International Norm Dynamics
and Political Change

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Normative and ideational concerns have always informed the study of international politics and are a consistent thread running through the life of *International Organization*. When *IO* was founded, dominant realist views of politics, while rejecting idealism, were very much concerned with issues of legitimacy and ideology. The early Cold War, after all, was not simply a positional conflict among anonymous great powers: it was a war for "hearts and minds." The coupling of power with "legitimate social purpose" was central to American foreign policy of this period.[1] At the same time, international relations scholars were busy studying two of the greatest social construction projects of the age: European integration and decolonization. Neofunctionalists, like the realists, were consciously trying to distance themselves from "idealist" predecessors (in this case, David Mitrany and his colleagues), but the complex web of technical tasks that they designed aimed at more than promoting material well-being; they aimed ultimately at ideational and social ends. Spillover was supposed to do more than create additional technical tasks; it was supposed to change attitudes, identity, and affect among participants. Likewise, scholars recognized that decolonization was driven by a profoundly normative agenda and that it explicitly sought to reconstitute the identities of both the new states and their former colonizers, as well as the relationships between them.

Attempts in the 1960s and 1970s to build a science of politics modeled on economics or natural science never displaced these normative and ideational concerns completely. They have surfaced consistently in the stream of critiques of the dominant state-centric paradigms that focused on material power. Scholars of transnational relations in the 1970s called attention to transnational actors who were sometimes influenced by norms and ideas.[2] The regimes scholarship of the early 1980s similarly

   1. Ruggie 1983b.
   2. Keohane and Nye 1971.

emphasized the role of principles and norms in ways that opened the door for a more sweeping "ideational turn" in the late 1980s.

Elsewhere in this issue John Ruggie, James March, and Johan Olsen explore the intellectual history of this recent "turn" and locate its proponents in the more abstract theoretical debates of social science. Building on their contributions, we address theoretical issues facing those of us interested in empirical research on social construction processes and norm influences in international politics. We are concerned with such questions as How do we know a norm when we see one? How do we know norms make a difference in politics? Where do norms come from? How do they change? We are particularly interested in the role norms play in political change—both the ways in which norms, themselves, change and the ways in which they change other features of the political landscape. Like other theoretical frameworks in international relations (IR), much of the macrotheoretical equipment of constructivism is better at explaining stability than change. Claims that actors conform to "logics of appropriateness"[3] say little about how standards of appropriateness might change. Such static approaches to IR are particularly unsatisfying during the current era of global transformation when questions about change motivate much of the empirical research we do. Lacking good macrotheoretic guidance, our approach to these questions relies heavily on induction from the extensive and growing body of norms research that has sprung up, not just in political science, but in law, economics, sociology, and psychology. This variety of conceptual and empirical material is useful for our inductive enterprise, but it also raises some important questions for macrotheory that we explore at the end of the article.

We use our review of scholarship on norms and related ideational phenomena in this article to make three arguments. First, the ideational "turn" of recent years is actually a *re*turn to some traditional concerns of the discipline, but it has not brought us back to precisely the same place we began. Standards for good empirical research have changed dramatically (and for the better) since the founding of *IO,* and applying these standards to long-standing normative issues has had real payoffs. Second, we generate some propositions about three aspects of norms—their origins, the mechanisms by which they exercise influence, and the conditions under which norms will be influential in world politics. Specifically, we argue that norms evolve in a patterned "life cycle" and that different behavioral logics dominate different segments of the life cycle. Third, we argue that the current tendency to oppose norms against rationality or rational choice is not helpful in explaining many of the most politically salient processes we see in empirical research—processes we call "strategic social construction," in which actors strategize rationally to reconfigure preferences, identities, or social context.[4] Rationality cannot be separated from any politically significant episode of normative influence or normative change, just as the normative context conditions any episode of rational choice. Norms and rationality are thus intimately connected, but scholars disagree about the precise nature of their relation-

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3. March and Olsen, this issue.
4. See Kahler, this issue, for a history of debates over rationality in international relations.

ship. We identify four focal points of debate where the relationship between norms and rationality is least understood and most important, and we show how these debates cross-cut research traditions in potentially fruitful ways.

The Return to Norms

Norms and normative issues have been central to the study of politics for at least two millennia. Students of politics have struggled with questions not only about the meaning of justice and the good society but also about the influence on human behavior of ideas about justice and good. Our conclusions (or our assumptions) about these issues condition every form of political analysis. Aristotle and Plato understood this in the fourth century B.C.E. just as E. H. Carr did in the twentieth century. Carr has become canonized in the discipline as a debunker of Wilsonian idealism, but this simplification misrepresents his message: "Political action must be based on a coordination of morality and power." Realism fails, in Carr's analysis, precisely because it excludes essential features of politics like emotional appeal to a political goal and grounds for moral judgment.[5] This conviction that understanding social purpose and legitimacy was essential to understanding politics continued through the 1950s and 1960s and is evident in the pages of *IO*. Inis Claude's work on the legitimation function of the United Nations deals precisely with this issue.[6] Early IR scholarship on certain issues—decolonization, human rights, education—recognized that much UN activity involved establishing norms, but it often failed to theorize these normative processes.[7] Certainly the work of the integration theorists such as Ernst Haas was implicitly, and often explicitly, about creating shared social purpose.[8] Even realists like Hans Morgenthau wrote extensively about the way in which ideational and normative factors such as nationalism, morality, and international law limit states' exercise of power.[9]

The "turn" away from norms and normative concerns began with the behavioral revolution and its enthusiasm for measurement. Normative and ideational phenomena were difficult to measure and so tended to be pushed aside for methodological reasons. This tendency was reinforced by the emerging infatuation of political scientists with economic methods in the late 1970s and 1980s.[10] Realists began recasting the pursuit of power as "utility maximization" and, following the economists, tended to specify utility functions in material terms only. Liberals drew on microeconomic analyses of collective action games (Prisoners' Dilemma, Stag Hunt) to reinvigorate their long-standing debate with realists and show that cooperation, welfare improve-

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5. Carr [1946] 1964, 97, 89.
6. Claude 1966.
7. See Kay 1967; Henkin 1965; Jacobson 1962; and Ball 1961.
8. Haas 1961, 1964a. For an argument related to some concerns of this article, see Haas 1993.
9. Morgenthau [1948] 1985, pt. 5, 6.
10. For a discussion about the causes and effects of the dominance of economic models and methods in the study of U.S. politics, see Lowi 1992; Simon 1993a; Lowi 1993a,b; and Simon 1993b.

ment, and "progress" were possible even given some of realism's pessimistic assumptions about self-seeking human nature. In fact, these "neos," both realist and liberal, might more appropriately be called "econorealists" and "econoliberals," since what was new in both cases was an injection of microeconomic insights.[11]

Although the move to rational choice in no way required a move to a material ontology, its proponents showed little interest in ideational or social phenomena, and study of these issues languished during this period. However, when interest in these matters revived in the 1980s, first with the regimes project[12] and later with the constructivists led by John Ruggie, Friedrich Kratochwil, Alexander Wendt, and others,[13] the discipline to which norms returned had changed in important ways. Although the behavioral revolution and the "economic turn" of the 1970s and 1980s may have neglected norms, they made important contributions by forcing scholars to think much more rigorously about issues of research design, theoretical clarity, disciplinary cumulation, and parsimony.

As contemporary researchers make their arguments about norms, culture, and ideas, they will need to specify ideational causal claims and mechanisms clearly, think seriously about the microfoundations on which theoretical claims about norms rest, and evaluate those claims in the context of carefully designed historical and empirical research.[14] David Lumsdaine's analysis of the role of morality in international politics, for example, is very different from Carr's. Carr uses evidence anecdotally to illustrate his arguments about the moral character of "the ordinary man" and the political consequences of that morality. The result is a brilliant piece of political thought but one vulnerable to charges of wishful thinking, since Carr provides no systematic evidence that human beings actually *do* behave as his "ordinary man" does and not according to some other conception of human nature. Lumsdaine, by contrast, offers systematic evidence that morality actually does play a significant role in foreign aid by examining predictions from alternative explanations and compiling extensive evidence, both quantitative and qualitative, to arbitrate among explanations.[15] The same attention to alternative explanations, rigorous standards of evidence, and social theoretic microfoundations has characterized the article-length research on norms in *IO* on such issues as the end of apartheid in South Africa, the end of the Cold War, prohibitions against certain kinds of weapons, the end of slavery, and other prohibition regimes.[16] In a wide variety of issue areas, norms researchers have made inroads precisely because they have been able to provide explanations substantiated by evidence for puzzles in international politics that other approaches had been unable to explain satisfactorily.

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11. See also Ruggie, this issue.
12. Krasner 1983b.
13. See Kratochwil and Ruggie 1986; Wendt 1987; Dessler 1989; Kratochwil 1989; and Adler 1997.
14. Readers should note that we use ideational "causation" here in a way that recognizes that ideas and norms are often reasons for actions, not causes in the physical sense of the word. See Ruggie, this issue.
15. Lumsdaine 1993.
16. See Klotz 1995a; Risse-Kappen 1994; Price 1995; Ray 1989; and Nadelmann 1990.

Norms are no easier to measure today than they were in the 1930s or 1960s, but conceptual precision is essential for both meaningful theoretical debate and defensible empirical work. In the remainder of this section we take up three issues where conceptual clarification seems most pressing and most possible: definitions, the relationship between domestic and international norms, and whether norms are agents of stability or change.

