Understanding the Domestic Impact of International Norms: A Research Agenda

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For more than a decade, scholars, who have highlighted both the regulative and constitutive functions of norms in international politics, have challenged the structural realist paradigm, which focuses mostly on the effects of variations in the distribution of capabilities among states under anarchy. Until recently, the focus of scholarship on norms—like that of structural realism—has been cast at the level of the international system, with norms held to affect state behavior by providing solutions to coordination problems.


reducing transaction costs, providing a language and grammar of international politics, and constituting the state actors themselves.

Without denying the effects of international norms at the level of the international system, a second wave of scholars has argued that international norms also have important effects on state behavior via domestic political processes. Two national-level factors have been shown to condition the effects of international norms on domestic political processes and provide explanations for important cross-national variation in compliance with and interpretation of international norms: the domestic salience or legitimacy of the norm, and the structural context within which the domestic policy debate transpires. Domestic political structures are important because they condition access to policy-making fora and privilege certain actors in policy debates, as

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7. This approach extends the prominent analysis by Peter Gourevitch, who has argued the need to examine the effects of “third image” factors on regime types and coalition patterns, as well as the mediating effects of preexisting state structures on systemic pressures. See “The Second Image Reversed: The International Sources of Domestic Politics,” *International Organization* 32, No. 4 (1978), pp. 881–911.
Peter Gourevitch argued. Similarly, Thomas Risse-Kappen argues that the ability of transnational actors to promote norms (principled ideas) and influence state policy is dependent on domestic structures understood in terms of state-societal relations. Moreover, Jeffrey T. Checkel finds that the effects of international norms are conditioned by domestic structures and the norms’ congruence with domestic political culture. Jeffrey W. Legro’s research shows that organizational cultures can mediate between international norms and state policy preferences.

Whereas studies of domestic structural determinants of a norm’s influence are well developed, the same cannot be said for the concept of domestic salience. Scholars repeatedly conclude that domestic salience is crucial to many cases of states’ compliance with international norms, but they rarely provide definitions or operational measures for the concept and, instead, merely assert that the norm in question was salient.

Further progress on a domestic approach to international norm compliance hinges on the redress of two major shortcomings in the literature. First, insufficient attention has been devoted to the measurement of a norm’s strength, legitimacy, or salience in the domestic political arena. Second, the mechanisms and processes by which international norms can or cannot attain

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11 For an exception, see Legro, “Which Norms Matter?”
domestic legitimacy remain underexplored, as research has tended to be biased toward processes and dynamics at the international system level.\textsuperscript{12}

The two tasks are intimately related. Without a clear definition of salience, it is difficult to know what to observe or measure in the domestic political context. Moreover, the identification of the mechanisms whereby international norms become domestically salient may lead to insights into variations in the degree of salience enjoyed by various international norms in the domestic discourse. In turn, this should help to clarify the dimensions along which measures for salience should be constructed.

The chief objective of this article is to identify avenues for subsequent research on the domestic impact of international norms. The article operationalizes the concept of domestic salience and identifies several mechanisms and conditions that may contribute to establishing the domestic salience of international norms. The focus is not on understanding a particular instance of norm compliance, but rather the factors that promote an international norm’s attaining the status of an “ought” in the domestic political arena. The goal is then to provide a framework for understanding why some international norms resonate in the domestic political discourse while others do not.

The article is organized in the following fashion. The first section defines and operationalizes the concept of salience. The second section presents in some detail hypothesized conditions and mechanisms leading to domestic salience. The third section discusses the empirical research necessary for progress toward the formulation of testable, contingent hypotheses. The conclusion discusses the wider implications of this research agenda.

\section*{The Domestic Salience of International Norms}

International rules and norms have important effects by way of domestic political processes. The concept of salience highlights the varying strength of

\textsuperscript{12}In a recent review of scholarship on norms and international politics, Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink tellingly focus almost exclusively on explaining the emergence and operation of norms at the international system level, while largely neglecting the growing body of literature that concentrates on the operation of international norms through domestic political systems. See “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change,” \textit{International Organization} 52, No. 4 (1998), pp. 887–917. The systems-level bias of this research has consequences. Analyses cast at the international system level are basically correlative and capture group tendencies rather than the effects of norms on particular states and foreign policy decisions. If norms can be counterfactually valid, a point discussed below, a systems-level analysis of compliance will underestimate the range of actors and decisions for which the norm was an important, if not determinative, factor.
international norms—defined here as “prescriptions for action in situations of choice”—within the domestic political context.¹³ Not all international rules and norms will resonate in domestic debates. Rather, salience requires a durable set of attitudes toward the norm’s legitimacy in the national arena, such that the norm is presumptively “accepted as a guide to conduct and a basis for criticism, including self criticism.”¹⁴ Salient norms give rise to feelings of obligation by social actors and, when violated, engender regret or a feeling that the deviation or violation requires justification.¹⁵

