Great Powers and Norm Cascades in Global Politics

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ABSTRACT

How do great powers shape the evolution of global norms? While hegemonic influences can be discerned in many episodes of norm change, theories of norm evolution rarely focus on the concrete effects of hegemonic power. This paper offers some ways to think about norm change from the perspective of the international system, rather than as a product of socialization campaigns by norm entrepreneurs. I identify some general mechanisms through which great powers can shape global practices: imposition, inducement, learning, legitimation, and metanorm enforcement. I argue that these become especially important for norm change during sudden hegemonic transitions, marked by the abrupt rise and decline of great powers. The outcomes of these geopolitical transformations produce both material and ideological incentives for norm change, and have structured the spread and decline of global norms surrounding sovereignty, humanitarian intervention, and democracy promotion. Moreover, changes in global norms during the twentieth century can be described as the co-evolution of three competing visions of sovereignty – individual, nation, and state – with hegemonic shocks acting as the critical junctures of this volatile process. I illustrate the argument with case studies of the Great Depression and the Soviet Collapse.

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Great powers are often implicated in episodes of sudden and profound norm change. Nearly two centuries ago, Britain's hegemonic status ensured the success of its crusade against the widely-accepted practice of slave-trading.[1] In other cases, it is not conscious efforts by great powers but shifts in the structure of global hegemony that drive norm change. The decline of bipolarity and the collapse of the USSR, for example, led to a broad transformation in the legitimacy of key global practices such as election monitoring, democracy promotion, and external intervention.[2]

Yet despite general agreement that great powers "matter" in shaping global norms, there is relatively little theoretical work on *how* or *when* they matter.[3] Theories of norm evolution rarely focus on the mechanics of hegemonic power and instead emphasize tactics like shaming and persuasion by non-state actors.[4] In this bottom-up approach, the efforts of norm entrepreneurs and NGOs allow new practices to percolate up through the society of states and, upon reaching a threshold of acceptance, to eventually become internalized.[5]

In this paper I present some ways to think about a top-down or structural approach to norm evolution, focusing on the role played by major systemic transformations in producing global norm change.[6] I argue that hegemony plays a specific role in norm evolution through the effects of recurring hegemonic transitions. These hegemonic shocks, marked by the sudden rise and fall

[1] Abolition, Krasner (1999:108) argues, was "made possible in large measure by the commitment and power of Great Britain."

[2] See, e.g., Green 1999, Voeten 2001, Levitsky and Way 2010, Hyde 2011c, Western and Goldstein 2011.

[3] This sentence is paraphrased from Renshon (2016:513).

[4] See, e.g., Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, Keck and Sikkink 1998, Risse and Sikkink 1999.

[5] Krasner (1999:125) calls these "contractual" theories of norm change. These occasionally acknowledge the role of hegemonic power, albeit not in a systematic way. Florini (1996:375), for example, notes that powerful states "have obvious advantages if they wish to try to create a new norm," such as possessing greater "communications resources" that allow them to promote these norms to others. Farrell (2005:13) notes that while some constructivists are willing to treat "reform-minded powerful states" as norm entrepreneurs, and "recognize that occupying positions of authority can aid norm entrepreneurs." Yet, he concludes, many "do not make power or proximity to power a condition for success," as demonstrated by their focus on NGOs as successful norm entrepreneurs. Fordham and Asal (2007:40) conclude that scholars who focus on transnational movements "do not see them as a transmission process for the influence of major powers. Instead, they claim that norms are created and transmitted through an entirely different process, and that this process often supersedes the influence of major powers."

[6] Not all constructivist theories of norm change are committed to agential approaches. Charli Carpenter (2007, 2014), for example, argues that norm campaigns are conditioned by structural power – in this case not hegemonic power but the structure of global issue networks devoted to human security. A small group of prominent actors or organizations may acquire enough structural power to allows them to act as gatekeepers, deciding which norms campaigns fail or succeed.

of great powers, create uniquely favorable conditions for *norm cascades* – periods of ideological transformation in which old and accepted norms are discarded, transfigured, or replaced by new legitimate practices which then quickly propagate through the international system.[7]

Abrupt great power transitions produce a combination of material and ideological incentives for normative reform. They not only drastically alter the costs and benefits of norm compliance, but also force a normative re-evaluation of which global practices and institutions ought to be considered legitimate and acceptable. The outcomes of hegemonic transitions reveal seemingly credible information about the appeal and validity of competing norms. Since institutional learning over-emphasizes the big and dramatic cases, hegemonic transitions also intensify the processes of norm learning and emulation.[8] By prevailing in a crisis, the norms of a rising hegemon appear to be not only normatively appealing but materially effective. In this way major shifts in the structure of global hegemony affect both interests and beliefs. Across post-1945 Europe, writes Archie Brown (2009:148), "there was ideational change as well as the strategic change brought about by Soviet force of arms. Socialism was increasingly believed to be a more just and more rational way of organizing an economy than capitalism."

While shocks enable rising powers to build new normative orders, this process rarely achieves the clear-eyed precision of purpose implied in the term. The "building" of orders is rarely strategic or even conscious; instead, it is often unintentional, half-blind and halting, swayed by chance and circumstance, and shaped by amorphous and misinformed interests and sentiments. Great powers do not always set out to transform particular norms, and when they do so their efforts may face failures and unintended consequences.[9] They may unintentionally discredit the very norms they seek to promote, or generate a normative backlash through heavy-handed

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[7] Here, 'hegemonic shocks' are defined as the two World Wars, the Great Depression, and the Soviet Collapse. Measures and definitions are discussion in more detail in Gunitsky (2014) and (2017). Some of my previous work examines the effects of sudden hegemonic transitions on waves of domestic regimes; this paper turns instead to their role in shaping global norm evolution.

[8] Goldsmith (2005), for instance, argues that prestigious or high-profile examples are more likely to serve as learning models for policy-makers, rather than cases whose circumstances are more applicable to their own, and this bias can decrease the effectiveness of learning. Russia, as a result, sought to learn too many lessons from the United States, leading to policy failure in the "shock" policies of the early 1990s. (See also Stiglitz 2002.)

