Finnemore and Sikkink "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change" International Organization Autumn 1998

This review of the use of norms in political science makes three broad arguments:

1) The ideational "turn" of recent years is actually a return to some traditional concerns of the discipline.

Norms were important from Aristotle and Plato to E.H. Carr. The turn away from norms first began with the behavioral revolution and its enthusiasm for measurement. Norms are hard to measure so they were ignored. The revolution in economic methods in the late 1970s and 1980s further exacerbated this tendency. "Econorealists" recast realism in material terms and "econoliberals" used game theory to justify cooperation based on realist assumptions about human nature. Persistent failures of these approaches to explain "a wide variety of phenomena" led to an increasing use of ideational arguments in the 1990s.

Definitions:
A *norm* is a standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity (more specifically, this is an *evaluative* or *prescriptive norm*). This is different from an *institution, which* refers to a collection of norms.
A *regulative norm* orders and constrains behavior.
A *constitutive norm* creates new actors, interests, or categories of action.

Norms are not directly observable (nor are interests or threats) so we must infer them from behavior. However, since we want to know the effect of norms on state behavior, it is important to operationalize norms in a way that is distinct from behavior.

The central problem with ideational arguments (as with realist arguments) is their inability to explain change. In an ideational institutional structure, idea shifts and norm shifts are the main vehicles for system transformation. Norm shifts are to the ideational theorist what balance of power shifts are to the realist.

2) Norms evolve according to a "life cycle" of three stages, each of which has a unique origin, mechanism of influence, and condition under which norms will influence world politics.

Stage 1: Norm Emergence.
Norm entrepreneurs are motivated to adopt a norm by altruism, empathy, or ideational commitment. These entrepreneurs use organizational platforms (either pre-existing or created specifically to promulgate the norm) to persuade their own governments to adopt the norm. These organizations rarely are able to coerce a state into adopting a norm—they must persuade. Prior to the threshold for Stage 2, the norm must be institutionalized in specific sets of rules and organizations. Once enough states have adopted the norm (usually about 1/3) a critical mass will lead to the norm cascade.

Stage 2: Norm Cascade.
States are motivated by a desire to adopt a norm in order to enhance their legitimacy, reputation, and/or esteem. States and international organizations and networks that have adopted the norm socialize other states by inducing norm breakers to become norm followers. In this stage, states are motivated more by external actors than internal pressure groups led by domestic norm entrepreneurs (domestic pressure may in fact be completely absent). The microfoundations of this process rely on individual-level psychological arguments about the effect of socialization and peer-pressure on state elites. When enough states adopt a norm, the definition of "state" (or a relevant subset like "liberal" state) changes to

incorporate it. This creates cognitive dissonance between behavior and identity in non-conforming states. To retain one's identity, then, one must adopt the norm.

Stage 3: Internalization.
Domestic and international laws, professional training, and bureaucratic operating procedures widely incorporate the norm. Any remaining non-conforming states adopt it simply to conform. The norm is so institutionalized that it becomes a matter of habit and is taken for granted.

	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

What kind of norms will matter under what conditions?

Legitimation—states suffering from legitimacy crises may be especially inclined to adopt international norms.
Prominence—norms held by states widely viewed as successful are more likely to be adopted.
Intrinsic qualities—universalism, individualism, voluntaristic authority, rational progress, and world citizenship may by objective characteristics of norms that are more likely to be adopted. (Others include norms involving bodily harm to innocent groups or legal equality of opportunity).
Adjacency claims or path dependence—new norms that "fit" in existing frameworks of norms may be more successful.
World time context—international crises may spark an abandonment of norms perceived to lead to the crisis and an intensive search for new norms. Recent gains in technology that lower organizational costs may also increase the number of new norms that are adopted.

3) The tendency to oppose norms to rationality is not helpful in explaining the most salient political processes. Instead we must recognize that "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."

Four cleavages are identified and their worth refuted:

Materialism—Rational choice theorists argue that the claim that norms cause behavior does not tell us much, so we should rely on better-specified materialist explanations. BUT rational choice explanations can specify ideational concerns in their utility functions.
Utilitarianism—Rational choice arguments are agent-based (people try to get what they want) while ideational arguments are structure-based (people behave according to the "logic of appropriateness" by conforming to roles and rules). BUT the debate between these groups has revolved around whether the "logic of appropriateness" even exists, rather than which logic applies to what kind of actors when (which would be much more fruitful).
Choice—Ideational theorists criticize rational choice theorists for believing individual choice exists when ideational models focus on how internalized norms eliminate that choice. This sets up the classic free

will-determinism dispute. BUT ideational theories as they have been applied to IR are not very deterministic because they emphasize the contingent and contested nature of normative change. *Persuasion*—Ideational theorists focus on persuasion, which can be thought of as the attempt to change others' preferences, but rational choice theory cannot endogenize these preference changes. BUT persuasion is central to politics and therefore must be explained.