When a norm is salient in a particular social discourse, its invocation by relevant actors legitimates a particular behavior or action, creating a prima facie obligation, and thereby calling into question or delegitimizing alternative choices.¹⁶ In policy disputes, claims based on salient norms shift and raise the burden of justification necessary to overcome the claimant’s position in favor of competing options.¹⁷ To overcome the objection, one “must try to show that the facts are not as they seem to be; or that the rule, properly interpreted, does not cover the conduct in question; or that some other matter excuses nonperformance.”¹⁸

Yet the literature on international norms demonstrates that there are multiple conceptual difficulties in measuring variations in the domestic salience of international norms. For example, the danger of tautology is apparent in constructing valid and reliable measures of a norm’s salience in the domestic discourse. It would be easy, and wrong, to code a norm as salient merely because state behavior is observed to be consistent with an existing international norm.


¹⁵ For a similar view of salience, see Ian Hurd, “Legitimacy and Authority in International Politics,” International Organization 53, No. 2 (1999), p. 381.


¹⁷ See Kratochwil, Rules, Norms, and Decisions, chs. 4 and 5.

¹⁸ Chayes and Chayes, New Sovereignty, p. 119.
Needed are measures of salience that are independent of the particular behavioral outcome being explained.¹⁹

For their part, prominent institutionalists from the rationalist and constructivist schools argue that the strength of a norm is a function of its level of "institutionalization," which means the embedding of the norm's tenets in the state's constitutional, regulative, or judicial systems.²⁰ Precisely how and when domestically embedded international institutions infuse actors' beliefs and thereby affect behavior is underspecified. A more accurate—if less parsimonious—measurement of the domestic salience of a particular norm would involve a threefold investigation of changes in the national discourse, the state's institutions, and state policies.²¹

The first sign of an international norm's domestic impact is its appearance in the domestic political discourse. The introduction of international norms into the domestic discourse may come from state or societal actors and often takes the form of demands for a change in the policy agenda. The proponents of the international norm will invoke it to justify institutional or policy change or to delegitimize the preferences of other domestic actors. Indicative of the growing salience of international institutions is the formation of more organized societal groupings devoted to pressing for domestic institutional change or government working groups or committees charged with formulating policy options consistent with the tenets of the international institution.

Changes in national institutions provide a second indication that a given international norm or the normative tenets of an international institution have achieved more than nominal domestic salience. Institutional change comes in several forms and degrees.²² As a first step, the international norm may be embedded in domestic laws and procedures. The norm will enjoy greater salience if conflicting domestic institutions are eliminated or weakened, if procedures are established that enable domestic actors to complain about violations, if procedures exist or are created to sanction violations, or if a

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²¹ Harold Koh offers a similar framework, arguing that one might distinguish among the social, political, and legal internalization of international norms. See "Why Do Nations Obey International Law?" *Yale Law Journal* 106 (1997), pp. 2656–2657.

²² See the essays in Steinmo et al., eds., *Structuring Politics*. 
state unit is created to monitor and implement compliance. The more the international norm or institution accords with national institutions and the more numerous the mechanisms devoted to its reproduction and reinforcement, the greater its domestic salience.

A third indication of the level of salience enjoyed by an international norm involves analysis of the state’s policies. The analysis may not be straightforward, as the state can change one policy to placate international or domestic pressure but fail to modify a host of other policies and procedures that diminish or undermine the norm’s impact. To gauge the implication of any one policy change, requires the examination of several policies, including those in related issue areas.

Of the three measures of norm salience, discourse is the most important if also the least objective. This is true for several reasons. For one, changes in the domestic discourse will precede and accompany changes in institutions and policy and provide evidence as to the reasons for change. Less obvious is that analysis of discourse can provide insights into “nonevents” that may be norm-governed. A focus on observable behavior may be inappropriate for explaining situations where an actor did not choose a particular course of action, or did not exploit an opportunity for gain. When certain behaviors are ruled out of the range of acceptable alternatives, owing to internalized normative constraints, there may be no outward or observable behavioral traces on which to base empirical analysis. Or, paradoxically, the most salient norms will be most evident when they are violated, as actors will feel a strong need to justify or apologize for noncompliance.