[9] Symons and Altman (2015:65), for example, argue that norm diffusion does not necessarily lead to its spread and internalization, but can also produce resistance and even polarization, a "combative response" to norm promotion. Attempt to spread the hegemonic Western norm of sexuality rights, for example, has led to contentious backlash rather than compliance.

promotion efforts.[10] Moreover, it is not always the active exercise of hegemonic power that shapes norm evolution after shocks, but the mere *existence* of the hegemon itself. By the virtue of their recent success, rising great powers not only alter the cost-benefit calculus of national reforms, but also force a fundamental normative reevaluation of which practices should be considered discredited or desired, laudable or repulsive, legitimate or obsolete.

 As John F. Kennedy noted, "Strength takes many forms, and the most obvious forms are not always the most significant."[11] Hegemonic power can indeed coerce and intimidate, but it can also cajole, inspire, and polarize – occasionally without the hegemon's intention or even awareness.[12] In fact, the history of twentieth-century norm evolution seems to suggest that America's most enduring contribution to the spread of the democracy norm has not been its conscious efforts at regime promotion, which have often been clumsy and inconsistent, but its continued status as a ideological model worthy of emulation and a prosperous side worth joining.[13] In the long run, conditions that drive great powers to pursue norm change may be less important than the conditions under which hegemonic transitions enable great powers to serve as effective normative models for other states.

In many cases, the legitimacy of competing practices reflected the changing normative preferences of great powers – and their ability to express these preferences has in turn been consistently affected by shifts in the structure of global hegemonic power. Yet effects of hegemonic transitions cannot be reduced to the propaganda efforts of particular great powers. These shocks exercise their influence both through the active (purposive) strategies of great powers but also from the structural (passive) consequences of the shock itself. The sudden rise of a great power creates incentives for norm change even when the hegemon takes no action to shape or implement these incentives. Hence the emphasis, in this paper, on hegemonic shocks as a *structural* source of norm change, rather than on great power promotion efforts as such.

In sum, great power transitions create opportunities for normative change in a variety of ways – by creating new power hierarchies that facilitate the *imposition* and *inducement* of norms; by

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[10] Some recent examples: the backlash against democracy promotion under George W. Bush, or against neoliberalism in the 1990s, especially in Russia. Historical example: much of communism promotion in the developing world.

[11] Kennedy 1963.

[12] As a result, hegemony can induce norm emulation even without a conscious effort by the great power: "[N]orms may also begin to spread in the absence of a norm entrepreneur if some states simply emulate the behavior of some prestigious or otherwise well-known actor, even if the emulated actor is not attempting to communicate its behavior." Florini (1996:375).

[13] The latter element encompasses not only its wealth as an investment/trading partner, but also its hegemonic role as manager, stabilizer, and provider of public goods to the global club of like-minded states. (McDonald 2015.)

intensifying the diffusion of norm *learning* and *legitimation*; and by creating global orders that overcome the collective action problem of norm compliance and *metanorm enforcement*.[14] Sudden hegemonic transitions cannot explain all cases of norm change, but they can shed light on key shifts in global norms such as colonialism, female suffrage, international election monitoring, or aid conditionality.

Moreover, I argue that most global normative evolution over the twentieth century can be characterized as an ongoing contest between three competing types of sovereignty – state, national, and individual. *State sovereignty* encompasses norms of territorial integrity and non-interference; *national sovereignty* emphasizes norms of self-determination, anti-colonialism, and minority group rights; and *individual sovereignty* emphasizes norms relating to personal freedoms, including human rights and political representation.[15] Hegemonic shocks have acted as the critical junctures in this volatile process of norm change. The general trend over the past century has been the rise of national sovereignty (as marked by the collapse of empires and colonies, accompanied by the steady rise in the number of nation-states) and an increased assertion of individual sovereignty (through the expansion of suffrage and the protection of human rights).

The overall effect on state sovereignty has been paradoxical. On one hand, state power has been steadily eroded by nationalist claims, economic globalization, and the assertion of individual rights. On the other hand, since World War II the norm against territorial conquest has acquired an unprecedented dominance, such that even relatively minor violations trigger sanctions and condemnation.[16] The overall result may be that states, as fixed legal entities, are less threatened by prevailing norms while the *regimes* that govern those states are now more threatened.

These normative transformations take place within a context of continued organized hypocrisy, although the focus of this hypocrisy changes over time.[17] Since the three sovereignties

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[14] Major reconfigurations of hegemonic power therefore produce effects that map onto both material/rationalist and ideational/constructivist conceptions of normative change. Here as elsewhere, the traditional dichotomies – power vs. persuasion, interest vs. conviction, benefit vs. belief – disguise some blurry boundaries.

[15] I include voting as an instance of individual sovereignty because it implies that people's choices supercede even the national interest (i.e. state sovereignty).

[16] The norm of territorial integrity was formalized into international law by the UN charter after World War II. "The propagation of the borders norm has helped stabilize international relations by effectively delegitimizing territorial conquest." (Griffiths 2016:523.) See also Fazal 2007, Zacher 2001, Atzili 2012.

[17] Krasner 1999. While Krasner seeks to unpack the various elements of state sovereignty (through four variants that can often go together without being "logically coupled"), this paper focuses on state sovereignty as an element of global norms in continued tension with alternative (also frequently hypocritical) conceptions of sovereignty. (Krasner 1999:9.) Because of the zero-sum nature of these norms, hegemonic claims to be pursuing them simultaneously betray the

are inherently in tension, norms can be portrayed as positive or negative depending on whether they break or reinforce particular categories of sovereignty. The notion of "fundamental human rights" as encapsulated in the UN Charter is fundamentally at odds with the principle of non-intervention. As a result, violations of one type of sovereignty can be easily justified by appeals to upholding another kind of sovereignty. Thus a foreign invasion condemned as a violation of state sovereignty can be lauded as a humanitarian intervention that upholds individual sovereignty. The flexible language of modern sovereignty transforms the concept into an empty vessel ready to be filled with convenient and idiosyncratic meanings.