Definitions

There is general agreement on the definition of a norm as a standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity,[17] but a number of related conceptual issues still cause confusion and debate. First, whereas constructivists in political science talk a language of norms, sociologists talk a language of "institutions" to refer to these same behavioral rules. Thus, elsewhere in this issue March and Olsen define "institution" as "a relatively stable collection of practices and rules defining appropriate behavior for specific groups of actors in specific situations."[18] One difference between "norm" and "institution" (in the sociological sense) is aggregation: the norm definition isolates single standards of behavior, whereas institutions emphasize the way in which behavioral rules are structured together and interrelate (a "collection of practices and rules"). The danger in using the norm language is that it can obscure distinct and interrelated elements of social institutions if not used carefully. For example, political scientists tend to slip into discussions of "sovereignty" or "slavery" as if they were norms, when in fact they are (or were) collections of norms and the mix of rules and practices that structure these institutions has varied significantly over time.[19] Used carefully, however, norm language can help to steer scholars toward looking inside social institutions and considering the components of social institutions as well as the way these elements are renegotiated into new arrangements over time to create new patterns of politics.[20]

Scholars across disciplines have recognized different types or categories of norms. The most common distinction is between regulative norms, which order and constrain behavior, and constitutive norms, which create new actors, interests, or categories of action.[21] Some scholars have also discussed a category of norms called evaluative or prescriptive norms, but these have received much less attention and, indeed, are often explicitly omitted from analysis.[22] This lack of attention is puzzling, since it is precisely the prescriptive (or evaluative) quality of "oughtness" that sets norms apart from other kinds of rules. Because norms involve standards of "appropriate" or "proper" behavior, both the intersubjective and the evaluative dimensions are inescapable when discussing norms. We only know what is appropriate by reference to

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17. See Katzenstein 1996b, 5; Finnemore 1996a, 22; and Klotz 1995b.
18. March and Olsen, this issue.
19. Krasner 1984, 1988, 1993; Thomson 1994; Strang 1991; Ruggie 1993; and Spruyt 1994.
20. For an excellent discussion of these issues, see Jepperson 1991.
21. Ruggie, this issue; Searle 1995; Katzenstein 1996b; and Wendt forthcoming.
22. Gelpi 1997. See, for example, the treatment in Katzenstein 1996b, 5, fn12.

the judgments of a community or a society. We recognize norm-breaking behavior because it generates disapproval or stigma and norm conforming behavior either because it produces praise, or, in the case of a highly internalized norm, because it is so taken for granted that it provokes no reaction whatsoever.[23] Thus, James Fearon argues that social norms take the generic form "Good people do (or do not do) X in situations A, B, C . . ." because "we typically do not consider a rule of conduct to be a social norm unless a shared moral assessment is attached to its observance or non-observance."[24]

One logical corollary to the prescriptive quality of norms is that, by definition, there are no bad norms from the vantage point of those who promote the norm. Norms most of us would consider "bad"—norms about racial superiority, divine right, imperialism—were once powerful because some groups believed in the appropriateness (that is, the "goodness") of the norm, and others either accepted it as obvious or inevitable or had no choice but to accept it. Slaveholders and many non-slaveholders believed that slavery was appropriate behavior; without that belief, the institution of slavery would not have been possible.

Given this discussion, we can begin to answer the essential research question: how do we know a norm when we see one? We can only have indirect evidence of norms just as we can only have indirect evidence of most other motivations for political action (interests or threats, for example). However, because norms by definition embody a quality of "oughtness" and shared moral assessment, norms prompt justifications for action and leave an extensive trail of communication among actors that we can study. For example, the United States' explanations about why it feels compelled to continue using land mines in South Korea reveal that it recognizes the emerging norm against the use of such mines. If not for the norm, there would be no need to mention, explain, or justify the use of mines in Korea at all. Note that we separate norm existence or strength from actual behavioral change in our operationalization. Because one central question of norms research is the effect of norms on state behavior, it is important to operationalize a norm in a way that is distinct from the state or nonstate behavior it is designed to explain.[25]

Norms as shared assessments raise the question of how many actors must share the assessment before we call it a norm. In part this is a question of empirical domain. Norms may be regional, for example, but not global. Even within a community, norms are "continuous, rather than dichotomous, entities. . . . [They] come in varying strengths" with different norms commanding different levels of agreement.[26] We argue that one way to understand the dynamics of this agreement process is by examining what we call the "life cycle" of norms. We show how agreement among a critical mass of actors on some emergent norm can create a tipping point after which

23. For a particularly good discussion of the way in which conventions produce judgments of social "oughtness" and morality, see Sugden 1989. See also Elster 1989a,c; and Sunstein 1997.
24. Fearon 1997, 25, fn18.
25. Legro 1997.
26. Ibid., 33.

agreement becomes widespread in many empirical cases, and we provide some suggestions about common features of "critical mass."

Connecting Domestic and International Norms

In this article we are concerned with international or regional norms that set standards for the appropriate behavior of states.[27] Domestic norms, however, are deeply entwined with the workings of international norms. Many international norms began as domestic norms and become international through the efforts of entrepreneurs of various kinds. Women's suffrage, for example, began as a demand for domestic change within a handful of countries and eventually became an international norm.[28] In addition, international norms must always work their influence through the filter of domestic structures and domestic norms, which can produce important variations in compliance and interpretation of these norms.[29] Even in situations where it might appear at first glance that international norms simply trump domestic norms, what we often see is a process by which domestic "norm entrepreneurs" advocating a minority position use international norms to strengthen their position in domestic debates. In other words, there is a two-level norm game occurring in which the domestic and the international norm tables are increasingly linked.[30] We argue later, however, that all these domestic influences are strongest at the early stage of a norm's life cycle, and domestic influences lessen significantly once a norm has become institutionalized in the international system.

Recent work in U.S. legal circles also suggests that there is more similarity in the way norms and law work domestically and internationally than IR scholars have thought. IR scholars have generally assumed that the existence of a coercive state able to enforce laws made domestic order very different from international order. A prominent group of legal scholars at the University of Chicago, however, now argue that, even within a domestic setting, making successful law and policy requires an understanding of the pervasive influence of social norms of behavior. This is a particularly compelling insight for IR scholars, since the international system is characterized by law and norms operating without direct punitive capacity. The processes through which these legal scholars claim that norms work domestically—involving norm entrepreneurs, imitation, "norm cascades," and "norm bandwagons"—are entirely consistent with the research done on norms by scholars in IR and suggest that IR norms research might also learn from domestic analogies. For example, the normative and legal process through which Southern gentlemen in the United States stopped dueling, examined by Lawrence Lessig, may be relevant for thinking about

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27. For analyses of domestic norms and their influence on domestic politics, see Kier 1997; Johnston 1995a; Katzenstein 1996a, 1993; and Berger 1998. For a critique of this emphasis on international as opposed to domestic norms, see Checkel 1998.
28. Dubois 1994.
29. See Risse-Kappen 1995b; and Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink forthcoming.
30. See Putnam 1988; and Evans, Jacobson, and Putnam 1993.

what kinds of norms and rules could lead to a decrease in conflict in the international system.[31]

Stability Versus Change

Macro-level theorizing has provided good explanations of the way norms produce social order and stability. Norms channel and regularize behavior; they often limit the range of choice and constrain actions.[32] From a constructivist perspective, inter- national structure is determined by the international distribution of ideas.[33] Shared ideas, expectations, and beliefs about appropriate behavior are what give the world structure, order, and stability. The problem for constructivists thus becomes the same problem facing realists—explaining change. In an ideational international structure, idea shifts and norm shifts are the main vehicles for system transformation. Norm shifts are to the ideational theorist what changes in the balance of power are to the realist.

John Ruggie argues in this issue that "having identified the possibility of system transformation in the macro level, corresponding micro practices that may have trans- formative effects must be identified and inventoried." The following section is an attempt to identify these practices.

Evolution and Influence of Norms

In this section we advance some propositions about (1) the origins or emergence of international norms, (2) the processes through which norms influence state and non- state behavior, and (3) which norms will matter and under what conditions. We illus- trate the arguments with material drawn from two major issue areas: women's rights, especially suffrage, and laws of war. International norms about women's rights often came into direct competition with strongly held domestic norms, and, typically, there was no self-evident state "interest" in the promotion of such norms. Although topics related to gender and women have been absent from the pages of *International Orga- nization*,[34] the suffrage campaign led to the formal political participation of half of the world's population and therefore seems worthy of study. Laws of war allow us to discuss the impact of norms where we might least expect it—the traditional security

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31. See Sunstein 1997; and Lessig 1995. For an interesting journalist's overview, see Rosen 1997.
32. See Katzenstein 1996a, 3; and Sunstein 1997, 40. Even Waltz, in his discussion of socialization, says that norms encourage conformity and that "socialization reduces variety." Waltz 1979, 76.
33. Wendt 1992 and forthcoming.
34. In its first fifty years *International Organization* has published only one article on any issue related to gender or women, Craig Murphy's review essay on gender and international relations; Murphy 1996. We suggest that there may have been a well-internalized norm (with a taken-for-granted quality) that research on gender and women did not constitute an appropriate topic for international relations scholar- ship. Note that as with any well-internalized norm, this does not imply that the editors self-consciously rejected articles on gender-related topics. To the contrary, we know a strong norm is in effect when it does not occur to authors to write on the topic or submit articles because it is not generally understood as an appropriate topic.

field, where such norms limit state discretion in an area perceived as essential to national sovereignty and security.