Measuring the salience of norms requires the analyst to take actors’ explanations for their behavior seriously, but justifications need further analysis. For example, if an actor explains a particular behavioral choice in terms of a norm or obligation, one would try to test the implications of that explanation in other fields of behavior. If the norm governs behavior, a high degree of consistency across related issues would be expected. Similarly, if an actor apologizes for violating a norm and justifies noncompliance in terms of extenuating circumstances, then we would expect other observable behaviors and conditions. Mere rationalizations can be distinguished from forthright justifications because the

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23 Koh argues that “legal internalization occurs when an international norm is incorporated into the domestic legal system through executive action, judicial interpretation, legislative action or some combination of the three.” See “Why Do Nations Obey International Law?,” p. 2657.


25 On providing justification, see Kratochwil, Rules, Norms, and Decisions, ch. 4.
justifications can be reasonably fit into a larger pattern of behavior and reconciled with prominent contextual factors whereas the rationalizations cannot.

This approach to measuring norm salience is admittedly interpretivist. Yet it does yield a four-value scale—high, moderate, low, and not salient. When an investigation of the domestic discourse, institutions, and policies shows the norm's objectives, prescriptions, and proscriptions to be uncontested, and when domestic actors routinely invoke the norm to promote their interests, the norm can be said to enjoy a high degree of salience. Somewhat less salient are those norms for which the domestic discourse admits exceptions, reservations, and special conditions. As long as such exceptions or deviations are embedded in higher order, principled understandings, and permitted on nonidiosyncratic terms and without invidious discrimination, the norm should retain salience as a guide to behavior and policy choice.\(^{26}\) Norms enjoying moderate salience then are those that appear in the domestic discourse, producing some change in the national agenda and the state's institutions, but still confront countervailing institutions, procedures, and normative claims. When norms have entered the national discourse but fail to produce an agenda or institutional change, they can be said to enjoy a low degree of salience. Norms that lack domestic advocates or that are used to justify actions in purely idiosyncratic (nongeneralizable) terms are not considered salient.

Because international norms vary in their degree of domestic salience, the preceding discussion stresses the need for measurement. Yet the effect of a particular norm on behavior will rarely be a straightforward result of salience. As Friedrich V. Kratochwil and John Ruggie have pointed out, norms are often counterfactually valid and not "causes" of behavior that can be readily subsumed under a covering-law approach to explanation.\(^{27}\) Rather, the most important effects of salient norms result from processes of internalization at the level of the individual actor and persuasion at the level of discourse.

**How Do International Norms Become Salient Domestically?**

The previous section argued that a norm's domestic salience should be established by the analysis of national discourse, state institutions, and policies. But


how are international norms introduced and embedded into these features of the state’s domestic politics?

This section draws on research in international politics and international law to identify several plausible conditions, mechanisms, and processes that contribute to the domestic salience of an international norm. The discussion is structured around five key factors. First, we address the “cultural match” between the international norm and national understandings, a factor that conditions the impact of an international norm once it enters the national arena. Second, the analysis turns to four pathways or mechanisms through which an international norm can enter the domestic arena: national political rhetoric, the material interests of domestic actors, domestic political institutions, and socializing forces. Whereas the first three mechanisms operate primarily at the level of domestic politics, socializing forces generally emanate from interactions at the level of the state system.

The mechanisms should be regarded as neither competing explanations nor mutually exclusive. As suggested below, norm salience may be a function of one or more of these factors in any one case. Before one can explore empirically how these conditions and mechanisms interrelate, it is necessary first to identify and analyze each individually.

We do not address the interesting question of the origins of international norms here. Many international norms, such as those pertaining to human rights, have their origins in national discourses. The ways that new normative understandings emerge and become salient in domestic contexts, and then come to infuse international politics, is a worthwhile subject of analysis.\(^{28}\) The focus of this analysis is limited to conditions and mechanisms mediating between the existence of an international norm and its impact on domestic politics and policy choice.

**Cultural Match**

Preexisting domestic understandings condition the impact of international norms in policy debates. Checkel refers to this condition as “cultural match.”\(^{29}\) Using the term “culture” captures why, if international norms are to become salient domestically, they need to resonate with domestic norms, widely held domestic understandings, beliefs, and obligations. The domestic discourse, then, provides the context within which the international norm takes on meaning and thereby conditions its operation.