A small caveat: the causes a norm's spread or acceptance is a separate question from its underlying efficacy. It may indeed be the case that the increased presence of election monitors does not actually lead to better elections (e.g. Luo and Rozenas 2016), yet the underlying legitimacy of their presence has nevertheless been changed since the end of the Cold War. Moreover, as the mechanisms above suggest, norms may spread for all the wrong reasons – not out of sincere or even instrumental belief, but as a cheap way to signal compliance with certain hegemonic expectations. The problem of insincere compliance, which is incompatible with traditional theories of norm change, deserves more attention (see Hyde 2015), but is also amenable to the framework adopted in this paper.

While hegemonic transitions act as critical junctures of norm evolution, their capacity to act as decisive breaks from the past should not be overstated. Many cases of norm change are actually variations upon long-standing themes of individual autonomy and state authority. The main effect of hegemonic shocks is thus not to sever ongoing normative constestations, but to reframe them through new ideological prisms, and this reframing generally reflects the changing structure of global power and the shifting normative preferences of newly rising states.

Finally, hegemonic transitions are clearly not the only source of norm change. Especially after 9/11, changes in the nature of terrorism have led to contestations in norms regarding external intervention, for example in the use of unmanned drones that casually violate domestic sovereignty. These normative transformations are rooted in exogenous changes, whether technological or social, which are largely divorced from hegemonic shifts. At the same time, great powers remain critical in adapting, disseminating, and contesting the norms that arise from these exogenous transformations.

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inconsistent nature of their normative justifications. Thus for the US, national sovereignty becomes important in the case of Kosovo but not in Abkhazia – not because of the abstract legal claims associated with the two territories, but because of the geopolitical implications attached to their legal recognition.

I begin with a brief review of the literature, critiquing some common approaches to norm evolution in current IR scholarship. I then examine in more detail the five mechanisms linking great powers with normative reforms. These mechanisms are then applied to two case studies – the changes in norms surrounding democracy and capitalism that accompanied the Great Depression, and the revolutions in global practices after the Soviet collapse. I conclude by examining modern norm evolution as an ongoing struggle between three competing visions of sovereignty – a struggle in which hegemonic shocks have acted as crucial turning points.

A Costly Morality

The evolution of international norms has often been marked by turbulence – the quick collapse of old practices and the profusion of new standards and expectations. As Axelrod notes, "the standing of a norm can change in a surprisingly short time." Colonialism, for example, remained a normative bedrock of international politics for centuries before swiftly becoming intolerable "in the relatively short period of just two decades after World War II."[18] Likewise, Elkins notes that the norm of a written constitution "burst on the international scene at the turn of the 18th century." In a few decades, "the founding charter was as much a part of the required script for independent states as was a flag, a national anthem, and a motto."[19] More recently, the collapse of the USSR resulted on a wave of ideological transformations in practices dealing with fiscal policy, democratization and free elections, the use of sanctions, foreign aid, election monitoring, humanitarian intervention, and a host of other political and economic practices that suddenly acquired increased importance after the end of the Cold War.

Traditional explanations of norm evolution cannot usually account for such rapid change. "Constructivists allow for changes in identities and norms," note Hall and Ross (2015:851), "but primarily through gradual processes of socialization." And as Finnemore and Sikkink (1998:594) concede, "the problem for constructivists" who analyze norm transformations "is explaining change."

Despite the tempestuous, occasionally short-lived nature of global norms, IR scholars have generally focused on their emergence and spread, rather than on their death and disappearance. Finnemore and Sikkink's norm "life-cycle" model, for example, omits the elements of decline and death. Instead, the life-cycle is complete when the norm gains widespread acceptance and become internalized, at which point violation has psychological costs even if it remains otherwise undetectable. As a result, once a norm is internalized there is no apparent way for it to decline or

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[18] Axelrod 1986:1096.
[19] Elkins 2010:977

disappear. Because of this implicit teleology, socialization-focused theories of norm evolution perform poorly at explaining how formerly widespread norms can decline and disappear. Panke and Petersohn (2012:719) thus note that while the IR literature "has rich explanations for norm creation, diffusion and socialization," there exists "a theoretical and empirical gap" in the analysis of "degeneration of international norms."

Moreover, while the literature on norm evolution is illustrious and varied, most theories of norm change do not generally emphasize the role of hegemonic power. McCann and Sandholtz (2012), for example, classify explanations of norm change into two broad categories: transnational activism and world society. The first approach, outlined in Finnemore and Sikkink (1998), focuses on the role of norm entrepreneurs who operate through tactics like shaming, persuasion, and rhetorical framing.[20] The second approach stresses the influence of a global model that legitimates certain practices and institutions – not through learning or rational calculation but through blind, sometimes slavish imitation of an accepted template.[21]

While the 'transitional activism' approach and the 'world society' approach have major differences, both emphasize the importance of non-state actors such as transnational activists, NGOs, or international governmental organizations as the primary drivers of norm change.[22] As a result, notes Zarakol (2011:14), studies of norm evolution very rarely "make the power dynamics behind socializing relationships their explicit focus."[23] For example, approaches focusing on the role of transnational social movements, argue Fordham and Asal (2007:40), "have been more explicitly skeptical of the role of major powers." The literature instead stresses the role of materially weak states and non-state actors, focuses on norms that are adopted *despite* great power protests (such as the landmine ban treaty), and emphasizes that that the diffusion of norms "supersedes the influence of major powers."[24]

As a result, Saunders argues, "social constructivism misses the crucial role of power in selecting whose ends make it to the top of the international agenda." Theories of norm change "should pay greater attention to the empirical reality that great powers are important sources and