The Norm "Life Cycle"

Norm influence may be understood as a three-stage process. As shown in Figure 1, the first stage is "norm emergence"; the second stage involves broad norm acceptance, which we term, following Cass Sunstein,[35] a "norm cascade"; and the third stage involves internalization. The first two stages are divided by a threshold or "tipping" point, at which a critical mass of relevant state actors adopt the norm. This pattern of norm influence has been found independently in work on social norms in U.S. legal theory, quantitative research by sociology's institutionalists or "world polity" theorists, and various scholars of norms in IR.[36] The pattern is important for researchers to understand because different social processes and logics of action may be involved at different stages in a norm's "life cycle." Thus, theoretical debates about the degree to which norm-based behavior is driven by choice or habit, specification issues about the costs of norm-violation or benefits from norm adherence, and related research issues often turn out to hinge on the stage of the norm's evolution one examines. Change at each stage, we argue, is characterized by different actors, motives, and mechanisms of influence.

The characteristic mechanism of the first stage, norm emergence, is persuasion by norm entrepreneurs. Norm entrepreneurs attempt to convince a critical mass of states (norm leaders) to embrace new norms. The second stage is characterized more by a dynamic of imitation as the norm leaders attempt to socialize other states to become norm followers. The exact motivation for this second stage where the norm "cascades" through the rest of the population (in this case, of states) may vary, but we argue that a combination of pressure for conformity, desire to enhance international legitimation, and the desire of state leaders to enhance their self-esteem facilitate norm cascades. At the far end of the norm cascade, norm internalization occurs; norms acquire a taken-for-granted quality and are no longer a matter of broad public debate. For example, few people today discuss whether women should be allowed to vote, whether slavery is useful, or whether medical personnel should be granted immunity during war. Completion of the "life cycle" is not an inevitable process. Many emergent norms fail to reach a tipping point, and later we offer arguments about which norms are more likely to succeed. Internalized or cascading norms may eventually become the prevailing standard of appropriateness against which new norms emerge and compete for support.

Research on women's suffrage globally provides support for the idea of the life cycle of norms and the notion of a "tipping point" or threshold of normative change. Although many domestic suffrage organizations were active in the nineteenth cen

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35. Sunstein 1997.
36. See Sunstein 1997; Meyer and Hannan 1979; Bergesen 1980; Thomas et al. 1987; and Finnemore 1993.

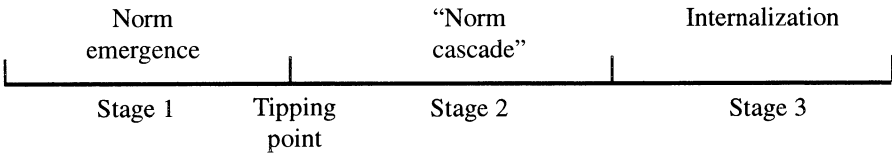| Norm emergence		"Norm cascade"	Internalization
Stage 1	Tipping point	Stage 2	Stage 3

FIGURE 1. *Norm life cycle*

tury, it was not until 1904, when women's rights advocates founded the International Women's Suffrage Association (IWSA), that an international campaign for suffrage was launched. In fact, rather than a single international campaign for women's suffrage, there were three or four overlapping campaigns with different degrees of coordination.[37] A quantitative analysis of the cross-national acquisition of suffrage rights reveals a different dynamic at work for early and late adopters of women's suffrage.[38] Prior to a threshold point in 1930, no country had adopted women's suffrage without strong pressure from domestic suffrage organizations. Between 1890 and 1930, Western countries with strong national women's movements were most likely to grant female suffrage. Although some original norm entrepreneurs came from the United States and the United Kingdom, this was not a case of "hegemonic socialization," since the first states to grant women the right to vote (New Zealand, Australia, Finland) were not hegemons, and the United States and the United Kingdom lagged ten to twenty years behind. After 1930, international and transnational influences become far more important than domestic pressures for norm adoption, and countries adopted women's suffrage even though they faced no domestic pressures to do so. For women's suffrage, the first stage of norm emergence lasted over eighty years: it took from the Seneca Falls Conference in 1848 until 1930 for twenty states to adopt women's suffrage. In the twenty years that followed the tipping point, however, some forty-eight countries adopted women's suffrage norms.[39]

Stage 1: Origins or emergence of norms.   Although little theoretical work has focused exclusively on the process of "norm building," the accounts of norm origins in most studies stress human agency, indeterminacy, chance occurrences, and favorable events, using process tracing or genealogy as a method.[40] Generalizing from these accounts, two elements seem common in the successful creation of most new norms: norm entrepreneurs and organizational platforms from which entrepreneurs act.

NORM ENTREPRENEURS. Norms do not appear out of thin air; they are actively built by agents having strong notions about appropriate or desirable behavior in their community. Prevailing norms that medical personnel and those wounded in war be treated as neutrals and noncombatants are clearly traceable to the efforts of one man, a Gen-

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37. See Dubois 1994; and Berkovitch 1995.
38. Ramirez, Soysal, and Shanahan 1997.
39. Ibid.
40. See Kowert and Legro 1996; and Price 1995.

evese Swiss banker named Henry Dunant. Dunant had a transformative personal experience at the battle of Solferino in 1859 and helped found an organization to promote this cause (what became the International Committee of the Red Cross) through an international treaty (the first Geneva Convention). The international campaign for women's suffrage was similarly indebted to the initial leadership of such norm entrepreneurs as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony in the United States and Millicent Garrett Fawcett and Emmeline Pankhurst in England. Both of these cases are consistent with the description Ethan Nadelmann gives of "transnational moral entrepreneurs" who engage in "moral proselytism."[41] Legal theorist Lessig uses the term "meaning managers" or "meaning architects" to describe the same kind of agency in the process of creating norms and larger contexts of social meaning.[42]

Norm entrepreneurs are critical for norm emergence because they call attention to issues or even "create" issues by using language that names, interprets, and dramatizes them. Social movement theorists refer to this reinterpretation or renaming process as "framing."[43] The construction of cognitive frames is an essential component of norm entrepreneurs' political strategies, since, when they are successful, the new frames resonate with broader public understandings and are adopted as new ways of talking about and understanding issues. In constructing their frames, norm entrepreneurs face firmly embedded alternative norms and frames that create alternative perceptions of both appropriateness and interest. In the case of the Red Cross, Dunant and his colleagues had to persuade military commanders not to treat valuable medical personnel and resources they captured as spoils of war, to be treated as they saw fit. In the case of women's suffrage and later women's rights, norm entrepreneurs encountered alternative norms about women's interests and the appropriate role for women. In other words, new norms never enter a normative vacuum but instead emerge in a highly contested normative space where they must compete with other norms and perceptions of interest.

This normative contestation has important implications for our understandings of the ways in which a "logic of appropriateness" relates to norms.[44] Efforts to promote a new norm take place within the standards of "appropriateness" defined by prior norms. To challenge existing logics of appropriateness, activists may need to be explicitly "inappropriate." Suffragettes chained themselves to fences, went on hunger strikes, broke windows of government buildings, and refused to pay taxes as ways of protesting their exclusion from political participation. Deliberately inappropriate acts (such as organized civil disobedience), especially those entailing social ostracism or legal punishment, can be powerful tools for norm entrepreneurs seeking to send a message and frame an issue. Thus, at this emergent stage of a norm's life

41. Nadelmann 1990.
42. Lessig 1995.
43. David Snow has called this strategic activity *frame alignment*—"by rendering events or occurrences meaningful, frames function to organize experience and guide action, whether individual or collective." Snow et al. 1986, 464.
44. March and Olsen 1989, and this issue.

TABLE 1. *Stages of norms*

	Stage 1 *Norm emergence*	*Stage 2* *Norm cascade*	*Stage 3* *Internalization*
Actors	Norm entrepreneurs with organizational platforms	States, international organizations, networks	Law, professions, bureaucracy
Motives	Altruism, empathy, ideational, commitment	Legitimacy, reputation, esteem	Conformity
Dominant mechanisms	Persuasion	Socialization, institutionalization, demonstration	Habit, institutionalization

cycle, invoking a logic of appropriateness to explain behavior is complicated by the fact that standards of appropriateness are precisely what is being contested.

Given the costs of inappropriate action and many of the persuasive tools they use, one has to wonder what could possibly motivate norm entrepreneurs (see Table 1). Obviously the answer varies with the norm and the entrepreneur, but for many of the social norms of interest to political scientists, it is very difficult to explain the motivations of norm entrepreneurs without reference to empathy, altruism, and ideational commitment. Empathy exists when actors have the capacity for participating in another's feelings or ideas. Such empathy may lead to empathetic interdependence, where actors "are interested in the welfare of others for its own sake, even if this has no effect on their own material well-being or security."[45] Altruism exists when actors actually take "action designed to benefit another even at the risk of significant harm to the actor's own well-being."[46] Kristen Monroe argues that the essence or "heart" of altruism is a "shared perception of common humanity. . . . a very simple but deeply felt recognition that we all share certain characteristics and are entitled to certain rights, merely by virtue of our common humanity."[47] Ideational commitment is the main motivation when entrepreneurs promote norms or ideas because they believe in the ideals and values embodied in the norms, even though the pursuit of the norms may have no effect on their well-being.