\(^{29}\)Checkel, “Norms, Institutions and National Identity in Contemporary Europe.”
When such a cultural match exists, domestic actors are likely to treat the international norm as a given, instinctively recognizing the obligations associated with the norm. Domestic salience under such conditions is automatic. Conversely, when the international norm conflicts with understandings, beliefs, or obligations established in the domestic sphere, domestic actors may then find appeals to the international norm to be ineffective in garnering support for a particular policy.\footnote{Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998), reach a similar conclusion with respect to the ability of transnational advocacy networks to promote norm compliance. Such advocacy networks “are more likely to be influential if they fit well with existing ideas and ideologies in a particular historical setting” (p. 204).}

Gary Goertz and Paul F. Diehl note that “although Britain and France may face the same international norms... the unique national experience of a country will make its propensity to follow that norm different.”\footnote{Gary Goertz and Paul F. Diehl, “Toward a Theory of International Norms: Some Conceptual and Measurement Issues,” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 36 (1992), p. 653.}


In some cases, recognition of an international norm might be likened to cultural imperialism or colonialism and cause domestic resistance or rejection. Resistance to the norm might transcend societal distinctions or be limited to particular groups within a society. For example, political elites might view adhering to an international norm as compromising the state’s sovereignty or their own capacity for rule. This appears to be the case in many parts of Asia, where ruling elites reject international calls for policies reflecting Western conceptions of human rights and political pluralism with appeals to the primacy of “Asian values.”\footnote{See Richard Robinson, “The Politics of ‘Asian Values,’” pp. 309–327; Gary Rodan, “The Internationalization of Ideological Conflict: Asia’s New Significance,” pp. 328–351; and Michael Freeman, “Human Rights, Democracy and ‘Asian Values,’” pp. 352–366; all in *Pacific Review* 9, No. 3 (1996).}

Even if elites embrace an international norm, they may encounter resistance from a domestic populace that views the norm’s tenets as inconsistent with their
prevailing values, traditions, or aspirations. As for colonial America’s embrace of liberal neutrality rules, Mlada Bukovansky concludes: “Even if they had wanted the U.S. to be a mercantilist state on the British model (and they most certainly did not), Jefferson, Madison, and Gallatin would never have been able to legitimate mercantilist principles on that basis. Their authority and identity lay in the promise to combat, not emulate, British mercantilism.”

The foregoing should not be read to imply that the relationship between domestic understandings and an international norm’s domestic salience reflects an “either/or” dynamic—that is, it either resonates with the country’s culture and is salient, or it does not and is not. Rather, an international norm might confront a void about the behavior or issues it is intended to guide or regulate. Ceteris paribus, the absence of preconceptions and other unique national beliefs enhances the probability that the proponents of an international norm—domestic or transnational—can establish the legitimacy of the international norm in domestic discourse, laws, and institutions. Peter Haas writes:

If decision makers have no strong preconceived views and beliefs about an issue area in which regulation is to be undertaken for the first time, an epistemic community can have an even greater impact in shaping their interpretations and actions in this case and in establishing the patterns of behavior that they will follow in subsequent cases regarding the issue area.

Similarly, in a recent comparative study of norm diffusion, Checkel finds that in Ukraine, which lacked a national normative framework about questions of national identity, newly empowered national elites have succeeded in institutionalizing “inclusive citizenship norms” developed by the Council of Europe. As Checkel explains, “the lack of an institutionalized—and hence politically influential—Soviet conception of identity has removed a potent barrier to norm diffusion.”

The fact that legitimating discourses are bounded by prevailing domestic understandings should not obscure the dynamic nature of the relationship between domestic and international normative structures. Both are usually evolving. This implies that the match between the two sets of normative structures may change over time—both greater consonance and dissonance are possible—and that the domestic salience of international norms will vary accordingly.

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Cultural match as a condition mediating the domestic salience of international norms is dynamic and malleable, as the discussion of rhetoric clarifies.

**Rhetoric**

The evolving nature of domestic normative understandings directs attention toward political rhetoric—or persuasive discourse—as a mechanism for generating collective understandings and the domestic salience of an international norm.\(^{37}\)

The pronouncements of authoritative national leaders illustrate how domestic understandings about the legitimacy of an international norm can evolve. Repeated declarations by state leaders on the legitimacy of the obligations that an international norm places on states usually raise the norm’s salience in the national arena. A single pronouncement of this type is unlikely to establish domestic salience. Instead, the effect of these declarations is cumulative. As authoritative officials set precedents and standards for themselves and their successors, their normative pronouncements become part of the society’s legitimating discourse, establish intersubjective understandings and expectations at both the domestic and international levels, and constrain policy options.

