, the branches are also encouraged to engage "in continuous dialogue with governments and other relevant actors."¹¹⁵ In 2016, ICRC vice-president Christine Beerli addressed the United Nations General Assembly to discuss, among other things, nuclear weapons, their consequences for humanity, disarmament, and elimination.¹¹⁶

The other proponents of the movement that are discussed in this thesis follow the same course of action. The cited articles in the *International Review of the Red Cross* all claim that the debate around nuclear weapons should be reframed, and they subsequently advance this cause as they themselves emphasize the humanitarian consequences while discrediting theories and strategies such as deterrence, while also criticizing the current disarmament mechanisms. The more local organizations argue that the message of the humanitarian initiative must be spread throughout the community, and that policymakers must be pressured. Pax Christi UK hosts and attends various meetings to spread awareness.¹¹⁷ The American Physicians for Social Responsibility, quite recently, co-

¹¹⁴ "Council of Delegates 2011: Resolution 1," International Committee of the Red Cross.

¹¹⁵ *Ibidem*.

¹¹⁶ Christine Beerli, "Weapons: Statement of ICRC vice-president to the United Nations, 2016," International Committee of the Red Cross, last edited October 12, 2016, <https://www.icrc.org/en/document/weapons-nuclear-statement-unga-2016>.

¹¹⁷ "Events," Pax Christi, accessed May 9, 2017, http://paxchristi.org.uk/news-and-events/events-calendar/action~agenda/page_offset~-1/request_format~json/.

sponsored a conference titled “Toward a Fundamental Change in Nuclear Weapons Policy” in Washington, D.C., which is in line with the organization’s claims and beliefs as well.¹¹⁸

Empirical credibility

The second factor that can influence the degree of resonance is empirical credibility, which refers to the extent to which the frame corresponds to events in the world.¹¹⁹ Benford and Snow ask the following questions when assessing the empirical credibility: “Can the claims be empirically verified? Is there something out there that can be pointed out as evidence of the claim embedded in the framing?” From this perspective, evidence does not have to be *conclusive*, it should merely be available. As was the case with the previous factor, empirical credibility is the same for the United States and the United Kingdom and will therefore not be counted as a dependent variable to explain differences in the resonance between these two countries.

The main claim presented by the humanitarian initiative is that any use of nuclear weapons will have catastrophic effects on humanity and the environment and these weapons should therefore be prohibited and eliminated. The first part of this claim is difficult to contest. The fact that the use of nuclear weapons, as well as accidents with nuclear material, have severe effects is common knowledge. There is empirical evidence to support this claim, and it is readily available.¹²⁰ The second part of the claim, which argues that nuclear weapons should be prohibited and eliminated, is less easy to fully empirically back. Related to this claim are the arguments that deterrence is a flawed theory, that current disarmament mechanisms do not work, and that a Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty is the required strategy to facilitate prohibition and then elimination.

Regarding deterrence, there is discussion among scholars on whether the theory works or not. For example, concerning the conflict between India and Pakistan, scholars argue that nuclear weapons have prevented a large-scale war between the countries, and they are able to provide empirical evidence to back their claim.¹²¹ However, various other authors provide evidence to question this.¹²²

¹¹⁸ “Conference: Toward a Fundamental Change in Nuclear Weapons Policy,” Physicians for Social Responsibility, last edited April 27, 2017, <http://www.psr.org/news-events/events/conference-toward-fundamental-change-nuclear-policy.html>.

¹¹⁹ Benford and Snow, “Framing Processes,” 620.

¹²⁰ For more information on the effects of nuclear weapons on health and the environment, see: Arjun Makhijani, Howard Hu, and Katherine Yih, *Nuclear Wastelands: A Global Guide to Nuclear Weapons Production and Its Health and Environmental Effects* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2000).

¹²¹ Sumit Ganguly, “Nuclear Stability in South Asia,” *International Security* 33, no.2 (2008): 46; Rajesh M. Basrur, “Two Decades of Minimum Deterrence in South Asia: A Comparative Framework,” *India Review* 9, no.3 (2010): 308.

¹²² Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, “Paradox of Deterrence: India-Pakistan Strategic Relations,” *Strategic Studies* 29, no.4 (2009).

Some scholars argue that whether it works or not is irrelevant, as the theory is simply morally indefensible.¹²³ Even among the theory's proponents, there is a general consensus that deterrence has its flaws.¹²⁴ While current events in the world might not be able to provide a conclusive answer as to whether deterrence is a viable theory, there is empirical evidence that support the claims and beliefs of the humanitarian initiative that it is flawed, which therefore contributes to the credibility of the frame.