Of course, many norm entrepreneurs do not so much act against their interests as they act in accordance with a redefined understanding of their interests. Suffragists,

45. See Keohane 1984, chap. 7; Keohane 1990a; and Mansbridge 1990.
46. Monroe 1996. See also Oliner and Oliner 1988.
47. Monroe 1996, 206.

for example, were working on behalf of a coherent conception of women's political interests, but it was not an understanding initially shared by the great majority of women in the world. Women had to be persuaded that it was indeed in their interests to pursue suffrage. Similarly, the Red Cross had to persuade military leaders that protecting the wounded was compatible with their war aims.

ORGANIZATIONAL PLATFORMS. All norm promoters at the international level need some kind of organizational platform from and through which they promote their norms. Sometimes these platforms are constructed specifically for the purpose of promoting the norm, as are many nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) (such as Greenpeace, the Red Cross, and Transafrica) and the larger transnational advocacy networks of which these NGOs become a part (such as those promoting human rights, environmental norms, and a ban on land mines or those that opposed apartheid in South Africa).[48] Often, however, entrepreneurs work from standing international organizations that have purposes and agendas other than simply promoting one specific norm. Those other agendas may shape the content of norms promoted by the organization significantly.[49] The structure of the World Bank has been amply documented to effect the kinds of development norms promulgated from that institution; its organizational structure, the professions from which it recruits, and its relationship with member states and private finance all filter the kinds of norms emerging from it.[50] The UN, similarly, has distinctive structural features that influence the kinds of norms it promulgates about such matters as decolonization, sovereignty, and humanitarian relief.[51] The tripartite structure of the International Labor Organization, which includes labor and business as well as states, strongly influences the kinds of norms it promotes and the ways it promotes them.[52]

One prominent feature of modern organizations and an important source of influence for international organizations in particular is their use of expertise and information to change the behavior of other actors. Expertise, in turn, usually resides in professionals, and a number of empirical studies document the ways that professional training of bureaucrats in these organizations helps or blocks the promotion of new norms within standing organizations. Peter Haas's study of the cleanup of the Mediterranean shows how ecologists were successful in promoting their norms over others' in part because they were able to persuade governments to create new agencies to deal with the cleanup and to staff those posts with like-minded ecologists. Studies of the World Bank similarly document a strong role for professional training in filtering the norms that the bank promotes. In this case, the inability to quantify many costs and benefits associated with antipoverty and basic human needs norms

48. See Sikkink 1993a; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Klotz 1995a,b; and Price 1997.
49. See Strang and Chang 1993; Finnemore 1996a; Adler 1992; and Ikenberry and Kupchan 1990.
50. See Ascher 1983; Miller-Adams 1997; Wade 1996b; and Finnemore 1996a.
51. See Barnett 1995, 1997; McNeely 1995; and Weiss and Pasic 1997.
52. Strang and Chang 1993.

created resistance among the many economists staffing the bank, because projects promoting these norms could not be justified on the basis of "good economics."[53]

Whatever their platform, norm entrepreneurs and the organizations they inhabit usually need to secure the support of state actors to endorse their norms and make norm socialization a part of their agenda, and different organizational platforms provide different kinds of tools for entrepreneurs to do this.[54] International organizations like the UN and the World Bank, though not tailored to norm promotion, may have the advantage of resources and leverage over weak or developing states they seek to convert to their normative convictions. Networks of NGOs and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) dealing with powerful states, however, are rarely able to "coerce" agreement to a norm—they must persuade. They must take what is seen as natural or appropriate and convert it into something perceived as wrong or inappropriate. This process is not necessarily or entirely in the realm of reason, though facts and information may be marshaled to support claims. Affect, empathy, and principled or moral beliefs may also be deeply involved, since the ultimate goal is not to challenge the "truth" of something, but to challenge whether it is good, appropriate, and deserving of praise.[55] In these cases, what the organizational network provides is information and access to important audiences for that information, especially media and decision makers.

In most cases, for an emergent norm to reach a threshold and move toward the second stage, it must become institutionalized in specific sets of international rules and organizations.[56] Since 1948, emergent norms have increasingly become institutionalized in international law, in the rules of multilateral organizations, and in bilateral foreign policies. Such institutionalization contributes strongly to the possibility for a norm cascade both by clarifying what, exactly, the norm is and what constitutes violation (often a matter of some disagreement among actors) and by spelling out specific procedures by which norm leaders coordinate disapproval and sanctions for norm breaking. Institutionalization of norms about biological and chemical weapons, for example, has been essential to coordinating the near universal sanctions on Iraq following the Gulf War and has enabled states to coordinate an invasive inspections regime aimed at securing compliance with those norms. Institutionalization is not a necessary condition for a norm cascade, however, and institutionalization may follow, rather than precede, the initiation of a norm cascade. Women's suffrage was not institutionalized in international rules or organizations prior to the beginning of the norm cascade. The first intergovernmental agency created to deal with women's issues was a regional organization, the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM), established in 1928. Although scholars locate the tipping point on women's suffrage around 1930, the norm cascaded in similar ways both in Latin America (where it was

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53. See Ascher 1983; Miller-Adams 1997; and Finnemore 1996a.
54. Paul Wapner points out that there are exceptions to the centrality of the state in these processes in environmental politics where activists lobby polluting corporations directly to bring about change (for example, the campaign against McDonald's clamshell containers for its sandwiches). Wapner 1996.
55. Fearon 1997.
56. See Goldstein and Keohane 1993b; and Katzenstein 1996b.

institutionalized) and in other places around the world where women's rights were not similarly institutionalized.

TIPPING OR THRESHOLD POINTS. After norm entrepreneurs have persuaded a critical mass of states to become norm leaders and adopt new norms, we can say the norm reaches a threshold or tipping point. Although scholars have provided convincing quantitative empirical support for the idea of a norm tipping point and norm cascades, they have not yet provided a theoretical account for why norm tipping occurs, nor criteria for specifying a priori where, when, and how we would expect it. We propose two tentative hypotheses about what constitutes a "critical mass" and when and where to expect norm tipping. First, although it is not possible to predict exactly how many states must accept a norm to "tip" the process, because states are not equal when it comes to normative weight, empirical studies suggest that norm tipping rarely occurs before one-third of the total states in the system adopt the norm.[57] In the case of women's suffrage, Francisco Ramirez, Yasemin Soysal, and Suzanne Shanahan place the threshold point in 1930, when twenty states (or approximately one-third of the total states in the system at that time) had accepted women's suffrage.[58] In case of land mines, by May 1997 the number of states supporting the ban on anti-personnel land mines reached 60, or approximately one-third of the total states in the system. After that point, a norm cascade occurred, and 124 states ratified the Ottawa land mine treaty in December 1997.

It also matters which states adopt the norm. Some states are critical to a norm's adoption; others are less so. What constitutes a "critical state" will vary from issue to issue, but one criterion is that critical states are those without which the achievement of the substantive norm goal is compromised. Thus, in the case of land mines, a state that did not produce or use land mines would not have been a critical state. By contrast, the decision in mid-1997 by France and Great Britain, both land mines producers, to support the treaty could well have contributed to the norm cascade that happened in late 1997.[59] Securing support of those same two states was simply essential to producing the norm cascade and near universal acceptance of the first Geneva Convention in Europe 130 years earlier. States may also be "critical" because they have a certain moral stature. For example, the decision of South Africa under Nelson Mandela to support the land mine treaty was very influential, especially with other states in Africa but also globally.[60] Although cascades require support from some critical states, unanimity among them is not essential. For example, after initially supporting the norm of banning land mines, the United States refused to support the treaty, but the norm cascaded nevertheless.

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57. International law has had to wrestle with this problem repeatedly, since many modern international norms are embodied in treaties. Treaties implicitly recognize this concept of critical mass by specifying that a particular number of countries must ratify for the treaty to enter into force. Where treaties exist, the entry into force of the treaty may be a useful proxy for the critical mass necessary to say that a norm exists.
58. Ramirez, Soysal, and Shanahan 1997.
59. Price 1998.
60. Ibid.

Stage 2: Norm cascades. Up to the tipping point, little normative change occurs without significant domestic movements supporting such change. After the tipping point has been reached, however, a different dynamic begins. More countries begin to adopt new norms more rapidly even without domestic pressure for such change. Empirical studies suggest that, at this point, often an international or regional demonstration effect or "contagion" occurs in which international and transnational norm influences become more important than domestic politics for effecting norm change.[61] Contagion, however, is too passive a metaphor; we argue that the primary mechanism for promoting norm cascades is an active process of international socialization intended to induce norm breakers to become norm followers.[62] Kenneth Waltz suggested some of the ways socialization in occurs: emulation (of heroes), praise (for behavior that conforms to group norms), and ridicule (for deviation).[63] In the context of international politics, socialization involves diplomatic praise or censure, either bilateral or multilateral, which is reinforced by material sanctions and incentives. States, however, are not the only agents of socialization. Networks of norm entrepreneurs and international organizations also act as agents of socialization by pressuring targeted actors to adopt new policies and laws and to ratify treaties and by monitoring compliance with international standards. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) certainly did not disappear with the signing of the first Geneva Convention. Instead, the ICRC became its chief socializing agent, helping states to teach the new rules of war to their soldiers, collecting information about violations, and publicizing them to pressure violators to conform.