The original embrace of an international norm may be purely instrumental, indeed cynical, yet still lead to salience. For example, Risse has documented how authoritarian leaders’ adoption of the rhetoric of universal human rights norms in political strategies aimed at relieving outside pressures for domestic reform or regaining foreign assistance has legitimized these norms in their states’ domestic politics.\(^{38}\) As Risse notes, “if norm-violating governments find it necessary to make rhetorical concessions and to cease denying the validity of human rights norms, this provides a discursive opening for their critics to challenge them further: If you say that you accept human rights, how come that [sic] you

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violate them systematically?" 39 The domestic debate then shifts from being concerned with whether the norm is legitimate to one concerning why it should not be consistently applicable.

The rhetoric of societal leaders can also enhance the salience of international norms in the domestic political arena. The literature on social movements finds that the leaders of such movements often cast their demands in terms of international norms, either making the case for national applicability or decrying the state’s failure to comply with international obligations. Across a range of issue areas and national contexts, the appeals of societal leaders to international norms have succeeded in establishing their salience in wider domestic political debates. 40

Preexisting national understandings may provide arguments both for and against accepting the international norm. In situations where the match between the international norm and prevailing domestic understandings is partial, proponents of the international norm face a political and rhetorical struggle that will require them to argue convincingly for the priority of one set of domestic understandings over others.

**Domestic Interests**

The society’s legitimating discourse may also evolve due to considerations of material interest as espoused by state or societal groups. This mechanism can also produce a congruence between domestic and international norms where one had not previously existed.

Studies have demonstrated that international norms are more likely to become salient if they are perceived to support important domestic material interests, whether economic or security. It is probably not enough to invoke an international norm as supporting a narrow domestic material interest. Instead, one must connect the particular interest with the nation’s more general beliefs and durable national priorities. For example, G. John Ikenberry argues that the Bretton Woods system, and the normative tenets that John Ruggie terms “embedded liberalism,” were successful and politically possible because they “allowed political leaders and social groups across the political spectrum [in the United States and Britain] to envisage a postwar economic order in which multiple and

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otherwise competing political objectives could be combined.”^{41} In this way, international norms can serve to “bridge domestic rifts, allowing for the convergence of diverse material and ideal interests into a national interest.”^{42}

The argument is basically Weberian.^{43} International norms can become salient in the domestic discourse by being linked to important material interests, but they are not easily reducible to those interests. Precisely which norms will become salient in the domestic political arena will be historically contingent, a function of human agency in rhetorical or political processes. Any number of international norms may be consistent with a given constellation of domestic interests. This is generally the case in regulatory or technology standardization questions, but the issue arises elsewhere, even in such “high politics” areas as a state’s security policy.

For example, a central principle of the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) I regime was the desirability of locking in secure mutual second-strike capability as a prop for stable nuclear deterrence.^{44} Central to this goal was the Anti-ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, which limited strategic defenses on both sides to strategically insignificant deployments. In pursuit of treaty ratification, officials in the Nixon administration stressed the benefits of establishing the norm of “no strategic defenses” as regulative of U.S.-Soviet strategic relations rather than the alternative and more encompassing norm of “mutual non-
vulnerability." Arguably, each was consistent with the general principle of ensuring secure second-strike capability and with U.S. security interests as understood then. The results of having legitimized the no strategic defenses norm instead of the mutual nonvulnerability norm had profound implications for future force postures and the arms race. New technological innovations such as Multiple Independently-targetable Reentry Vehicles (MIRVs) and Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) were consistent with a norm of no strategic defenses, but might have been more successfully challenged by their critics if mutual nonvulnerability had been the domestically salient norm.

**Domestic Institutions**

A fourth factor contributing to the salience of an international norm is the state's domestic political institutions. Domestic political institutions provide the rules of the game for citizens and state officials, establish rights and obligations, identify what is legitimate and what is not, and, in the process, help national actors define their interests domestically and internationally. The incorporation of an international norm into domestic institutions enhances its salience, as argues the eminent international lawyer Louis Henkin: "When international law or some particular norm or obligation is accepted, national law will reflect it, the institutions and personnel of government will take account of it, and the life of the people will absorb it."  