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[20] Finnemore and Sikkink 1998. See also Keck and Sikkink 1998, and Risse and Sikkink 1999.
[21] See Strang and Chang 1993; Meyer, Boli, Thomas, and Ramirez 1997; Boli and Thomas 1998.
[22] Both focus on the importance of socially-constituted notions like legitimacy and socialization. And both largely downplay the role of rationality or cost-benefit analyses of norms, focusing instead on the logic of appropriateness and the importance of legitimacy as engines of norm diffusion.
[23] Likewise, Farell (2005:13) notes that "many constructivists do not make power or proximity to power a condition for success."
[24] Fordham and Asal:2007:40.

sponsors of ideas and norms."[25] This means paying more attention to powerful states. Constructivist work "has thus far tended to examine international or nonstate actors rather than states."[26] A possibility "still largely unexplored in constructivist accounts, is that states, or state elites, may try to act as norm entrepreneurs."[27]

The idea that shifts in hegemonic power have played a key role in norm change has been a recurring motif in constructivist writings on the subject, but it is rarely examined in any significant depth. To take one prominent example, Philpott (2001) portrays the evolution of sovereignty as the result of normative "revolutions". According to him, iconoclastic ideas about justice and political authority challenge the legitimacy of the existing order, leading to social dissonance that culminates in revolts, protests, and wars. Revolutions in sovereignty, he argues:

> are not merely the aftereffects of the rise and fall of great powers, or of slow shifts
> in class structure or political structure, in technology, commerce or industrial
> production, or in the division of labor, methods of warfare, or population size.
> Such forces contribute to the upheavals but do not solely bring them about. It
> takes a revolution in ideas to bring a revolution in sovereignty.[28]

In this framework, revolutions in ideas are the unmoved mover; they precede material shifts and are in fact its pre-requisite.[29] Yet Philpott's subsequent analysis simply reverses the arrow of causation, pointing to political upheavals as the *catalysts* of normative change rather than its symptoms. Discussing transformations in the nature of international society, for example, Philpott notes that they

> indeed arose out of a crisis, often a major war, sometimes a major upheaval in the
> international system. . . Westphalia came out of the Thirty Years War. . .
> Colonial independence came out of World War II and the intense fighting and
> protest in the colonies after the war.. . . Minority treaties came out of European
> great-power wars in the nineteenth century and after World War I. Finally,
> intervention has come out of the major changes wrought by the end of the Cold
> War.[30]

Philpot's own evidence, in other words, suggests that hegemonic shocks often lead to changes in norms, rather than conflicts between norms leading to hegemonic shocks. Changing norms about

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[25] Saunders 2006:25,46.

[26] Saunders 2006:32.

[27] Saunders 2006:36. Barnett (1998), she notes, provides a useful narrative of norm contestation among Arab leaders.

[28] Philpott 2001:4

[29] As he notes: "Revolutions in sovereignty result from *prior* revolutions in ideas about justice and political authority." (2011:4, emphasis added).

[30] Philpott 2001:44

colonialism stemmed from the result of World War II, and changing norms about intervention came about as a result of the Soviet collapse. Throughout the twentieth century, in fact, changes in the legitimacy of international norms have resulted from the outcomes of major crises rather than from normative contestations involving motivated norm entrepreneurs.

While material power frequently lurks under the surface of constructivist explanations, it is rarely invoked explicitly. Sandholtz and Stiles (2008), for example, examine ten case studies of norm evolution, and find that in eight of the cases, radical norm change was associated with specific triggers like wars or crises. The norm of conquest, for example, was deeply affected by events like Prussia's seizure of Alsace and Lorraine, or Iraq's annexation of Kuwait. Similarly, norms against plunder evolved as a direct response to the Napoleonic Wars and German looting during World War II.

Although shocks are clearly involved in the majority of their cases, the authors do not go on to develop a theory of how hegemonic transitions can lead to norm change – except to say that shocks can destabilize the global order. The bulk of their explanation, despite all evidence to the contrary, remains in the constructivist camp. Namely, they conclude that norms change through the course of arguments that arise out of these events and disputes."[31] Shocks matter only insofar as they open political space for norm entrepreneurs. "And once the international order appears to be destabilized, they write, "actors perceive an opportunity to challenge existing norms, through breech or contestation or both."[32] While Sandholtz and Stiles mention that power is "crucial to norm change", they never offer a theory for its role on norm cascades. Moreover, they emphasize that powerful states cannot impose norms on others, because norms are by definition social, and thus "evolve through collective processes of argumentation and persuasion."[33] As they put it, "Power is important for the creation of norms, but it is power in the form of consensus among the leading states that matters." Norm change, they conclude, "emerged out of agreement among the leading powers of the time."[34] Here the role of hegemonic power is once again reduced to an element of simple coercion.

The literature on transnational activism has also sought to minimize the role of hegemonic power. Finnemore and Sikkink (1998:896) write that the spread of women's suffrage "was not a case of 'hegemonic socialization.'" While they concede that some "critical states" may be more important than others in the diffusion process, the examples given are rarely major powers. For example, Finnemore and Sikkink (1998:901) point to the moral authority of South Africa under

[31] Sandholtz and Stiles 2008:319.
[32] Sandholtz and Stiles 2008:326.
[33] Sandholtz and Stiles 2008:332, 15.
[34] Sandholtz and Stiles 2008:333, 334.

Nelson Mandela in making it a potentially critical state. They also pointedly note that the norm against the use of land mines cascaded through the international system in spite of the opposition of the United States." Fordham and Asal 2007:37. They add "To be sure, proponents of the transnational social movements hypothesis do not deny that major powers can play a role in the process they discuss. Keck and Sikkink (1998:12–13) note that other states may be used by transnational social movements to put material pressure on states that refuse to abide by particular norms."[35] Yet as Fordham and Asal conclude: "those who have written about transnational social movements do not see them as a transmission process for the influence of major powers. Instead, they claim that norms are created and transmitted through an entirely different process, and that this process often supersedes the influence of major powers."[36]

Linking Great Powers and Norm Evolution

Sudden great power transitions have been closely associated with fundamental changes in global practices. Below I examine some recurring mechanisms through which great power transitions can shape international norms.