Socialization is thus the dominant mechanism of a norm cascade—the mechanism through which norm leaders persuade others to adhere—but what makes socialization work? What are the motives that induce states opposed to the norm to adhere and adhere quickly? We argue that states comply with norms in stage 2 for reasons that relate to their identities as members of an international society. Recognition that state identity fundamentally shapes state behavior, and that state identity is, in turn, shaped by the cultural-institutional context within which states act, has been an important contribution of recent norms research.[64] James Fearon similarly argues that one's identity is as a member of a particular social category, and part of the definition of that category is that all members follow certain norms.[65] What happens at the tipping point is that enough states and enough critical states endorse the new norm to redefine appropriate behavior for the identity called "state" or some relevant subset of states (such as a "liberal" state or a European state).

To the degree that states and state elites fashion a political self or identity in relation to the international community, the concept of socialization suggests that the

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61. See Ramirez, Soysal, and Shanahan 1997; and Whitehead 1996.
62. Socialization involves the "induction of new members . . . into the ways of behavior that are preferred in a society." Barnes, Carter, and Skidmore 1980, 35. Socialization can thus be seen as a mechanism through which new states are induced to change their behavior by adopting those norms preferred by an international society of states. See also Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink, forthcoming.
63. Waltz 1979, 75–76.
64. Katzenstein 1996b.
65. Fearon 1997.

cumulative effect of many countries in a region adopting new norms "may be analogous to 'peer pressure' among countries."[66] Three possible motivations for responding to such "peer pressure" are legitimation, conformity, and esteem.

Scholars have long understood that legitimation is important for states and have recognized the role of international sources of legitimation in shaping state behavior. Claude, for example, described international organizations as "custodians of the seals of international approval and disapproval," and emphasized their crucial role in establishing and assuring adherence to international norms.[67] Certainly there are costs that come with being labeled a "rogue state" in international interactions, since this entails loss of reputation, trust, and credibility, the presence of which have been amply documented to contribute to Pareto-improving effects from interstate interaction. We argue, though, that states also care about international legitimation because it has become an essential contributor to perceptions of domestic legitimacy held by a state's own citizens. Domestic legitimacy is the belief that existing political institutions are better than other alternatives and therefore deserve obedience.[68] Increasingly, citizens make judgments about whether their government is better than alternatives by looking at those alternatives (in the international and regional arena) and by seeing what other people and countries say about their country. Domestic legitimation is obviously important because it promotes compliance with government rules and laws; ruling by force alone is almost impossible. Thus, international legitimation is important insofar as it reflects back on a government's domestic basis of legitimation and consent and thus ultimately on its ability to stay in power. This dynamic was part of the explanation for regime transitions in South Africa, Latin America, and southern Europe.[69]

Conformity and esteem similarly involve evaluative relationships between states and their state "peers." Conformity involves what Robert Axelrod refers to as "social proof"—states comply with norms to demonstrate that they have adapted to the social environment—that they "belong." "By conforming to the actions of those around us, we fulfill a psychological need to be part of a group."[70] Esteem is related to both conformity and legitimacy, but it goes deeper, since it suggests that leaders of states sometimes follow norms because they want others to think well of them, and they want to think well of themselves.[71] Social norms are sustained, in part, by "feelings of embarrassment, anxiety, guilt, and shame that a person suffers at the prospect of violating them."[72] Fearon has argued that identity is based on those aspects of the self in which an individual has special pride or from which an individual gains self-esteem.[73] Thus, the desire to gain or defend one's pride or esteem can explain norm

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66. Ramirez, Soysal, and Shanahan 1997.
67. Claude 1966. For more contemporary arguments that international organizations continue to play this role, see Barnett 1997, 1995; and Barnett and Finnemore 1997.
68. Linz 1978.
69. See Klotz 1995a,b; and Whitehead 1996.
70. Axelrod 1986, 1105.
71. Fearon 1997.
72. Elster 1989c.
73. Fearon 1997, 23.

following. In this sense, states care about following norms associated with liberalism because being "liberal states" is part of their identity in the sense of something they take pride in or from which they gain self-esteem.

The microfoundations of both the conformity and esteem arguments for individuals are psychological and rest on extensive research on the importance of self-esteem and conformity for individuals. The power of conformity to group norms is so strong in some experimental situations that individuals will make statements that are objectively wrong in order to avoid deviating from group judgments. In situations where the objective reality is ambiguous, individuals are even more likely to turn to "social reality" to form and evaluate their beliefs.[74] Theories of cognitive dissonance may also provide insights into the motivations for norm-conforming behavior. Studies suggest that cognitive dissonance is aroused primarily when people notice that their behavior leads to aversive consequences that cannot be easily rectified. The unpleasant experience of dissonance leads actors to reduce it by changing either their attitudes or their behavior.[75] We argue that an analog to this exists at the level of the state: state leaders conform to norms in order to avoid the disapproval aroused by norm violation and thus to enhance national esteem (and, as a result, their own self-esteem). It is difficult to generalize to the state level from research on esteem done at the individual level, but norm entrepreneurs frequently target individual state leaders for criticism. Because much norm advocacy involves pointing to discrepancies between words and actions and holding actors personally responsible for averse consequences of their actions, one way to think about norm entrepreneurs is that they provide the information and publicity that provoke cognitive dissonance among norm violators. In the area of human rights a body of empirical research is emerging that suggests that some state leaders care deeply about their international image as human rights violators and make significant policy changes in order to change that image.[76]

Stage 3: Internalization.   At the extreme of a norm cascade, norms may become so widely accepted that they are internalized by actors and achieve a "taken-for-granted" quality that makes conformance with the norm almost automatic. For this reason, internalized norms can be both extremely powerful (because behavior according to the norm is not questioned) and hard to discern (because actors do not seriously consider or discuss whether to conform). Precisely because they are not controversial, however, these norms are often not the centerpiece of political debate and for that reason tend to be ignored by political scientists. Institutionalists in sociology, however, have made many of these most internalized norms the centerpiece of their research program and have done us the service of problematizing and "denaturalizing" many of the most prominent Western norms that we take for granted—such as those about market exchange, sovereignty, and individualism. Instead of trying to explain variation in state behavior, these scholars are puzzled by the degree of simi-

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74. For a survey of this literature, see Eagly and Chaiken 1993; on compliance with social norms, conformity in groups, and the normative origins of conformity, ibid., 630–34, 642–44; on self-esteem maintenance, ibid., 484; on ego defense, ibid., 480–81, 576–78; and on self-concept, ibid., 177–78.
75. Eagly and Chaiken 1993.
76. See Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink forthcoming, esp. chap. by Sieglinde Gränzer on Morocco.

larity or "isomorphism" among states and societies and how those similarities have increased in recent years. Their explanations for these similarities point to past norm cascades leading to states taking up new responsibilities or endowing individuals with new rights as a matter of course.[77]

Professions often serve as powerful and pervasive agents working to internalize norms among their members. Professional training does more than simply transfer technical knowledge; it actively socializes people to value certain things above others. Doctors are trained to value life above all else. Soldiers are trained to sacrifice life for certain strategic goals. Economists, ecologists, and lawyers all carry different normative biases systematically instilled by their professional training. As state bureaucracies and international organizations have become more and more professionalized over the twentieth century, we should expect to see policy increasingly reflecting the normative biases of the professions that staff decision-making agencies.[78] A number of empirical studies have already documented a role for highly internalized norms held by professionals determining policy. In addition to the role of economists at the World Bank mentioned earlier, Anne-Marie Burley's work shows a crucial role for legal professional norms in creating the post–World War II political order, and her work with Walter Mattli shows their importance in the European Union.[79]

Another powerful and related mechanism contributing to the consolidation and universalization of norms after a norm cascade may be iterated behavior and habit. Political scientists have understood the power of these mechanisms for years but have not connected them theoretically to norms and social construction debates. The core of the neofunctionalist argument about integration in Europe, after all, was that frequent interactions among people involving joint work on technical tasks would ultimately create predictability, stability, and habits of trust. As trust became habitual, it would become internalized and internalized trust would, in turn, change affect among the participants. Changed affect meant changed identity and changed norms as empathy and identification with others shifted. Thus, the engine of integration was indirect and evolutionary. Diplomatic tools such as confidence-building measures and track 2 diplomacy may follow a similar logic. Generalized, this argument suggests that routes to normative change may be similarly indirect and evolutionary: procedural changes that create new political processes can lead to gradual and inadvertent normative, ideational, and political convergence.[80]

Which Norms Matter Under What Conditions?

One of the common criticisms of norms research has been that it provides no substantive hypotheses about which norms will be influential in world politics and under

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77. See Bergesen 1980; Thomas et al. 1987; Scott and Meyer 1994; McNeely 1995; Meyer et al. 1997; and Finnemore 1996b.

78. See Haas 1989; Ascher 1983; Adler 1992; Miller-Adams 1997; Finnemore 1995; and Barnett and Finnemore 1997.

79. See Burley 1993; and Burley and Mattli 1993. These empirical findings are consistent with theoretical arguments made by DiMaggio and Powell 1983.