The humanitarian initiative is also able to provide evidence that the current disarmament mechanisms do not function adequately. While the stockpile has shrunk by over two-thirds, there are still over 14,900 nuclear weapons in the world.¹²⁵ Moreover, most of the nuclear weapons states are modernizing their nuclear arsenal.¹²⁶ The NPT has not been able to prevent India, Pakistan, and North Korea from gaining a nuclear capability. Furthermore, the failed 2015 NPT Review Conference also serves as evidence for the shortcomings of the current disarmament mechanisms.

Finally, there is also (some) evidence that supports the theory that a Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty can lead to prohibition and subsequent elimination of weapons. Proponents of the humanitarian initiative often refer to the prohibition and subsequent elimination of anti-personnel landmines and cluster munition. The movement claims that the prohibition and elimination of these weapons serve as evidence that nuclear weapons can be eliminated too as the result of a ban.¹²⁷ This reasoning, however, has some serious flaws, as it can be argued that nuclear weapons are fundamentally different strategic weapons. Williams argues that "the cluster-munitions ban was possible only in the aftermath of their repeated use (...) which demonstrated the immediacy of the threat and the consequences."¹²⁸ Nuclear weapons evidently have not been used since the Second World War, and the immediacy of the threat and its consequences have therefore not been demonstrated recently. Proponents of the humanitarian initiative in fact know their limitations when referring to landmines and cluster munition, with some authors treating disarmament of both more as sources of inspiration than as concrete evidence that the same path is achievable for nuclear weapons.¹²⁹ However, while acknowledging these limitations, the humanitarian initiative still often refers to these campaigns as examples. The bans on landmines and cluster munition might arguably not be the most convincing evidence that a ban can lead to elimination, but it is some form of evidence nonetheless.

¹²³ Robert G. Joseph and John F. Reichart, "The Case for Nuclear Deterrence Today," *Orbis* 42, no.1 (1998): 9.

¹²⁴ Basrur, "To Decades of Minimum Deterrence."

¹²⁵ "World Nuclear Weapon Stockpile," Ploughshares Fund.

¹²⁶ Hans M. Kristensen and Robert S. Norris, "Slowing nuclear weapon reductions and endless nuclear weapon modernizations: A challenge to the NPT," *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists* 70, no.4 (2014): 94.

¹²⁷ Heather Williams, "Why a Nuclear Weapons Ban is Unethical (For Now)," 39.

¹²⁸ *Ibidem*, 43.

¹²⁹ Minor, "Changing the Discourse," 722.

Credibility of the frame articulator

The credibility of the frame articulator is the third factor that can influence the degree of resonance of a frame, and arguably the most difficult to assess without conducting field work on the matter. This factor can be determined by looking at the perceived status and expertise of the humanitarian initiative from the perspective of the frame's audience.

Traditionally, the United States has been reluctant to conduct its foreign policy in a multilateral context. Moreover, Americans, to a certain degree, "have not been outward seeking people," and are argued to be particularly unaware of the consequences of U.S. foreign policy in general.¹³⁰ In addition, as will be further discussed in the section about narrative fidelity, Americans traditionally hold on to American exceptionalism; the idea that the United States stands out above other nations.¹³¹ From this perspective, it seems unlikely that the American public would attribute greater status to international organizations such as ICRC and ICAN, than to the American government and American organizations. However, other research shows that Americans do hold a favorable view of various international organizations.¹³² The United Nations is popular among Americans, yet, at the same time, the American public is highly critical of its performance. A 2017 Gallup poll shows that 60% of Americans believe the United Nations is doing "a poor job in trying to solve the problems it has to face."¹³³ Moreover, there is a strong partisan divide, as "a paltry 16% of Republicans rate the institution's work positively."¹³⁴ The public in the United Kingdom holds a slightly more favorable view of the United Nations in general.¹³⁵ In addition, as will be discussed in the section on narrative fidelity as well, British people are traditionally more prone to handle issues through negotiations and in coalitions.¹³⁶ Unfortunately, it is difficult to find numbers on the performance of the United Nations from the British perspective, as well as polls that show the British views on international organizations, that can be compared with

¹³⁰ Jerel A. Rosati and James M. Scott, *The Politics of United States Foreign Policy* (Boston: Wadsworth, 2011): 3; 351.

¹³¹ Stephen M. Walt, "The Myth of American Exceptionalism," *Foreign Policy* 11 (2011).

¹³² "U.S. Opinion on International Institutions," Council on Foreign Relations, last edited September 4, 2009, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/us-opinion-international-institutions>.

¹³³ "In US, 37% Say UN Doing 'Good Job' Solving Problems," Gallup, last edited February 24, 2017, http://www.gallup.com/poll/204290/say-doing-good-job-solving-problems.aspx?g_source=mn2-highereducation.

¹³⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹³⁵ Jacob Poushter, "Favorable views of the UN prevail in Europe, Asia and the U.S.," Pew Research Center, last edited September 20, 2016, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/09/20/favorable-views-of-the-un-prevail-in-europe-asia-and-u-s/>.