Norm Imposition

First, hegemonic transitions create the opportunities for the imposition of new norms. Norms are social constructs, and social constructs cannot be coerced. Yet the forcible imposition of new norms, when accompanied by subsequent success with using these norms, can credibly convince previously reluctant rulers (and their people) that the new set of norms is associated with increased international standing, security, and prosperity. As Owen (2010) argues, great powers have repeatedly sought to export their preferred institutions upon weaker states, and similar dynamics apply to the imposition of particular norms.[37]

Over time, therefore, imposed norms can acquire real legitimacy and become internalized through habit, positive association, or institutional inertia. The imposition of capitalism and democracy in post-WWII Japan offers one such case. "Through its role as an occupying power,"

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[35] Fordham and Asal 2007:37.
[36] Fordham and Asal 40.
[37] Unlike Simmons et al (2006) or Krasner (1999:37), among others, I don't consider sanctions as a form of coercion, since these still take the form of bargaining, albeit (usually) under conditions of power asymmetry. That is, states facing the threat of sanctions may still decide to absorb the costs rather than change their policy (e.g. Iran in its pursuit of nuclear weapons, or Russia in Crimea). Norm coercion refers only to cases of forcible external impositions, whether through military occupations, externally-sponsored coups, or humanitarian interventions. I classify sanctions and other forms of direct hegemonic pressure under the category of norm inducement.

argue Ikenberry and Kupchan, "the United States in the early postwar years reshaped the norms that guided Japanese behavior in the domestic and international arenas.[38] Here the target state experienced a forcible, externally-led transformation of its values (including fundamental norms like universal suffrage, imperialism, and the legitimacy of conquest), which over time became entrenched and internalized by the country's leaders and masses alike.

This type of "coercive socialization" is a persistent element of norm change.[39] Farell, for example, notes that even forcible imposition of an institution can later lead to its social acceptance and internalization. In India, for instance, the pre-colonial army was forcibly reorganized along Western lines "and, over time, the Indian military elite became socialized into accepting norms of conventional warfare. When Britain left, an Indian version of the British Army stayed behind."[40]

Normative imposition is relatively uncommon in the international system, although its prevalence rises after hegemonic shocks, for several reasons. First, the power asymmetries associated with shocks create material opportunities for sustained norm imposition efforts. Second, the outcomes of shocks delegitimize the norms of declining hegemons, discredit defeated rulers, and make elites more open to the acceptance of new practices, even if these are promulgated partially by force. By transforming the international system, hegemonic transitions create both material and normative space for the imposition of new norms. Third, hegemonic shocks can lead to the creation of new states, as was the case in 1919 and 1989. In these cases, rising great powers can impose norms by making certain practices a precondition for the legal recognition of these new states. After World War I, for example, the victorious Allies imposed a number of conditions dealing with minority rights upon the states created from the ruins of defeated empires.[41]

Norm Inducement

Second, hegemonic transitions change the external costs and benefits of maintaining or discarding particular norms, and in doing so alter the normative preferences of domestic actors and groups, often in many countries simultaneously. (By 'external costs' I mean the incentives and inducements to discard or adopt norms of the rising great powers in the wake of hegemonic transitions.) Hegemonic transitions create incentives for states to adopt the norms of rising great powers and to discard the norms of declining great powers. This inducement can take on a variety

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[38] Ikenberry and Kupchan 1990:304-5.
[39] For more on the concept, see Fritz 2015.
[40] Farell 2005:55.
[41] Krasner 1999:39-40, 90-96. Norms of minority protection were likewise imposed upon Yugoslavia's successor states after the collapse of the Soviet system. (Krasner 1999:74.)

of forms -- leverage via international organizations, pressures generated by trade and aid with more powerful states, aid conditionality, or simply the desire to ingratiate oneself with the winning side.[42] After World War II, for example, both superpowers expressed strong (though hypocritical) preferences against European colonialism, which greatly increased the costs of colonization and led to a transformation in the norm of sovereignty.[43] Both world wars, in fact, triggered massive changes in the norms of colonialism, female suffrage, laws of war, post-conflict justice and global human rights.

Hegemonic transitions therefore create opportunities for rising great powers to spread their norms by means short of coercion – employing cajoling, diplomacy, economic incentives, military partnerships, prestige, membership in international clubs, and a variety of other inducements. States that participate in the new hegemonic order and abide by its norms are rewarded with trade, investment, patronage, diplomatic recognition, and membership in international organizations. States that reject the norms of the rising hegemon may face sanctions, diplomatic ostracism, or even armed intervention (as mentioned above). Using these material mechanisms of influence, great powers can persuade states to accept certain norms. Though norm inducement operates through instrumental reasons in its initial stages – that is, states adopt or discard norms based on their perceived costs and benefits – the resultant shift in practices acquires an inertia of its own, especially if the normative transformation is perceived as beneficial, and becomes an accepted part of the state's normative repertoire.

The division between normative and instrumental considerations may not be so stark when normative evolution is considered over time, when imposed norms may eventually become internalized. Material considerations can propel normative transformations that over time acquire a moral legitimacy. "Although primarily driven by utilitarian calculations in the first instance, the sovereignty norm is now accepted as a taken-for-granted script," writes Spruyt (2006:187,188): "Norms based on purely utilitarian calculations, logics of consequences, may, over time, assume a taken-for-granted character." Likewise, Krasner argues that "the acceptance of a rule for purely

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[42] Simmons et al (2006:790) categorize this type of norm diffusion as "coercion" and describe it as "manipulating the opportunities and constraints encountered by target countries, either directly or through the international and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) they influence. Whether direct or mediated, this mechanism may involve the threat or use of physical force, the manipulation of economic costs and benefits, and/or even the monopolization of information or expertise—all with the aim of influencing policy change in other countries."