80. See also Rosenau 1986.

what conditions they will be influential. Our review of the literature reveals a number of such hypotheses that could be tested and elaborated in future research.

Legitimation. We argued earlier that an important condition for domestic receptiveness to international norms is a need for international legitimation. If legitimation is a main motivation for normative shifts, we might expect states to endorse international norms during periods of domestic turmoil in which the legitimacy of elites is threatened.[81] If states seek to enhance their reputation or esteem, we would expect states that are insecure about their international status or reputation to embrace new international norms most eagerly and thoroughly. Amy Gurowitz has argued, for example, that Japan has been more open to endorsing international norms about refugees than has Germany because Japan is "insecure" about its international political leadership role.[82] Dana Eyre and Mark Suchman similarly argue that developing states may adopt high-tech weaponry out of status concerns rather than from a utilitarian warfighting calculus.[83]

Prominence. Some domestic norms appear more likely candidates for internationalization than others. This could be due either to the quality of the norm itself (discussed later) or to the quality of the states promoting the norm. Drawing on natural selection theory, Ann Florini has argued that "prominence" is an important characteristic of norms that are likely to spread through the system.[84] Norms held by states widely viewed as successful and desirable models are thus likely to become prominent and diffuse. The fact that Western norms are more likely to diffuse internationally would seem to follow from this observation. This fits the pattern of adoption of women's suffrage norms, since almost all the norm leaders were Western states (though the United States and Britain were latecomer norm leaders, not early ones). Jon Elster, however, suggests that prominence should be seen in cultural and economic as well as military terms since there are many examples of countries like Greece and China that were conquered but whose norms were assimilated by their conquerors.[85]

Intrinsic characteristics of the norm. Within norms research, there are several sets of claims that intrinsic qualities of the norm itself determine its influence. We can divide these claims between those stressing the formulation of the norm (its clarity and specificity) and those stressing the substance of the norm and the issues it addresses (its content). Those stressing the form of the norm argue that norms that

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81. See Ikenberry and Kupchan 1990; and Ron 1997.
82. Gurowitz 1997.
83. Eyre and Suchman 1996.
84. Florini 1996.
85. Elster 1989a. Some authors have discussed "hegemonic socialization" in which norms will be influential when they are embraced and espoused by the hegemon. Ikenberry and Kupchan 1990. This is clearly related to the prominence thesis but can only be a subset of prominence, since states may be viewed as successful without being hegemonic.

are clear and specific, rather than ambiguous and complex,[86] and those that have been around for awhile, surviving numerous challenges, are more likely to be effective.[87] Institutionalists in sociology have also argued that norms making universalistic claims about what is good for all people in all places (such as many Western norms) have more expansive potential than localized and particularistic normative frameworks like those in Bali described by Clifford Geertz.[88]

Arguments about which substantive normative claims will be more influential in world politics have varied widely. Work by sociology's institutionalists suggests that norms about issues congruent with capitalism and liberalism will be particularly powerful, but this formulation is too vague to be useful. Many norms (some of them conflicting) are congruent with liberalism and capitalism, but only a subset of such norms have powerful transnational effects. John Boli and George Thomas have refined this observation somewhat and argue that five principles are central to world culture: universalism, individualism, voluntaristic authority, rational progress, and world citizenship. By implication they suggest that norms underpinned by these principles will be more successful internationally.[89] Both James Lee Ray and Neta Crawford have argued in a similar vein that there is a long-term trend toward humanizing the "other," or "moral progress," that helps to explain both the end of slavery and the end of colonization and could predict the demise of international war in the future.[90] Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink have advanced more specific claims. They argue that norms involving (1) bodily integrity and prevention of bodily harm for vulnerable or "innocent" groups, especially when a short causal chain exists between cause and effect, and (2) legal equality of opportunity are particularly effective transnationally and cross-culturally.[91] Norm entrepreneurs must speak to aspects of belief systems or life worlds that transcend a specific cultural or political context. Although notions of bodily harm are culturally interpreted, Keck and Sikkink argue, they also resonate with basic ideas of human dignity common to most cultures. The notion that norms about equality and protecting vulnerable groups from bodily harm will have more transnational resonance than other norms explains why norm campaigns around slavery and women's suffrage succeeded while a similar, powerful temperance campaign organized by many of the same people failed to reach a critical mass or tipping point. It might also explain why norms against drinking or smoking suddenly became more powerful when the effects on vulnerable or innocent bystanders of secondhand smoke or fetal alcohol syndrome became more widely known.

Arguments that the substantive content of a norm determines whether it will be successful imply that norm evolution has a clear direction if not a final endpoint and suggest that proponents of such arguments support some notion of "historical efficiency." It moves these norms researchers out of the "history-dependent institution-

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86. See Chayes and Chayes 1993; Legro 1997; and Franck 1992.
87. See Legro 1997; and Franck 1992.
88. See Meyer, Boli, and Thomas 1987; and Geertz 1980.
89. Boli and Thomas 1998.
90. See Crawford 1993; and Ray 1989.
91. Keck and Sikkink 1998.

alism" box that James March and Johan Olsen discuss in this issue into some version of "functional institutionalism." Not all researchers accept functional arguments, however. In his work on the chemical weapons taboo, Richard Price rejects arguments about the intrinsic characteristics of the issue, arguing instead that chemical weapons are not any more terrible than other weapons, and yet they are the only weapons that have been the subject of such a prohibition.[92] Martha Finnemore has also emphasized contradictions among dominant global norms as a barrier to any sort of teleological argument about their effects.[93] Price's recent work on the prohibition of land mines, however, suggests that transnational norm entrepreneurs have successfully used graphic images of bodily harm as a means of mobilizing a powerful transnational campaign against these weapons.[94] The speed with which the ban on land mines moved from norm emergence to a norm cascade reinforces the idea that norms prohibiting bodily harm to innocent bystanders are among those most likely to find transnational support.

ADJACENCY CLAIMS OR PATH DEPENDENCE. The relationship of new normative claims to existing norms may also influence the likeliness of their influence. This is most clearly true for norms within international law, since the power or persuasiveness of a normative claim in law is explicitly tied to the "fit" of that claim within existing normative frameworks (discussed later). Robert Sugden makes a similar argument that "because prominence is largely a matter of common experience . . . the conventions that are best able to spread are those that are most susceptible to analogy. Thus we should find family relationships among conventions."[95] Political scientists also make arguments about adjacency, precedent, and fit. Price argues that the association of chemical weapons with poison, which had already been prohibited, was important for sustaining the prohibition on chemical weapons.[96] Yet, as Price and others recognize, the meanings of any particular norm and the linkages between existing norms and emergent norms are often not obvious and must be actively constructed by proponents of new norms. Activists work hard to frame their issues in ways that make persuasive connections between existing norms and emergent norms. Opponents of female genital mutilation made little headway, for example, when the practice was called "female circumcision," because male circumcision is often a positively valued practice. However, when they replaced the term *circumcision* with *mutilation* and campaigned under the banner of "violence against women," the issue resonated much more strongly, and the campaign gained adherents. These activists clearly recognized the power of adjacency claims and actively worked to situate their issue in such a way as to make it more difficult to dismiss by tying it to the better-established body of human rights norms.[97]

92. Price 1995, 1997.
93. Finnemore 1996a, chap. 5 and 1996b.
94. Price 1998.
95. Sugden 1989, 93.
96. Price 1995.
97. Keck and Sikkink 1998.

WORLD TIME–CONTEXT. World historical events such as wars or major depressions in the international system can lead to a search for new ideas and norms.[98] Ideas and norms most associated with the losing side of a war or perceived to have caused an economic failure should be at particular risk of being discredited, opening the field for alternatives.[99] This kind of explanation would suggest that the end of the Cold War would be such a period of major normative growth and consolidation, based on the principles of the winning coalition in the "war."

   Notions of "world time" are also present in the arguments of those who see the current period of globalization as one that promotes dramatic expansion of new norms and creates new opportunities for norm entrepreneurs. Although norms have always been a part of international life, changes in communication and transportation technologies and increasing global interdependence have led to increased connectedness and, in a way, are leading to the homogenization of global norms. Although there is still inadequate information to make a conclusive argument, we suggest as an additional hypothesis that the speed of normative change has accelerated substantially in the later part of the twentieth century. If we compare the case of women's suffrage, where norm emergence took eighty years and the norm cascade another forty, to the issue of violence against women, which moved from norm emergence to cascade in less than twenty years, it appears that the speed of normative change is accelerating. The expansion of international organization (especially with the UN) is contributing to this acceleration process by providing more opportunities to address and negotiate on a broad range of normative issues.

Norms, Rationality, and Strategic Social Construction

The extensive body of empirical research on norms reveals an intimate relationship between norms and rationality. However, there is little good theoretical treatment of this relationship, partly because scholars have tended to counterpose norms to rationality in IR. The opposition of constructivist and "rationalist" arguments that has become widespread in the discipline implies that the issues constructivists study (norms, identities) are not rational and, similarly, that "rationalists" cannot or do not treat norms or identities in their research programs.[100] However, recent theoretical work in rational choice and empirical work on norm entrepreneurs make it abundantly clear that this fault line is untenable both empirically and theoretically.