¹³⁶ Paul M. Kennedy, "The tradition of appeasement in British foreign policy 1865-1939," *Review of International Studies* 2, no. 3 (1976); Henrik Larsen, *Foreign Policy and Discourse Analysis: France, Britain and Europe* (London: Routledge, 1997): 70.

the American perspective. To fully assess the perceived status and expertise of the humanitarian initiative from the perspective of the audience, a field study on the topic would be desirable.

Non-governmental organizations and pressure groups are capable of influencing public opinion. For instance, with regards to whaling, environmental non-governmental organizations proved successful in mobilizing public opinion and then shaping the position of the U.S. government.¹³⁷ One challenging factor for the humanitarian initiative is, however, that it has to compete with other many different actors that present different frames. Thomas A. Birkland argues that “group competition to set the agenda is fierce because no society or political institutions have the capacity to address all possible alternatives to all possible problems that arise at any one time.”¹³⁸ In the United States, the humanitarian initiative is competing with a large number of actors that are countering its frame. The government of the United States does not support the message of the humanitarian initiative.¹³⁹ Large think tanks such as RAND, the Council on Foreign Relations, and the American Enterprise Institute also do not support the initiative, ignore it, or are even explicitly opposed to it.¹⁴⁰ Another disarmament movement, Global Zero, proposes an alternative solution for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons, and it has the support of President Jimmy Carter and Ambassador Ivo Daalder, among many other prominent figures.¹⁴¹

As will be further discussed in the next chapter, various British political parties do support nuclear disarmament, and consider the humanitarian initiative to pursue a viable goal.¹⁴² Research institutes in the United Kingdom seem more divided and less outspoken than their American counterparts, and it takes considerable more effort to find think tanks that openly oppose nuclear disarmament in the same vein of their American counterparts. Some research institutes do provide a platform for the humanitarian initiative. For instance, the International Institute for Strategic Studies

¹³⁷ Michele M. Betsill, “Reflections on the Analytical Framework and NGO Diplomacy,” in *NGO Diplomacy: The Influence of Nongovernmental Organizations in International Environmental Organizations*, eds. Michele M. Betsill and Elisabeth Corell (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2008): 199.

¹³⁸ Thomas A. Birkland, “Agenda Setting in Public Policy,” in *Handbook of Public Policy Analysis: Theory, Politics, and Methods*, eds. Frank Fisher et al. (Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2007): 63.

¹³⁹ Michelle Nichols, “U.S., Britain, France, others skip nuclear weapons ban treaty talks.”

¹⁴⁰ Daniel M. Gerstein, “Protect Nuclear Nonproliferation Norms,” RAND Corporation, last edited October 9, 2016, <https://www.rand.org/blog/2016/10/protect-nuclear-nonproliferation-norms.html>; “Nonproliferation, Arms Control, and Disarmament,” Council on Foreign Relations, accessed May 28, 2017, <https://www.cfr.org/defense-and-security/nonproliferation-arms-control-and-disarmament>; Marc A. Thiessen, “With its nuclear weapons ban debate, the UN further demonstrates its irrelevance,” American Enterprise Institute, last edited March 28, 2017, <http://www.aei.org/publication/with-its-nuclear-weapons-ban-debate-the-un-further-demonstrates-its-irrelevance/>.

¹⁴¹ “Movement leaders,” Global Zero, accessed May 28, 2017, <https://www.globalzero.org/our-movement/leaders>.

¹⁴² “Humanitarian Initiative raised by MPs at Trident Debate,” ICAN, last edited January 22, 2015, <http://uk.icanw.org/action/humanitarian-concerns-raised-by-mps-at-trident-debate/>.

has published various articles in its journal that support the movement.¹⁴³ At the same time, actors such as Global Zero operate in the United Kingdom as well, with supporters such as Sir Richard Branson and Sir Lawrence Freedman.¹⁴⁴

The credibility of the frame articulator itself is difficult to determine, but it is reasonable to assume that the humanitarian initiative encounters considerably less resistance from actors in the United Kingdom compared to actors in the United States. A large number of actors in the United States that arguably have status and expertise appear to unite against nuclear disarmament and the debate on humanitarian consequences, while the debate in the United Kingdom is more divided and seemingly more moderate. The humanitarian initiative arguably faces more (harsh) competition of other actors in the United States, which would imply that a high degree of credibility of the frame articulator in relation to other actors would be more difficult to achieve.

¹⁴³ James E. Doyle, "Why Eliminate Nuclear Weapons?" *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 55, no. 1 (2013); Beatrice Fihn, "The Logic of Banning Nuclear Weapons," *Survival: Global Politics and Strategy* 59, no.1 (2017).

¹⁴⁴ "Movement Leaders," Global Zero.