Social scientists have reached similar conclusions from empirical research. For example, Audie Klotz found that the global racial equality norm was salient in U.S. policy debates only after being incorporated into domestic legal frameworks: "by institutionalizing a new tenet of policy—that majority rule in South Africa must be encouraged—passage of the CAAA [Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act] inaugurated a period of more consistent U.S. opposition to white-minority rule in South Africa." Similarly, Kevin Hartigan maintains that the weak impact of international refugee laws on Mexico and Honduras is explained because

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“neither country’s laws mention the concept of refugee, and neither country is a signatory of the 1951 convention or the 1967 protocol on refugees. . . . [Moreover,] changes in refugee policy were not accompanied in either country by the ratification of international legal instruments [or] by changes in domestic laws.” 49

A common effect of international norm creation is the simultaneous creation of vested interests and bureaucratic routines in a state’s institutions:

When, in the Headquarters Agreement with the United Nations, the United States agreed that members of foreign delegations to the United Nations should enjoy diplomatic immunity from arrest, that agreement was built into the life of New York. The laws of New York reflect the agreement, police regulations provide for it, the individual policeman is taught it, the citizen—grumbling perhaps,—acquiesces . . . .

In more complicated ways, accepted international arrangements—whether of the Universal Postal Union, or NATO, or a fisheries convention—launch their own dynamism, their own bureaucracy with vested interests in compliance, their own resistances to violation and to interference and frustration. The European Community agreements are observed, in part, because they have been accepted in member countries and enmeshed in national institutions; there are national bureaucrats whose job it is to assure that the agreements are carried out; powerful domestic groups have strong interests in maintaining these agreements. 50

The link between standard operating procedures and other institutional structures of bureaucratic agencies and the external normative environment in which such agencies operate is studied across various disciplines and confirmed by international law scholars, 51 the literature on international regimes, 52 as well as students of organizational behavior and psychology. 53

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The foregoing discussion suggests that once international norms become enmeshed in domestic institutions, their prescriptions will have an impact over time on the interests and actions of national actors. Habitual compliance with or application of the norm can lead to its salience, as it is seen as a “domestic” process and assumes a “taken-for-granted” character.

**Socializing Forces**

Socialization, or the process by which new members come to adopt a society’s preferred ways of behaving, has been studied by realist, liberal institutionalist, and constructivist scholars of international politics.\(^{54}\) Existing scholarship has demonstrated that among the principal effects of international socialization are stable patterns of state interaction. Most analyses have studied the phenomenon at the international system level. Yet the effects of international socialization go much deeper. Socialization provides an additional mechanism by which international norms can become salient in the domestic political arena.

Classical realists, such as Henry Kissinger, maintain that the construction of stable international orders is dependent upon the successful linkage of state interests to international legitimizing principles. Socialization from this perspective is the process of reconciling states’ (in particular revolutionary states’) individual aspirations to generally accepted standards.\(^{55}\) As Kissinger’s historical analysis informs, international norms became salient in domestic political struggles as states were socialized to the Vienna system. He argues that Prince Metternich’s construction of a legitimate international order, based on conservative monarchical principles, “enabled Austria to avoid the hard choice between domestic reform and revolutionary struggle; to survive with an essentially unaltered domestic structure in a century of rationalized administration; to

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continue a multi-national Empire in a period of nationalism.” Moreover, by
reconciling France to the Concert of Europe at the Conference of Aachen (1818),
the powers enhanced the prospects that the Duc de Richelieu and Louis XVIII
would survive continued domestic turbulence. In linking France’s international
interests to the principle of monarchical legitimacy and the rule of law, the
powers strengthened the principle in France itself, where a large proportion of
the population remained committed to revolutionary goals and methods. As
states became socialized to the post-Napoleonic order, the monarchical
principle was strengthened and republican nationalism simultaneously delegitimized
in domestic politics across Europe.

The effects of international socialization today are seen in the policies of
the successor states to the Soviet Union. For example, Scott D. Sagan found
that widespread international acceptance of the norms associated with the Nuclear
Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) convinced Ukraine’s leadership that renunci-
ation of nuclear weapons was a necessary step toward achieving international
standing: “the NPT regime created a history in which the most recent examples
of new or potential nuclear states were so-called ‘rogue states’ such as North
Korea, Iran and Iraq. This was hardly a nuclear club whose new members
would receive international prestige.” But “rogue states” do exist. Socializa-
tion is most likely and will require less effort when state leaders “aspire to
belong to a normative community of nations. This desire implies a view of state
preferences that recognizes states’ interactions as a social—and socializing—
process.”