   Rational choice theorists have been working on problems related to norm-based behavior for more that two decades now and have begun working on identity prob-

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98. Barkin and Cronin 1994. This is quite similar to explanations in the "ideas" literature about failure, crisis, and disappointment leading to changing ideas. See Odell 1982; and Hirschman 1982.
   99. Hall makes this kind of argument about shifts in economic ideas. Hall 1989a.
   100. For a related argument, see Fearon 1997, 28–29.

lems as well.[101] The fact that rational choice methods have been appropriated in the past by those with a material ontology has tended to obscure the fact that nothing about rational choice requires such an ontology. The utilities of actors could be specified as social or ideational as easily as they can be material. By making different assumptions about social relationships and ideational values, rational choice theorists provide interesting insights into the kinds of normative patterns that may develop and be stable. For example, B. Douglas Bernheim ascribes to actors concern about status and the opinions of others and shows how different patterns of social conformity result, including customs, fads, and subcultures.[102] Sugden examines the evolution of social conventions and shows how some Nash equilibria are evolutionarily stable in iterated games, whereas others are not, thus yielding certain kinds of social conventions. His analysis, however, finds a large role for "common experience" in determining the "focal points" around which particular conventions will emerge, an argument dovetailing nicely with constructivist arguments about the ways in which social structure and normative context shape the actions of agents and, again, suggesting the need for more theorizing about the connection between strategic choice and normative context.[103]

Similarly, empirical research on transnational norm entrepreneurs makes it abundantly clear that these actors are extremely rational and, indeed, very sophisticated in their means–ends calculations about how to achieve their goals.[104] They engage in something we would call "strategic social construction": these actors are making detailed means–ends calculations to maximize their utilities, but the utilities they want to maximize involve changing the other players' utility function in ways that reflect the normative commitments of the norm entrepreneurs. The first half of the process fits nicely in a rational game-theoretic framework. The second half does not. This suggests that instead of opposing instrumental rationality and social construction we need to find some way to link those processes theoretically.

Following Sugden, the editors of this volume make the important observation that what game theorists have called "common knowledge" provides an opening for conversation between rational choice scholars and constructivists, and they further suggest a two-stage division of labor between the frameworks: "Constructivists seek to understand how preferences are formed and knowledge generated, prior to the exercise of instrumental rationality."[105] Although this suggested division of labor captures one possible interaction of the two approaches, it does not exhaust the multiple ways in which norms and rationality interact. Specifically, this division ignores precisely what the empirical studies reveal—namely, that instrumental rationality and strategic interaction play a significant role in highly politicized social construc-

101. Akerlof 1980; Jones 1984; Axelrod 1986; Elster 1989a,c; Morrow 1994b; Laitin 1995; Fearon and Laitin 1996; and Fearon 1997.
102. Bernheim 1994.
103. Sugden 1989. For a discussion of common knowledge as "a point of complementarity" across theoretical perspectives, see Katzenstein, Keohane, and Krasner, this issue.
104. See Klotz 1995a,b; Price 1997; Sikkink 1993a; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Finnemore 1996a; Thomas 1997; and Nadelmann 1990.
105. Katzenstein, Keohane, and Krasner, this issue.

tion of norms, preferences, identities, and common knowledge by norm entrepreneurs in world politics. It ignores the "strategic" character of social construction. One of the consistent features of the empirical research reviewed here is that the common knowledge (or what constructivists would call intersubjective understandings) informing actors' calculations is not static nor is it just "out there" accreted by history and experience in some automatic way like the prominence of Grand Central Station (in Schelling's account) or driving on the left side of the road (in Sugden's account).[106] In many of the most politically salient strategic interactions, it is precisely the changing contours of common knowledge that are the object of the game, at least for some sets of players. Common knowledge about who is a political participant (suffrage), what the rules of war are, and even who is a person (slavery) has been created by strategic actors in highly contested processes that are central to our understanding of politics.

We realize that simply pointing out the complexity of this relationship between norms and rationality is not helpful by itself. We also understand that bracketing segments of a complex process like this one can be a useful way to understand a larger whole. After all, constructivists frequently bracket structure, then agency, to understand their mutual constitution. Our point is simply that processes of social construction and strategic bargaining are deeply intertwined, and pending a better theoretical treatment of this relationship we suggest that, at a minimum, a staged analysis of the relationship between rationality and social context could run either way: one could model rational choice as producing social knowledge as easily as one could model social context as a background for rational choice, depending on the empirical question being researched.

Rationality plays a role in virtually all research on norms. Even the institutionalists in sociology, whose work is perhaps most analytically distinct from rational choice, give rationality pride of place in the Weberian world culture that drives behavior and emphasize the ways in which rational action is prescribed and celebrated in that culture.[107] However, although all these research programs recognize rationality and link norms to rational behavior in important ways, they disagree strongly about the nature of that link. Our point is not that all scholars agree about how to research norms. They do not. Rather, our point is that the fights are not about (or should not be about) whether rationality plays a role in norm-based behavior. The fights are about the nature of the link between rationality and norm-based behavior. By unpacking that connection between rationality and norms we can see more clearly the issues at stake in contemporary research and understand better some of the debates driving it. Four issues stand out and create broad lines of cleavage and debate among scholars: materialism, utilitarianism, choice, and persuasion.

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106. Architectural and social historians no doubt could provide an account of the active construction of these bits of common knowledge.

107. In fact, the institutionalists could make a subsuming argument: If we see something that looks like rational choosing going on in human affairs, institutionalists would argue, that is in large part an artifact of our culture that tells us that utility-maximization is the "right" way to act (as opposed to, for example, action according to duty or social hierarchy or divine will. In fact, the success of rational choice theory within the social sciences is, itself, a logical outgrowth of world culture, in institutionalist terms.

One problem with claims in empirical work that norms are a cause of behavior is that, in fact, such claims do not really tell us very much. There are lots of possible reasons to conform to a norm, and scholars disagree about the motivations they impute to actors in their analyses.[108] One set of disagreements involves the preferences we impute to actors and whether norm-based behavior can be explained by preferences that are entirely material. Certainly, some norm conformance may be driven by material self-interest. Neoliberal institutionalists and regimes scholars have been investigating norms flowing from this type of motivation for many years.[109] More recently, however, scholars have begun debating the adequacy of an entirely materialist ontology and have emphasized nonmaterial and even other-regarding preferences in their analyses of norm-based behavior. Note, however, that there are no obvious methodological consequences to this particular debate over the specification of preferences, since rational choice can specify a utility function that includes religious, ideological, or altruistic concerns, just as more interpretivist accounts could focus on material rather than social facts. Note, too, that frequently heard arguments about whether behavior is norm-based or interest-based miss the point that norm conformance can often be self-interested, depending on how one specifies interests and the nature of the norm.

Another debate among those studying norms that does, by contrast, have profound methodological and theoretical consequences involves the behavioral logic that scholars believe drives norm-conforming behavior. The behavioral logic underlying the economistic and rational choice approaches to norm analysis is utility maximization. Actors construct and conform to norms because norms help them get what they want. An alternative approach to understanding norm conformance is what March and Olsen call the "logic of appropriateness," in which actors internalize roles and rules as scripts to which they conform, not for instrumental reasons—to get what they want—but because they understand the behavior to be good, desirable, and appropriate. Habit, duty, sense of obligation and responsibility as well as principled belief may all be powerful motivators for people and underpin significant episodes of world politics.[110]

The debate over behavioral logics is the focus of both Ruggie's and March and Olsen's articles in this issue and does not require extended treatment here. As those articles make abundantly clear, which logic one invokes to explain behavior has significant methodological and theoretical consequences. Most obviously, the two logics lead one to different sides of the structure-agent debate that has been bubbling through the field for some time. The utilitarian and instrumental approach is entirely agent-driven. It is compatible with rational choice and methodological individual-

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108. We are indebted to Fearon for helping us formulate this point succinctly.

109. See Keohane 1984; and Krasner 1983b.

110. On the logic of appropriateness and its contrast with a "logic of consequences," see March and Olsen 1989, chap. 2; and this issue. For more on the social psychological underpinnings of script and schemas and the ways these may override utility-maximizing choice, see Fiske and Taylor 1994; Nisbett and Ross 1980; Gilovich 1991; and Wilcox and Williams 1990. For a discussion of "habit-driven actors" in world politics, see Rosenau 1986.

ism, which, in turn, have long-standing relationships with realism and liberalism in the field of IR. The logic of appropriateness, however, necessarily has a structure-driven component. What channels and directs behavior in this view are components of social structure—norms of behavior, social institutions, and the values, roles, and rules they embody. Under a logic of appropriateness, notions of duty, responsibility, identity, and obligation (all social constructions) may drive behavior as well as self-interest and gain. Theoretically, this logic focuses attention on social construction processes that are not well explained by IR theories in their contemporary incarnations and has led scholars back into political theory writings dealing with the genealogy of morality (Price on Nietzsche), the social construction of rationality (Michael Barnett and Finnemore on Weber), the politics of communication and argumentation (Crawford and Thomas Risse on Aristotle and Habermas), symbolic interaction and the "presentation of self" (Wendt on Meade and Barnett on Goffman), and the origins of individualism and humanitarianism in liberal thought. Methodologically, this group has invoked different kinds of structuration, process tracing, text analysis, and *verstehen*. Unfortunately, debate in the field on this issue has not been over which logic applies to what kinds of actors under what circumstances. Rather, the debate has been over whether a "logic of appropriateness" exists at all or whether one can adequately capture all politically salient normative effects with a utilitarian and instrumental approach.