Chapter 5: Resonance - The Frame's Relative Salience

Centrality

Next to credibility, there is a second set of variables that add to the degree of resonance of a frame, namely those that look at a frame's relative salience. The first factor that adds to a frame's salience is its centrality, which assesses how much importance an audience gives to the subject of the frame. The values and beliefs of people are usually arranged in the form of a hierarchy, and this section will therefore analyze the importance of nuclear disarmament, nuclear weapons, and humanitarian issues to the target audiences in comparison with other issues.¹⁴⁵

Every month, Gallup conducts a poll among Americans, asking them the open-ended question: "What do you think is the most important problem facing this country today?"¹⁴⁶ Between November 2016 and May 2017, the top answers, among others, have been the economy in general, dissatisfaction with government/poor leadership, healthcare, immigration/illegal aliens, and race relations/racism.¹⁴⁷ The poll lists about fifty topics in total, none of which are specifically about nuclear weapons or disarmament in general. Topics that are (loosely) related to the nuclear weapons debate, such as international issues, the situation with North Korea, and lack of military defense, are listed, but rank relatively low in terms of importance.¹⁴⁸ While keeping in mind that foreign policy as a whole ranks relatively low on the scale of importance, a Gallup poll from February 2017 does identify nuclear proliferation as a top foreign policy goal.¹⁴⁹ Other surveys also show nuclear proliferation as a concern, specifically referring to Iran and current tensions between the United States and North Korea.¹⁵⁰

It is not that Americans are unaware of the possible dangers of nuclear weapons. When asked in 2014 which event people "fear will put an end to humanity," most of the respondents answered with nuclear war (35%).¹⁵¹ Moreover, it is also not the case that every American is against nuclear disarmament.¹⁵² But while Americans are aware of the issue, they merely do not attach that much

¹⁴⁵ Benford and Snow, "Framing Processes," 621.

¹⁴⁶ "Most Important Problem," Gallup, accessed May 21, 2017, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/1675/most-important-problem.aspx>.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibidem*.

¹⁴⁹ "Top US Foreign Policy Goals: Stem Terrorism, Nuclear Weapons," Gallup, last edited February 16, 2017, http://www.gallup.com/poll/204005/top-foreign-policy-goals-stem-terrorism-nuclear-weapons.aspx?g_source=nuclear+weapons&g_medium=search&g_campaign=tiles.

¹⁵⁰ "A Global 'No' To a Nuclear-Armed Iran," Pew Research Center, last edited May 18, 2012, <http://www.pewglobal.org/2012/05/18/a-global-no-to-a-nuclear-armed-iran/>.

¹⁵¹ "Public Opinion about Using Nuclear Weapons," Roper Center For Public Opinion Research, accessed May 21, 2017, <https://ropercenter.cornell.edu/public-opinion-using-nuclear-weapons/>.

¹⁵² Jeffrey M. Jones, "In U.S., 56% Favor U.S.-Russian Nuclear Arms Reductions" Gallup, last edited March 11, 2013, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/161198/favor-russian-nuclear-arms-reductions.aspx>.

importance to the subject compared to other policy issues. Moreover, when Americans do mention their worries about nuclear weapons, it is predominantly with regards to the proliferation of such weapons, while elimination and humanitarian consequences are rarely, if ever, touched upon in these studies. This is also reflected in the party lines of the Democratic and Republican parties on their respective websites, which in itself does not necessarily mirror public opinion, but it can be viewed as an indication for which issues they believe will resonate with their constituents.¹⁵³

Various scholars have also examined the lack of engagement from civil society in the debate on nuclear weapons. Anne I. Harrington et al. argue that many societies experience a lack of interest in disarmament, and attribute this to various possible factors. For example, the authors question the sense of concern or urgency people have for these weapons, especially since the Cold War is now over. In addition, they state that “although the public could be aware of the dangers of nuclear weapons, they may not perceive either of these issues as an immediate priority on par with policy areas such as economy or international security.”¹⁵⁴ This last argument is also reflected by Lawrence Wittner, as he argues that the audience is preoccupied “with other important issues, among them climate change, immigration, terrorism, criminal justice, civil liberties, and economic inequality.”¹⁵⁵ While the authors do not specify a particular country for which this last argument applies, it clearly corresponds with the abovementioned findings. Nuclear weapons, nuclear disarmament, and especially nuclear elimination are simply not central issues in the lives of the American people.

In the United Kingdom, the debate surrounding nuclear weapons and disarmament is more active. This has to do with the fact that their nuclear weapons are nearing the end of their lifespan, and a decision must be made to either renew, replace, or eliminate them.¹⁵⁶ The renewal of the countries’ Trident nuclear deterrent is covered in the manifestos of all major parties for the upcoming elections on June 8, 2017. The Conservative Party and the Labour Party both support the renewal of the weapons, although members of the latter do internally struggle over this decision.¹⁵⁷ The Liberal

¹⁵³ “National Security,” The Democratic Party, accessed May 21, 2017, <https://www.democrats.org/issues/national-security>; “America Resurgent,” GOP, accessed May 21, 2017, <https://gop.com/platform/american-exceptionalism/>.