[43] Shared great power norms may spread in the absence of direct cooperation. Joint US-Soviet efforts to "retard the proliferation of nuclear weapons" did not require monute coordination so long as the actors were "important enough to others to enforce a norm of the major actors' choice." Axelrod 1986:1104. See also Mancur Olson (1965) *The Logic of Collective Action*, Harvard University Press, p. 48-50.

instrumental reasons could generate new systems of authority. If a practice works, individuals might come to regard it as normatively binding, not just instrumentally efficacious." In fact, as he points out, the strongest norms are usually also instrumentally useful.[44]

Norm Learning (Emulation)

Third, hegemonic transitions enable rulers and domestic audiences to update their beliefs about the desirability of particular norms. The outcome of hegemonic transitions reveals information about the relative effectiveness and appeal of competing practices. Thus hegemonic transitions encourage states to emulate the norms of the rising great powers by credibly and dramatically demonstrating success in the international arena. In a process of normative learning, a state deliberately and voluntarily adopts the domestic and international norms of successful and powerful states in order to copy their success. States learning from the hegemonic shock hope to emulate some of the rising powers' dramatic success and in doing so improve their own security, stability, and legitimacy. As in the process of inducement, norms are adopted for instrumental (cost-benefit) reasons, but this material adoption is undergirded by the belief that the chosen norm is both beneficial and effective.

Both the second and the third mechanisms (*inducement* and *learning*), assume that actor behavior is guided by a rational weighing of the pros and cons of particular practices. In the case of inducement, these costs and benefits are exogenously changed by hegemonic forces; in the case of learning, the calculus is instead changed internally, by taking in the evidence presented by the hegemonic shock and updating prior beliefs. Learning is rarely fully rational, but is instead guided by a collection of cognitive heuristics that attempt to approximate the costs and benefits of norm change.[45]

The language of costs and benefits may suggest a type of rationality often absent from normative evolution. Rationality does not imply perfectly informed decision-making. Rather, it means that when choosing a standard of behavior, actors consider the costs and benefits of that behavior, and these considerations, whether consciously or not, impact their choice of action. This process is at least in part a social one – the dramatic nature of hegemonic shocks encourages normative imitation even in those in cases where the norms are unlikely to become internalized. Actors may be boundedly rational – they may form beliefs based on cognitive heuristics about the supposed costs and benefits of new norms. Research in political psychology has repeatedly shown

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[44] Krasner 1999:10, 52.
[45] See, e.g., Kahneman, Slovic, and Tversky 1982; Gilovich, Griffin and Kahneman, eds. 2002; Jervis 1976; Levy 1994; Goldsmith 2005; Weyland 2009, 2010, 2012, 2016.

that statesmen and political actors tend to over-emphasize dramatic events (availability bias), over-estimate the importance of recent events in lieu of a historical perspective (recency bias), and over-estimate their own effectiveness in bringing out the desired political reforms.[46] These cognitive heuristics intensify the perceived necessity and legitimacy of norm transformations after hegemonic transitions.

But however approximate the notions of costs and benefits, work on global norms has repeatedly demonstrated that even seemingly internalized state behavior can be guided by the perceived incentives and disincentives of norm adherence. For example, Fazal (2012) examines the disappearance of a long-standing norm: the formal declaration of war, a practice which virtually ceases after World War II. Its decline, she argues, is linked to the increasing costs of adherence: since the war, laws governing the conduct of interstate conflict have made *jus in bello* compliance more costly. A formal declaration of war implies acceptance of certain obligations like observing the proper rules of engagement, protecting cultural property, avoiding certain categories of weapons, and minimizing civilian casualties. Not only do these obligations impose costs on the warring party, but failure to follow them brings international liabilities, loss of reputation, and domestic audience costs. To avoid these costs, most states have opted to avoid formal war declarations, preferring to find new labels for violent conflicts. As a result, states have also avoided signing formal peace treaties to end wars, since doing so opens them to potential culpability. (Fazal 2013).

These two cases demonstrate how seemingly internalized norms – war declarations and formal peace treaties – can quickly decline because of an abrupt shift in the costs of compliance. In both cases, the calculus of adherence was shaped by rapid changes in international law and global norms that stemmed the hegemonic shock of World War II.

The emergent literature on international election monitoring has also invoked the language of costs and benefits in explaining the spread of the norm. Kelley (2008, 2012) argues that the shift in material power that accompanied the end of the Cold War bolstered the norm of election monitoring. The spread of election monitoring resulted from the shifting costs and benefits of non-democratic government in allowing external observers. The end of the Cold War bolstered Western desires for democratization, putting pressure on leaders to admit international observers

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[46] See Weyland, Kurt. 2009. The Diffusion of Revolution: 1848 in Europe and Latin America. International Organization 63(3):391-423; Weyland, Kurt. 2010. The Diffusion of Regime Contention in European Democratization, 1830-1940. Comparative Political Studies 43(8):1148-1176; Kahneman, Daniel. 2011. Thinking, Fast and Slow. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, p.255; Jervis, Robert. 1976. Perception and Misperception. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, p.344-8.

or face sanctions. As Kelley (2012:31) notes, "the stigma associated with not inviting monitors motivated even cheating governments to invite monitors to avoid an automatic stamp of illegitimacy."[47]

Hyde (2011a, 2011b) argues that allowing international observers serves as a credible signal of a commitment to a democracy, leading to material benefits like increased investment and foreign aid. The increased benefits of adherence and the rising costs of non-compliance transformed election observation into a widespread norm. "Though rare before 1990," notes Miller (2013:674), "international monitoring is now present in roughly three in four elections in nonconsolidated democracies, effectively becoming an international norm expected of legitimate governments."[48]

In sum, the rise and decline of political practices is often linked to the costs and benefits of norm compliance, and hegemonic shocks often shift the calculus of these costs and benefits, in the process altering the incentives associated with maintaining or discarding particular norms.