A third issue on which there is disagreement and, we think, some misunderstanding, is the role of choice and its converse, determinism, in norm-based behavior. For rational choice scholars, actors conform to norms (not surprisingly) out of choice; choices may be constrained, at times highly constrained, but the focus of the analysis is on the choice. Other researchers, however, focus almost exclusively on the way norms are "internalized" in actors, which raises important issues about the locus of causality in norms arguments. When norms become internalized in actors, actors are no longer choosing to conform to them in any meaningful way. For institutionalists in sociology, many norms, including some of the most powerful ones, have been so internalized that we no long think seriously about alternative behaviors. In this view, actors no longer think seriously about whether "the state" is the best or most efficient form of political organization (it almost certainly is not). They just set up more and more states to the exclusion of other political forms. They no longer think seriously about whether international institutions are the best way to solve international problems (again, a mixed bag). They just set up more and more international institutions.[111] Institutionalists might argue that "choice" is not a particularly robust analytic tool, since much of the most basic human behavior is not chosen in any meaningful sense. Rather, it is supplied to agents by the larger social and cultural environment. Social structure, not agent choice, institutionalists would argue, is where the real explanatory action lies.

In this understanding, norm conformance driven by a logic of appropriateness starts to look deterministic. Yet, as we survey the norms research that emphasizes

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111. Barnett and Finnemore 1997.

appropriateness logic in IR, very little of it looks deterministic. Indeed, most of it emphasizes the highly contingent and contested nature of normative change and normative influence. We see two reasons for this. First, IR scholars applying a logic of appropriateness in their analysis have never been imperialistic in their claims. The argument has never been that other logics of action do not ever drive behavior; the argument has been that appropriateness is a powerful and important motor of political behavior worthy of investigation. Second, and more important, even within a logic of appropriateness there is often substantial room for agent choice. Actors may face varied and conflicting rules and norms all making claims for different courses of action. Indeed, most significant political choices are significant and difficult precisely because they involve two or more conflicting claims for action on a decision maker. Actors must choose which rules or norms to follow and which obligations to meet at the expense of others in a given situation, and doing so may involve sophisticated reasoning processes. These processes, however, involve a different kind of reasoning than that of utility maximization. Actors may ask themselves, "What kind of situation is this?" and "What am I supposed to do now?" rather than "How do I get what I want?" Actors often must choose between very different duties, obligations, rights, and responsibilities with huge social consequences, but understanding the choice depends on an understanding, not of utility maximization, but of social norms and rules that structure that choice.[112]

A final issue that separates different approaches to norms research is whether and how they treat persuasion. Persuasion is central to most of the empirical case studies about normative influence and change. It is the mission of norm entrepreneurs: they seek to change the utility functions of other players to reflect some new normative commitment. Persuasion is the process by which agent action becomes social structure, ideas become norms, and the subjective becomes the intersubjective. It is essential to much of the process tracing that scholars are currently doing, yet we have no good way of treating it theoretically. Rational choice can model the ways in which transfers of information may change actor strategies, but changes in underlying preferences cannot be endogenized. Institutionalists in sociology can talk about applying cultural models of action to new situations and the consequent unfolding or elaborating of global culture, but the process by which some models appear compelling and others do not, why some cultural innovations are persuasive and others are not, is not well explained. These approaches thus gloss over this problem in different ways, but persuasion is central to politics of all kinds, and we need a good theoretical apparatus for understanding it.

Looking to other disciplines, we see two types of arguments about persuasion that might be useful in political science: one structural and logical, the other psychological and affective. International legal scholars draw on a complex structure of rules to craft arguments about and adjudicate among competing normative claims. The persuasiveness of a normative claim in law is explicitly tied to the "fit" of that claim

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112. March and Olsen emphasize choice within appropriateness much more than do Meyer and his colleagues in their work. March and Olsen 1989.

within existing normative frameworks; legal arguments are persuasive when they are grounded in precedent, and there are complex rules about the creation of precedent— such as which judgments trump which and how the accretion of judgments is to be aggregated over time. Since normative contestation in law is so explicit and well documented, and since much of contemporary norm politics in the world has a strong legal component, we believe an examination of legal mechanisms for norm selection and dissemination will be instructive for IR scholars.[113]

Approaches in psychology emphasize very different factors in bringing about persuasion. In these arguments both cognition and affect work synergistically to produce changes in attitudes, beliefs, and preferences. Most of this work stresses communicative processes that happen through argumentation, but, unlike the legal approach, logic alone does not dictate the result, since appeals to emotion may well be used to strengthen or undermine logical extensions of norms.[114] German IR scholars, for example, are beginning to apply Habermas's theory of communicative action (which requires empathy) as a means of understanding persuasion, accommodation, and arrival at mutual understandings in international politics.[115]

Debates over these four issues—materialism, utilitarianism, choice, and persuasion—will continue to shape the ways we understand normative influence and normative change in world politics. Our concern here has not been to settle these debates, but to clarify what, exactly, is being debated and what the stakes of the debates are. These are not debates about rationality, although rationality certainly plays a role in all of them. The debates also do not divide norms researchers into two tidy camps. Researchers may marry ideational ontologies with rational choice;[116] they may examine reasoned choice among conflicting "appropriate" behaviors;[117] they may examine highly instrumental and strategic interactions designed to construct new standards of appropriateness, as most studies of norm entrepreneurs do;[118] and they may generally find themselves cross-cut in ways that are refreshing and, we hope, stimulate new kinds of conversations.

Conclusions

The "return" to norms holds immense promise for shaking up the IR research agenda and opening up exciting new avenues for inquiry—and not just because it offers new (or previously forgotten) subject matter to study. More interesting, to our minds, is the way norms research opens up conversations with theoretical traditions that IR scholars have ignored in recent decades. The evaluative and prescriptive character of

113. See Franck 1990; Burley and Mattli 1993; and Burley 1993.
114. See Eagly and Chaiken 1993; and Chaiken, Wood, and Eagly 1996.
115. Risse 1997.
116. See Laitin 1995; Fearon and Laitin 1996; and Fearon 1997.
117. March and Olsen 1989.
118. See Klotz 1995a,b; Price 1997; Sikkink 1993a; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Finnemore 1996a; Thomas 1997; and Nadelmann 1990.

norms opens the way for a long-overdue conversation with political theory and ethics. For decades now IR research has been divorced from political theory on the grounds (implicitly, if not explicitly, articulated) that what "is" in the world and what "ought to be" are very different and must be kept separate, both intellectually and in policy. However, contemporary empirical research on norms is aimed precisely at showing how the "ought" becomes the "is." Empirical research documents again and again how people's ideas about what is good and what "should be" in the world become translated into political reality. People with principled commitments have made significant changes in the political landscape: slavery as a legal institution of property rights has been abolished everywhere on the planet for the first time in human history; women, more than half the world's population, have full formal political participation in most states of the world; and though war continues to be a horrible human practice, there is no doubt that it is less horrible as a result of efforts by humanitarians to curb the most awful weapons and practices. At the same time, principled commitments and notions of what "should be" have fueled xenophobic nationalism, fascism, and ethnic cleansing. Understanding where these "oughtness" claims come from, how they are related to one another, which ones will be powerful, and what their implications are for world politics is vital, but it is an inquiry that can only be undertaken at the nexus of political theory and IR.

Similar connections exist between norms research and other fields of study. International law, like philosophy and ethics, has been ignored by IR scholars for decades, yet customary international law *is* norms, and empirical research in IR is, again, demonstrating that these legal norms have powerful behavioral effects. Legal norms are also bound up inextricably with the workings of international institutions, which have been a central focus of virtually all types of IR research in recent years. Further, these legal norms are structured and channel behavior in ways that create precisely the types of patterns political scientists seek to explain. Understanding which norms will become law ("soft" law as well as "hard" law) and how, exactly, compliance with those laws comes about would seem, again, to be a crucial topic of inquiry that lies at the nexus of law and IR.

Microfoundations for norm-based behavior might be improved by paying more attention to studies in psychology, particularly work on the roles of affect, empathy, conformity, and esteem. Like law and philosophy, affect and empathy have been swept under the carpet in recent decades. Ideational phenomena have been treated as "information," which reduces uncertainty or provides new strategies to maximize utilities. The result is politics without passion or principles, which is hardly the politics of the world in which we live. Emotions can be politically dangerous and undesirable in politics; hate, after all, is affect, too. But to pretend that affect and empathy do not exist is to miss fundamental dynamics of political life, and we have tried to suggest how attempts in psychology to wrestle with these issues may be helpful.

Finally, we have tried to show how norms research cross-cuts our own discipline in ways that are refreshing and stimulate new conversations. Contrary to what we perceived to be the popular impression, rationality is not the issue that divides IR scholars. Rational choice theorists can and do have a great deal to say about ide-

ational phenomena and how norms work, just as empirical studies of social construction and norm emergence repeatedly reveal highly rational strategic interaction. Scholars are divided, however, about the role that choice plays in norm-based behavior, about what motivates choice, and about the role persuasion plays in normative processes and how to treat it. No school of thought in the discipline is entirely comfortable with its answers to these questions at the moment. We believe this is a good state of affairs, one that will encourage scholars to venture beyond narrow methodological commitments to think more broadly about these issues.