¹⁵⁴ Anne I. Harrington, Eliza Gheorge, Anya Loukianova Fink, “Disaggregating Arguments for Disarmament,” *N.E.X.T. Workshop Papers* (unpublished paper, 2016), 2-3.

¹⁵⁵ Lawrence Wittner, “Why Is There So Little Protest Against Recent Threats Of Nuclear War?” *The World Post*, last edited April 23, 2017, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/why-is-there-so-little-popular-protest-against-todays_us_58fbd122e4b0f02c3870eb10.

¹⁵⁶ “A guide to Trident and the debate about replacement,” BBC News, last edited May 23, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-13442735>.

¹⁵⁷ “Forward Together: The Conservative Manifesto,” The Conservative Party, accessed May 24, 2017, <https://www.conservatives.com/manifesto>, 41; Edward Malnick and Laura Hughes, “Jeremy Corbyn refuses six times to back Labour’s manifesto pledge to renew Trident,” *The Telegraph*, last edited May 26, 2017,

Democrats vouch to downsize the nuclear arsenal, while the Scottish National Party and the Green Party of England and Wales are campaigning for full disarmament.¹⁵⁸ As mentioned above, party programs are not necessarily synonymous with public opinion, but they do give an insight into which issues the parties think are important to the voters.

In contrast to polls in the United States, where the focus is predominantly on the proliferation of nuclear weapons, British polls often include a question on whether the British nuclear weapons should be fully eliminated.¹⁵⁹ A 2015 survey by YouGov, for example, shows that 19% of the respondent want to “give up nuclear weapons completely.”¹⁶⁰ It is noteworthy to mention that a distinction is often made between Scotland and the United Kingdom. This distinction is made as Britain’s submarines, which carry its nuclear weapons, are currently based at Faslane Naval Base in Scotland. Survey results show that Scottish respondents are more inclined to give up the nuclear weapons completely, compared to the other respondents.¹⁶¹

Polls and surveys show that the debate on nuclear disarmament and the possible elimination of nuclear weapons is more active in the United Kingdom than in the United States. However, as is the case in the latter, nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament are not the most important issues the British people are concerned about. A January 2017 Ipsos Mori Issues Index shows that 49% of respondents view “NHS/Hospitals/Healthcare” as one of the most “important issues facing Britain today.”¹⁶² Other high ranking issues are those concerning the EU and Brexit, immigration, the economy, housing, and unemployment.¹⁶³ “Defence/foreign affairs/terrorism” is listed in tenth place, yet further examination of the research shows that rising interest in this topic has a strong correlation

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/05/26/jeremy-corbyn-refuses-six-times-back-labours-manifesto-pledge/>.

¹⁵⁸ Greg Foster, “FAQ’s: What do the Liberal Democrats think about Trident?” Liberal Democrats, last edited April 25, 2017, <http://www.libdems.org.uk/faq-trident>; “Scrap Trident,” Scottish National Party, accessed May 27, 2017, <https://www.snp.org/scraptrident>; “Green party condemns Labour support for ‘HMS Pointless,’” Green Party, last edited May 11, 2017, <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2017/05/11/green-party-condemns-labour-support-for-%E2%80%98hms-pointless%E2%80%99/>.

¹⁵⁹ “YouGov / Sunday Times Survey Results,” YouGov, accessed May 22, 2017, https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/oqslggwc4a/YG-Archive-Pol-Sunday-Times-results-110415.pdf, 13.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹⁶¹ *Ibidem*; Lord Ashcroft, “CND are not the best people to ask what the Scots think of Trident,” Lord Ashcroft Polls, last edited May 10, 2013, <http://lordashcroftpolls.com/2013/05/cnd-are-not-the-best-people-to-ask-what-the-scots-think-of-trident/>.

¹⁶² “Ipsos Mori Issues Index,” Ipsos Mori, last edited January 2017, <https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/migrations/en-uk/files/Assets/Docs/Polls/ipsos-mori-issues-index-jan-2017-charts.pdf>.

¹⁶³ *Ibidem*.

with terror related events in the world, such as the rise of IS and the 2015 Paris attacks, and no apparent correlation with the debate surrounding nuclear weapons.¹⁶⁴

Nuclear weapons are thus not a top priority in the United Kingdom and the United States, but there is most certainly an active debate surrounding nuclear disarmament in the former. This debate is arguably fueled not primarily by growing interest in preventing the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, but rather because the Trident nuclear deterrent requires a costly renewal. Many in favor of disarmament argue that the money would be better spent on social issues such as the NHS or child care.¹⁶⁵ From this perspective, only part of the message of the humanitarian initiative would resonate more in the United Kingdom than in the United States, namely the part that deals with disarmament. However, what sets the movement apart from other disarmament actors is the specific focus on the humanitarian consequences, an issue that is rarely mentioned in both countries. Other claims, such as that theories like deterrence are flawed, that current disarmament mechanisms do not function properly, and that a Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty is needed, are seldom discussed either.