Norm (Re-)Legitimation

Fourth, hegemonic transitions cause a normative re-evaluation of acceptable and legitimate existing practices. Norms, as I've noted above, are not reducible to "the mere exercise of material power," nor are they simply epiphenomenal reflections of underlying interests.[49] Hegemonic shocks not only change the crude calculus of norm adherence, but also force a deep re-evaluation of which state practices ought to be considered fair or shameful, laudable or repulsive, legitimate or obsolete. Norms are not just a function of cost-benefit analysis. Though the shifts in hegemonic power are manifested through material rise and decline, the drivers of norm cascades are neither wholly rational not driven purely by material incentives. By resolving a dramatic clash of competing norms, the outcomes of hegemonic transitions force a normative re-evaluation of acceptable and legitimate state practices. Norms associated with rising powers come to be seen as

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[47] Kelley (2004) likewise argues that material incentives can be a critical driver of norm change. Examining national ethnicity policies in Eastern Europe, she concludes that external normative pressure was insufficient; when domestic opposition to policy change was strong, normative pressures did not lead to reforms. Material incentives in the form of EU membership conditionality were much more effective in shaping normative reforms, and were able to overcome even high levels of domestic opposition. She concludes that norm diffusion is not effective unless backed by material incentives, which are "a vast improvement over the use of normative pressure alone." (Kelley 2004:178.)

[48] Donno (2010) argues that the punishment of states violating the norm of free elections is actually contingent on their material power. States with large economies, high military expenditures, or significant fuel exports are less likely to be punished, suggesting that material power interacts with ideational factors in determining the quality of norm enforcement.

[49] Florini 1996:366.

desirable and appropriate, while norms associated with the declining or losing powers are discredited and discarded. In doing so, hegemonic transitions create opportunities for reassessing the legitimacy, viability, and ideational appeal of existing and emerging norms.

As Adler argues, power plays "a crucial role in the construction of social reality," because it contains "the authority to determine the shared meanings that constitute the identities, interests, and practices of states." (Adler 1997:336.) In this way, shifts in hegemonic power create new opportunities to shape states' "underlying rules of the game" and "to define what constitutes acceptable play"; this may be, in fact, the "most subtle and most effective form of power." (Adler 1997:336.) Clearly, historical events don't only impact material structures. "They introduce new conceptions of what really exists (the violent crowd as the people's will in action), of what is good (the people in ecstatic union), and of what is possible (revolution, a new kind of regeneration of the state and the nation)," writes Sewell (1996:861.). "This implies that symbolic interpretation is part and parcel of the historical event." As a result, hegemonic transitions produce both material and non-material consequences. As Krebs (2015) notes, normative narratives are not just the byproducts of exogenous shocks, but require a process of social interpretation and legitimation.

Explanations that adopt a rigidly instrumental approach to norms ignore the inertia of deeply-held beliefs and the importance of social interpretation – including the interpretation of material crises like hegemonic transitions. As Fearon and Wendt (2002:62) note, "fear of bad consequences and desire to do right" can interact, and "in the aggregate the two explanations are complementary rather than mutually exclusive."[50] Sudden shifts in social structures are forged by both material and ideational causes, which interact and reinforce each other. In examining the norm against political assassination, for example, Thomas (2000:115) notes that abstract principles alone, no matter how compelling, cannot become norms unless they also fit "into the prevailing structure of the international system – defined in both material and ideational terms."

Metanorm Enforcement

Fifth, hegemony may facilitate metanorm enforcement. According to Axelrod (1986), norm regimes become more resilient in the presence of metanorms -- the expectation that those who don't punish violators will themselves be punished. This kind of enforcement requires high material (i.e. hegemonic) capacity. Axelrod models the evolution of norms as an n-person game of players pursuing a strategy of varied boldness and vengefulness. The results of his simulation show

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[50] See also Checkel 1997:475, 488.

that metanorms (the willingness to punish those who don't punish those who disobey the norm) allow norms to become well-established.[51]

The enforcement of metanorms is difficult in the absence of hegemonic dominance, which prevents free-riding and acts as a focal point for norm compliance. Hegemonic transitions facilitate the enforcement of metanorms by creating new organizational arrangements that promote and institutionalize new practices. In the wake of hegemonic shocks, rising great powers acquire both the increased ability and increased opportunity to set normative precedents and then enforce them through the maintenance of the new global order.[52]

By destroying old hierarchies and suspending existing relations, hegemonic transitions enable rising powers to reconstruct the institutional and normative architecture through which they exercise and maintain their power. While such institution building is normally a slow and inertia-laden process, the brief periods after hegemonic shocks temporarily wipe the slate clean, facilitating and intensifying the creation of new global orders. After World War II, for example, the United States led the way in creating a global economic system that reflected its hegemonic preferences. As a 1942 Council on Foreign Relations report put it, "the period at the end of the war will provide a tabula rasa on which can be written the terms of a democratic new order. The economic and political institutions of 1939 and before are clearly in suspension and need not be restored intact after the war."[53] In the wake of the war, both the Soviet Union and the United States used their rising power to construct new organizations that helped them to both spread their norms and provide an enforcement mechanism for potential defectors.

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Figure 2, next page, summarizes the various ways in which hegemonic transitions may lead to large-scale normative change. (This is not meant to be a comprehensive list.)

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[51] Axelrod 1986:1092-1102
[52] See, e.g., Ikenberry 2000.
[53] Quoted in Maier 1977.

Hegemonic transitions → *imposition, inducement, learning, legitimation, metanorm enforcement* } → **Norm cascades**
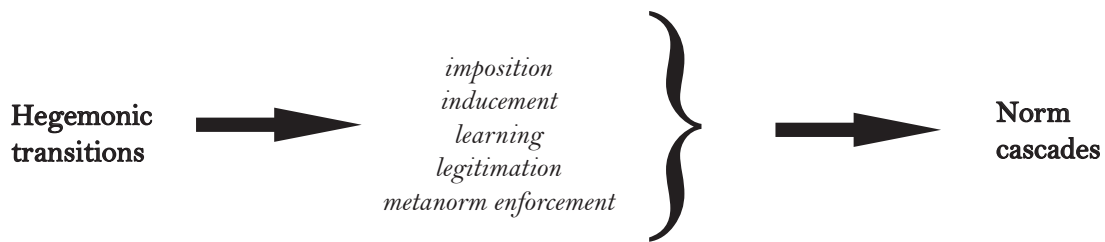
Figure 2. Abrupt hegemonic transitions and global norm evolution.