Numerous scholars have pointed to “internal reconstruction” as a method
of socializing states to a particular international order. Those working in the
realist tradition have found the internal reconstruction of weaker states by
more powerful states to be a common feature of international relations, par-
ticularly during periods of hegemony. As G. John Ikenberry and Charles
Kupchan note,

The hegemon directly intervenes in the secondary state and transforms its
domestic political institutions. . . . The hegemon imports normative principles
about domestic and international political order, often embodying these prin-
ciples in institutional structures and in constitutions or other written procla-
mations. The process of socialization takes place as elites in the secondary

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56 Henry Kissinger, A World Restored: Metternich, Castlereagh and the Problems of
Peace 1812–22 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), p. 322. Also see Paul W. Schroeder,


58 Keck and Sikkink, Activists beyond Borders, p. 29.
state become accustomed to these institutions and gradually come to accept them as their own.\textsuperscript{59}

The ease with which the hegemon will achieve its goals is probably a function of not only its own capabilities, but also the size of the gap between its preferred normative order and preexisting beliefs and understandings in the target state.\textsuperscript{60}

Scholars working in the liberal tradition or coming from a social constructivist perspective have found that socialization can occur as a result of the actions of nonstate actors and may involve use of “soft” power resources, such as moral leverage and technical knowledge. In a study of the diffusion of international science norms, Martha Finnemore found that “states were socialized by international organizations and an international community of experts—in this case scientists—to accept the promotion and direction of science as a necessary and appropriate role.” The result has been the proliferation of national bureaucracies devoted to science.\textsuperscript{61} Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink identify transnational advocacy networks as another avenue where states come to adopt international norms. These transnational groups succeed not only “by holding governments. . . accountable to previous commitments and the principles they have endorsed,” but also by framing their ideas in ways that “resonate or fit with the larger belief systems” of the target states.\textsuperscript{62}

Widely recognized, the effects of socialization are neither one way nor irreversible. Over time, the degree to which domestic actors regard an international norm as legitimate may hinge upon how much other states adhere to its tenets.\textsuperscript{63} Widescale noncompliance by other states may inspire domestic actors to challenge the norm’s legitimacy and utility as a guide to behavior. Insofar as both international and domestic legitimizing discourses are dynamic, the meaning of an international norm and the proper bounds of its applicability in a given domestic discourse may evolve, and not necessarily in lock-step with similar evolutions in other states or interstate discourses. Further research into


\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., pp. 313–314.


\textsuperscript{62} Keck and Sikkink, \textit{Activists beyond Borders}, pp. 201, 204.

the relationship between the effects of socializing forces on the international system and states' domestic politics is required because it remains poorly understood.

Pathways to Empirical Research

The previous section identified several plausible conditions and mechanisms mediating between the existence of an international norm and its salience in domestic political debates. The necessary next step is empirical research focusing on how specific international norms have and have not become salient in several national contexts. The pathways above provide a starting point for the development of inductively derived contingent hypotheses on the conditions and mechanisms that produce the domestic salience of international norms.

Although inductive, the approach is not atheoretical. By investigating the process or processes that led an international norm to attain domestic salience in a particular case, one seeks to identify conditions that may yield (or mediate the effects of) that process in other cases. The goal of "process tracing" in this instance is hypothesis generation. Before one proceeds toward a more general theory linking international norms and domestic discourse, a necessary first step is the development of a set of conditional hypotheses relating initial conditions (including the presence of an international norm) to outcomes (including the domestic salience of the norm). Such a research agenda will help to overcome some of the problems that others contend characterize constructivist research on norms, specifically the tendency to rely on correlations as evidence that norms "matter."

Whereas the routes to domestic salience may be many and because knowledge of the mechanisms is limited, initial analysis should be flexible and process oriented. This approach can help researchers remain open to the possibility

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64 As noted by Paul Kowert and Jeffrey Legro, the literature has generally been biased toward studying those norms that have affected state policies. See "Norms, Identity and Their Limits: A Theoretical Reprise," in Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 485.