Thus, to conclude, the message of the humanitarian initiative is not central to the beliefs, values, and ideas of the public in both countries. Especially the humanitarian aspect of the movement does not rank high, or not at all, in comparison with other issues. One can, however, make the reasonable claim that the humanitarian initiative has a significant higher chance of catching on in the United Kingdom than in the United States, purely because disarmament is being discussed as an issue in the former, while the public in the latter primarily focuses on nonproliferation, if nuclear weapons are discussed at all.

Experiential commensurability

The second factor that adds to a frame's relative salience, and therefore its resonance, is experiential commensurability. To assess this criterium, Benford and Snow ask the following questions: "Are the framings congruent or resonant with the personal, everyday experiences of the targets of mobilization? Or are the framings too abstract and distant from the lives and experiences of the targets?"¹⁶⁶

Neither the United States, nor the United Kingdom, has ever suffered a nuclear weapons attack. Experiential commensurability with regards to the humanitarian consequences of a nuclear attack is

¹⁶⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁶⁵ Ibidem; "Scrap Trident," Scottish Nationalist Party.

¹⁶⁶ Benford and Snow, "Framing Processes," 621.

therefore challenging to assess. However, there are other factors that can be included in this analysis. The United States detonated over a thousand nuclear weapons between 1945 and 1992.¹⁶⁷ The radioactive fallout from these tests, which were carried out above ground until 1963, exposed the public to high levels of radiation, while contaminating the environment.¹⁶⁸ The risks and consequences of these tests were denied or downplayed by the government, which was well aware of the dangers.¹⁶⁹ A significant group of people was directly affected, and many people will still suffer long-term consequences, such as thyroid cancer.¹⁷⁰ Other factors have also contributed to the spread of radioactive material in the United States. For example, the Hanford Site in Washington released contaminated material in the Columbia River, as well as in the air, while the nuclear accident at Three Mile Island in 1979 also caused the spread of radioactive material.¹⁷¹ A comparable event occurred earlier in the United Kingdom where the 1957 Windscale Fire, a fire in a nuclear facility, caused the release of radioactive material across the United Kingdom and Europe. The accident was not denied by the British government, as was sometimes the case in the United States, although the nuclear fallout was at the time underestimated.¹⁷²

These events could hypothetically contribute to the experiential commensurability of the frame, as, at a time, some of the claims of the humanitarian initiative were resonant with the personal, everyday experiences of Americans and British people. But these events were arguably not as extreme as now stipulated by the humanitarian initiative, and in the case of the United States they were strongly downplayed by the government as well. Moreover, while some long-term effects, such as cancer, are experienced today, most events happened in the past. Additional experiences that remind the public of the threat of nuclear weapons, such as duck and cover drills, are also no longer part of daily life. It is therefore challenging to make a reasonable claim that the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons are a part of the personal, everyday life of the majority of the American and British public today.

¹⁶⁷ "United States Nuclear Tests July 1945 through September 1992," U.S. Department of Energy, last edited September 2015, https://www.nnss.gov/docs/docs_LibraryPublications/DOE_NV-209_Rev16.pdf.

¹⁶⁸ Sarah A. Fox, *Downwind: A People's History of the Nuclear West* (Lincoln: Bison Books, 2014): 60.

¹⁶⁹ James Rice and Julie Steinkopf Rice, "'Radiation is Not New to Our Lives': The U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, Continental Atmospheric Testing, and Discursive Hegemony in the Downwind Communities," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 28, no. 4 (2015): 492; 514.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹⁷¹ Kate Brown, *Plutopia: Nuclear Families, Atomic Cities, and the great Soviet and American Plutonium Disasters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 50-64; Arifumi Hasegawa et al., "Health effects of radiation and other health problems in the aftermath of nuclear accidents, with an emphasis on Fukushima," *The Lancet* 386 (2015): 480; Charles Perrow, "Nuclear denial: From Hiroshima to Fukushima," *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 69, no. 5 (2013): 60-61.

¹⁷² J.A. Garland and R. Wakeford, "Atmospheric emissions from the Windscale accident of October 1957," *Atmospheric Environment* 41, no.18 (2007): 3904-3905.

