

Finnemore, M. and K. Sikkink (1998). "International norm dynamics and political change." International Organization 52(4): 887-917.

Abstract: "Norms have never been absent from the study of international politics, but the sweeping "ideational turn" in the 1980s and 1990s brought them back as a central theoretical concern in the field. Much theorizing about norms has focused on how they create social structure, standards of appropriateness, and stability in international politics. Recent empirical research on norms, in contrast, has examined their role in creating political change, but change processes have been less well-theorized. We induce from this research a variety of theoretical arguments and testable hypotheses about the role of norms in political change. We argue that norms evolve in a three-stage "life cycle" of emergence, "norm cascades," and internalization, and that each stage is governed by different motives, mechanisms, and behavioral logics. We also highlight the rational and strategic nature of many social construction processes and argue that theoretical progress will only be made by placing attention on the connections between norms and rationality rather than by opposing the two."

The Return to Norms

EH Carr and Morgenthau both argued for norms; norms and ideas have been pushed aside for methodological reasons having to do with measurement difficulty; this was reinforced by the "infatuation" of political scientists with economics; in the 1980s, the regimes project and constructivists brought it back in.

Definitions

- Norm: "a standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity" (Katzenstein 96)
- Constitutive norm: "create new actors, interests, or categories of action" (Searle 95)
- Regulative norm: "order and constrain behavior" (Katzenstein 96)
- Evaluative norm: "stressing questions of morality" (Katzenstein 96)
- Practical norm: "commonly accepted notions of 'best solutions'" (Katzenstein 96)

Institution: "a relatively stable collection of practices and rules defining appropriate behavior for specific groups of actors in specific situations." (March and Olsen 98). (Aggregation of norms)
 Question is how many actors must share a standard to call it a norm. F&S will argue for a "tipping point" later.

Connecting Domestic and International Norms

Int'l norms often start out as domestic; eventually, int'l norms can create/supersede/trump domestic norms. F&S suggest that both work without a formal legal structure.

Stability Versus Change

Stability is well-theorized; change is much less so.

Evolution and Influence of Norms

The Norm "Life Cycle"

Norms go through a three-part life cycle - I reproduce here the excellent table p.258 for three stages, actors, motives, and dominant mechanisms.

	<i>Stage 1: Norm Emergence</i>	<i>Stage 2: Norm Cascade</i>	<i>Stage 3: Internalization</i>
<i>Actors</i>	Norm entrepreneurs with organizational platforms	States, international organizations, networks	Law, professions, bureaucracy
<i>Motives</i>	Altruism, empathy, ideational, commitment	Legitimacy, reputation, esteem	Conformity
<i>Dominant mechanisms</i>	Persuasion	Socialization, institutionalization, demonstration	Habit, institutionalization

In the first stage, entrepreneurs with organizational power argue for a norm, primarily domestically; individual states convert. In between Stage 1 and Stage 2 is the "turning point," where a critical mass of states have joined. Empirically, this is about 1/3 of the states. In Stage 2, massive ratification occurs even in states where no powerful domestic movement exists. In stage 3, these norms are "taken for granted."

Which Norms Matter Under What Conditions?

The literature provides three hypotheses for when norms matter:

- Legitimation - states that need to be internationally legitimated will adopt norms.
- Prominence - norms held by successful states are likely to spread.

Finnemore, M. and K. Sikkink (1998). "International norm dynamics and political change." International Organization 52(4): 887-917.

Intrinsic characteristics of the norm - clear and specific norms, which exist for a while, and make universalistic claims, are likely to spread. Norms congruent w/capitalism & liberalism spread. Morally progressive norms linked to the body spread. (Not all constructivists make these teleological, or "functional" arguments)

Adjacency claims or path dependence - Norms that fit well with existing norms work better.

World time-context - Norms that fit with the general world historical context work well.

Norms, Rationality and Strategic Social Construction

The relationship between rationality and norms is undertheorized, partially due to the false normative-rational dichotomy. Norm entrepreneurs act rationally and strategically in promoting certain constructions of reality (although their motivations for such are not usually material utility-maximizing). Rational choice methods also fit with ideational ontologies. One way of combining them is that ideational approaches determine 'common knowledge,' while rational approaches determine the exercise of instrumental rationality in this framework; another (neglected) way has to do with the strategic behavior of norm entrepreneurs. Rational choice can produce social knowledge, just as social knowledge provides the inputs for rational choice. F&S identify four lines of debate among scholars: materialism, utilitarianism, choice, and persuasion.

Materialism: some argue over why actors conform to a norm; others argue for a basis in material preferences, while others argue for ideationally-based preferences.

Utilitarianism: some argue for a utilitarian, instrumental logic of consequences; others argue for a logic of appropriateness a la March and Olsen.

Choice: some explain phenomena based on agent choice; others explain based on social structure.

Persuasion: some argue for a legal model of persuasion, in which arguments are persuasive if grounded in precedent; others argue for a psychological model, in which appeals to emotion, etc. rather than logic happen.