67 See, for example, Jeffrey Checkel, "The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory," World Politics 50 (1998), p. 337.
that the mechanisms and processes identified in the previous section may offer complementary rather than competing routes to domestic salience.\footnote{68}{On the problems associated with viewing different analytical relationships as simply competing, see Ronald L. Jepperson, Alexander Wendt, and Peter J. Katzenstein, “Norms, Identity, and Culture in National Security,” in Katzenstein, ed., The Culture of National Security, pp. 68–72.}

Because there may be multiple sufficient causes or mechanisms producing domestic salience (the problem of equifinality), some of which are unknown so far, generating hypotheses through deductive entailment would limit our ability to generate knowledge and would provide little basis for moving beyond initial assumptions. Before we can move toward the construction of more rigorous models that may provide interesting deductions, we need to catalogue the range of phenomena to be explained. The implications of equifinality underscore the need for an inductive, process-oriented approach to hypothesis development.

One strategy for this type of hypothesis generation is the use of comparative case studies.\footnote{69}{For a similar argument, see Michael Zürn, “The Rise of International Environmental Politics: A Review of Current Research,” World Politics 50 (1998), esp. pp. 641–42.} Cases should be selected based on variation in relevant outcomes. That is, one should look for cases where a given international norm enjoyed various degrees of salience across national contexts, as well as cases where similar norms achieved various degrees of salience within a given domestic discourse. Longitudinal studies that investigate variation in the salience of a given norm over time provide a third source of data. Because the goal is generating hypotheses and not testing for sufficient causation, arguments against selecting cases on the value of the dependent variable are not applicable.

Of course, the approaches can be combined. One might examine variations in the salience of the international norm of free trade in a state such as Japan, where the norm has become more accepted over time, with a view toward identifying those factors that have hindered as well as those that have fostered the norm’s domestic salience.\footnote{70}{This example draws on Andrew P. Cortell and James W. Davis, Jr., “Understanding the Domestic Consequences of International Institutions: The Case of Japan and the GATT/WTO”; paper presented at the conference on International Institutions: Global Processes—Domestic Consequences, Duke University, April 1999.} One might then compare the Japanese case to the history of the free trade norm in other states, such as the Federal Republic of Germany. Although postwar Germany and Japan share similar positions in the international economic order and were exposed to many of the same international forces that we have identified as possible pathways to salience, the free trade norm’s legitimacy was accepted much earlier in Germany, where it has
also had much greater impact in domestic policy debates.\textsuperscript{71} A cross-national comparison of this sort might help to identify scope conditions affecting the operation of the various pathways to salience.

What we are proposing at this stage is modest. It involves the use of case studies as “building blocks” toward a more general theory of domestic salience rather than “tests” of a fully developed model or theory.\textsuperscript{72} Persuaded that the logic of discovery is somewhat different from the logic of testing, we anticipate movement toward more rigorous tests—and perhaps ancillary hypothesis generation through deduction—at a future stage of research. Before much confidence can be ascribed to the validity of inductively derived propositions, they need to be subjected to analysis across a much wider range of cases than those from which they were generated.

\textbf{CONCLUSION}

In the proliferating scholarship on norms in international politics, analysts have found that domestic political factors often mediate the impact of international norms on policy choice. In addition to domestic political structures, this research suggests that the effects of an international norm cannot be understood independent of the norm’s salience in the domestic political discourse.

To date, this research has suffered from two central shortcomings. First, there has been little effort directed at constructing measures of norm salience or legitimacy in the domestic political arena. Second, the mechanisms or pathways by which international norms come to infuse domestic understandings have not been studied systematically. These questions are central to progress toward a more comprehensive understanding of the effects of norms on international politics.

To redress these shortcomings and promote further research, this article offers a means for measuring variation in the domestic salience of international norms. Moreover, it identifies several mechanisms by which international norms may enter and take on meaning in the domestic discourse. The hope is that empirical investigations of these mechanisms will lead to the formulation of

\textsuperscript{71} For a review of postwar Germany’s embrace of the free trade norm, see Norbert Kloten, “Die Bundesrepublik als Weltwirtschaftsmacht,” in Karl Kaiser and Hanns W. Maull, eds., \textit{Deutschlands Neue Außenpolitik} (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1995), vol. 1, pp. 63–80.

\textsuperscript{72} In doing so, we propose the adoption of a research strategy set forth by Andrew Bennett and Alexander L. George in “Developing and Using Typological Theories in Case Study Research”; paper presented at the Thirty-Eighth Annual Convention of the International Studies Association, Toronto, Canada, March 18–22, 1997.
more precise hypotheses regarding when international norms will have more or less impact on state behavior.

Finally, an investigation of the processes linking domestic and international norms may require explorations of the impact of various international regimes on states' domestic politics. This research should also lead to a better understanding of the domestic bases of support for international institutions, a significant weakness of existing regime theory.⁷³

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