Conversely, it can be argued that a substantial part of the American and British public currently benefits from nuclear weapons. BBC News has reported that “some estimates suggest that up to 15,000 jobs may be lost – as well as considerable expertise – if a new batch of [Trident] submarines is not commissioned.”¹⁷³ This line of reasoning has also been highlighted by British Defense Secretary Sir Michael Fallon, who has argued that removing Trident from Scotland would “destroy thousands of highly skilled Scottish jobs.”¹⁷⁴ The substantially bigger United States nuclear weapons program is responsible for the employment of tens of thousands of Americans as well. Thus, regarding experiential commensurability, a plausible assumption would be that the main problem identified by the humanitarian initiative is too distant from the everyday experiences of the majority of the public in the United States and the United Kingdom to resonate. Moreover, for a significant group of people, the benefits of the nuclear weapons industry are considerably less distant than the negative consequences of nuclear weapons, which therefore thwarts the resonance of the frame.

Narrative fidelity

The final variable that can affect a frame’s relative salience, and therefore its resonance, is narrative fidelity. Narrative fidelity deals with the degree to which a frame is culturally resonant. This last factor is arguably the most abstract of all the variables discussed in this thesis, and Benford and Snow do not offer a concrete method for analysis, other than to assess a culture’s narrations, myths, and/or ideology.

For the past century, the United States has played a powerful role in international affairs. The country has shown supremacy in various areas, such as economic and military power, as well as through leadership.¹⁷⁵ American foreign policy has been characterized by recurring patterns of involvement versus isolationism, a focus on domestic affairs versus international commitments and power.¹⁷⁶ There is a strong underlying narrative that has fueled, or legitimized, American foreign policy, namely American exceptionalism: the belief that the United States stands out above the rest of the world.¹⁷⁷ American exceptionalism is tied to the concept of Manifest Destiny: “A belief in the superiority of American culture and the way of life and the need to Christianize and Americanize the world that goes

¹⁷³ “A guide to Trident,” BBC News.

¹⁷⁴ “Trident-free independent Scotland ‘would threaten security and jobs,’” Herald Scotland, last edited March 3, 2017, http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/15133155.Defence_Secretary_lays_out_vision_for_-Trident_free_independent_Scotland/.

¹⁷⁵ Joseph Nye, *Presidential Leadership and the Creation of the American Era* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013): 1.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibidem*, 15.

¹⁷⁷ Walt, “The Myth of American Exceptionalism.”

back to the nineteenth century.”¹⁷⁸ Furthermore, Rosati and Scott argue that Americans also tend to believe in American innocence and American benevolence, and that “together, these beliefs contribute powerfully to the sense of American ‘mission’ to lead the world, which runs deep within the political culture of the United States.”¹⁷⁹ In short, Americans tend to see themselves as the good guys. In addition, American culture strongly values military power, and there currently is a (predominantly Republican) reluctance to handle affairs through international organizations such as the United Nations.¹⁸⁰ American cultural history and American idealism in this sense do not match the ideas of the humanitarian initiative. In contrast, they have a significantly stronger match with opponents of the humanitarian initiative, such as Nikki Haley. Haley’s assessment of the current predicament reflects American tradition, to repeat her statement: “In this day and time we can’t honestly say we can protect our people by allowing the bad actors to have them and those that are good, trying to keep the peace and safety, not to have them.”¹⁸¹ According to the theory, such a statement would resonate better with the American people than the message of the humanitarian initiative would.

The United Kingdom has been less driven by such outspoken idealism, and it plays a significantly smaller role in world affairs today. While, in the past century, the United States was able to solidify its status as a superpower, the United Kingdom saw a stark decline in its influence in the world. However, while it may be less evident, scholars argue that the United Kingdom has an exceptionalist mentality as well. David Sanders and David Houghton state that “the psychological hangover of Empire is still very real in Britain, and it prevents its policymakers from seeing the UK as ‘just another country’.”¹⁸² Moreover, the authors argue that the United Kingdom will therefore want to remain a global player, and compare the British mentality to that of Manifest Destiny and American exceptionalism.¹⁸³ Yet, while both countries envision a special role for themselves in foreign affairs, the United Kingdom does have a tendency to settle its differences and reach its goals in a more diplomatic fashion. Paul M. Kennedy claims that British foreign policy was characterized by a tradition of appeasement, in the sense that international “quarrels” were settled “by admitting and satisfying grievances through

¹⁷⁸ Rosati and Scott, *The Politics of the United States*, 351.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibidem*, 350.

¹⁸⁰ Neil Campbell and Alasdair Kean, *American Cultural Studies: An Introduction to American Culture* (London: Routledge, 1997), 15; Richard Gowan, “Republicans Have Long Wanted to Punish the U.N., but Trump Might Actually Do It,” Politico, last edited December 28, 2016, <http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2016/12/republicans-have-long-wanted-to-punish-the-un-but-trump-might-actually-do-it-214558>.

¹⁸¹ Michelle Nichols, “U.S., Britain, France, others skip nuclear weapons ban treaty talks.”

¹⁸² David Sanders and David Patrick Houghton, *Losing an Empire, Finding a Role: British Foreign Policy Since 1945* (London: Palgrave Mcmillon, 2016): 288-289.

¹⁸³ *Ibidem*, 33; 288.

rational negotiation and compromise.”¹⁸⁴ During the Cold War, especially under prime minister Thatcher, British foreign policy became driven by ideological language as well, especially when it came to military strength.¹⁸⁵ However, in line with tradition, Sanders and Houghton argue that “coalitions and alliances have (...) become a central focus in British defence policy since the 1990s.”¹⁸⁶ It is clear that ideology is present in British culture and history, however, not to the extent as is the case in the United States. A sense of exceptionalism is certainly present in British foreign policy, yet the country has not refrained from handling issues in a multilateral context. When comparing ideals in the United States with foreign policy tradition in the United Kingdom, a reasonable conclusion can be drawn that the ideas, and more specifically the proposed strategies, of the humanitarian initiative would fare better in the United Kingdom.

¹⁸⁴ Kennedy, “The tradition of appeasement”; Larsen, *Foreign Policy*, 70.

¹⁸⁵ Larsen, *Foreign Policy*, 79-80.

¹⁸⁶ Sanders and Houghton, *Losing an Empire*, 229.

Conclusion

This research set out to examine in what context the humanitarian initiative would have the biggest chance of catching on, with a comparative case study of the United Kingdom and the United States. In the first phase of this research, a document analysis has been carried out to identify the frame of the humanitarian initiative, and whether this frame meets certain conditions that would theoretically increase its degree of resonance. It has been shown that different elements of the movement share the same central message, namely that the consequences of any use of nuclear weapons would be catastrophic, and that the solution would be to prohibit and fully eliminate these weapons. The movement points out other issues as well, such as the flaws of deterrence and the current nuclear disarmament mechanisms. The humanitarian initiative presents a credible frame, as it shows consistency and as it has empirical credibility.

The second phase of this research used a comparative case study to examine which additional conditions would increase or decrease the degree of resonance of the frame in a national context. The findings of these sections show that it is reasonable to assume that the humanitarian initiative has a higher chance of catching on in the United Kingdom than in the United States. Nuclear disarmament and the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons are not central issues in the lives of Americans. The majority of Americans are also not confronted with the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons detonations on a daily basis, apart from a group of people that has been exposed to radiation in the past. When Americans do encounter nuclear weapons, for example, through the media, the overwhelming focus is on nuclear proliferation, and any mention of the humanitarian initiative or its goals is often countered. The humanitarian initiative has a large number of big players that argue against it in the United States, and a high degree of credibility of the frame articulator relative to these competing actors would be difficult to achieve. Moreover, the rhetoric and strategies of the humanitarian initiative do not match up well with American ideals and traditions.

In contrast, the humanitarian initiative would hypothetically fare better in the United Kingdom. The humanitarian initiative would meet less resistance from other actors, and the strategies of the movement would match up better with British values and traditions compared to those of the United States. However, this does not mean that the movement has a high degree of resonance in the United Kingdom. Nuclear disarmament is a prominent issue for British people, but the humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, a Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty, flaws regarding deterrence, and other issues do not get as much attention. Nuclear disarmament is an issue for the British people mainly because of the current debate around the renewal of Trident, and arguments for disarmament are mostly driven by financial considerations. The majority of British people is not affected by the consequences of nuclear weapons in their daily lives either, nor by any of the other

issues identified by the humanitarian initiative. Nonetheless, there is a debate on disarmament, and it might be beneficial for the humanitarian initiative to focus more on this part of its message to increase resonance in the United Kingdom.

This study has one major limitation, and that is that the research is predominantly theoretical and hypothetical. The theoretical framework of Benford and Snow does not account for the degree to which the audience is actually exposed to the humanitarian initiative and its message. The conclusion therefore cannot be that the humanitarian initiative resonates more in the United Kingdom, but that it would *hypothetically* resonate more in this country. Other elements that are not included in the framework, that would possibly increase resonance, are for example the influence of the media, or what the costs and benefits of the humanitarian approach would be for the audience. The lack of insight into whether the humanitarian initiative is reaching the audience has also been troublesome when analyzing the credibility of the frame articulator from the perspective of the audience. If this section were to be analyzed in future research, field work on this particular topic would be recommended. A final difficulty has been that not all sources in the United States and the United Kingdom are comparable. Polls and surveys do not always ask the same questions or utilize the same methods, and one must therefore make sure to not draw unwarranted conclusions.

This thesis evidently only shows one part of the debate, namely whether the humanitarian initiative has a chance of catching on in the United States and the United Kingdom. As is the intention of the humanitarian initiative, this research has concentrated on the public. Whether the movement should focus on the public is debatable, as wanting to convince the audience might be a naïve approach. But this thesis does offer a starting point for future research, and further examination of particular groups in society or the elite is recommended to provide a more complete picture of the prospects of the humanitarian initiative.

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