Increased relative power expands a state's repertoire (i.e. its choice of action) for the diffusion of its preferred norms. When power is relatively equal, a state may only be able to promote norms through socialization or persuasion. A hegemon, however, has access to both direct tactics like inducement, but also indirect (and even unintentional) levers of influence like the halo effect of material success. Thus De Nevers (2007:54) argues that "great powers appear to 'speak softly' to those they regard as their peers, but they 'carry a big stick' to force others into line."

Given the continued importance of great powers, why are hegemonic transitions (rather than great power influence more generally) especially important in shaping normative change? Sudden transitions of power, rather than the stock capacity of power, are key in creating the ideological space for normative change. Ikenberry and Kupchan (1990:283), for example, argue that geopolitical shocks act as catalysts of hegemonic socialization, which occurs "primarily after wars and political crises, periods marked by international turmoil and restructuring as well as the fragmentation of ruling coalitions and legitimacy crises at the domestic level." As Krasner (1982:204) concludes, "revolutionary change, which generates new principles and norms, is associated with shifts in power." And Saunders (2006:46) argues that "[s]hifts in power within the international system as a whole could have important effects on such redefinitions as arguably happened within the society of Western democratic states after the collapse of the Soviet threat."[54] Theo Farrell notes that shocks are a "necessary condition for radical change," since they

> undermine the legitimacy of existing norms, shift power within communities, and
> enable norm cultural entrepreneurs to construct a new consensus around

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[54] "Powerful states – or in the case of a unipolar system, the most powerful state – have the ability to put forward new ideas, to define (or redefine) international society, and to exclude those states that do not comply." Saunders 2006:25.

alternative norms.[55]

Hegemonic shocks increase the ability of rising powers to socialize other states, and increase the willingness of domestic elites to adopt new practices and institutions. In doing so they increase both the "supply" of socialization at the international level and the "demand" for socialization at the domestic level. At the international level, sudden increases in power allow rising hegemons to use their capabilities to socialize others to their institutions, a pursuit that their recent successes make more legitimate. At the domestic level, hegemonic shocks make elites more open to institutional reform, particularly if their existing institutions become discredited by the outcome of the crisis, and create "opportunities for political gains and coalitional realignment."[56] Zarakol (2011), for example, has argued that Turkey, Russia, and Japan were especially eager to embrace new norms in the wake of major hegemonic declines (Turkey in 1919, Japan in 1945, and Russia in 1991). Openness to new norms, her study suggests, becomes especially likely in the wake of hegemonic shocks, when new status hierarchies are created and old orders are discredited.

Case Study: The Soviet Collapse

After examining different ways in which great power transitions can lead to changes in global norms, an illustrative example may be helpful. The twentieth century saw four major hegemonic transitions or 'shocks' – the two World Wars, the Great Depression, and the Soviet collapse. Each episode was defined by the relatively sudden rise and fall of one or more great powers. How did the last hegemonic shock of the twentieth century – the collapse of the Soviet system between 1989 and 1991 – affect global political norms?

A number of studies have anecdotally pointed to links between the Soviet collapse and changes in norms regarding the right to democracy, economic statecraft (i.e. the role of sanctions, democracy assistance, and foreign aid), humanitarian intervention, and international election monitoring. "Modern humanitarian intervention was first conceived in the years following the end of the Cold War," writes Western and Goldstein:

> The triumph of liberal democracy over communism made Western leaders
> optimistic that they could solve the world's problems as never before. Military

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[55] Farell 2001:82. "World historical events such as wars or major depressions in the international system can lead to a search for new ideas and norms. 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.'" (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998:909)
[56] Ikenberry and Kupchan 1990:284.

force that had long been held in check by superpower rivalry could now be
unleashed to protect poor countries from aggression, repression, and hunger.[57]

The collapse of the bipolar world fundamentally transformed the viability of norms like humanitarian intervention. The Cold War, argues Mazower, had "marginalized" the UN, but the Soviet collapse "offered the UN not only challenges but renewed meaning. Its peacekeeping role could now be expanded and the mandate for its soldiers made more robust."[58] As a result, notes Farrell, the 1990s "saw a dramatic explosion in collective humanitarian interventions. The end of the Cold War broke the veto logjam in the UNSC." Global crises "were no longer viewed as extensions of East West rivalry, and this enabled the Security Council to authorize armed intervention in humanitarian crises."[59] Between 1945 and 1989 the Security Council approved 15 peacekeeping operations and passed 22 Chapter VII resolutions authorizing the use of force against states. But between 1990 and 1998 alone, the SC approved 31 peacekeeping operations and passed 145 Chapter VII resolutions.[60] Thus the end of the Cold War "for the first time" enabled the UN Security Council to "function in the way its creators intended, as an instrument to deal quickly and effectively with aggression." (Johnson 2001:768.)[61]

The norm of sanctions underwent a similar transformation. The UN Security Council voted to use sanctions only twice between 1945 and 1990.[62] In the 1990s alone, it voted to impose sanctions 12 times. There were almost twice as many instances of sanctions being used in the last ten years of the twentieth century than in the first ninety years.[63] "The origins of smart sanctions," concludes Drezner, "lie in the explosion of economic statecraft that started with the end of the Cold War."[64]

Norms of democracy assistance and foreign aid conditionality were also profoundly affected by the end of the Cold War. Powerful states like the U.S. no longer had to prioritize anti-Communism over democracy promotion, increasing pressure on African autocrats who had used superpower rivalry to stave off reforms. At the same time, international financial institutions and aid donors became more focused on supporting accountable government, making outside

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[57] Western and Goldstein 2011.

[58] Mazower 2009:1-2.

[59] Farell 2005:144.

[60] Voeten 2001.

[61] "The end of the cold war has allowed a revolution in international sensitivity to and promotion of human rights." (Green 1999:24.)

[62] Cortright and Lopez 2000.

[63] Hufbauer 2007.

[64] Drezner 2011:97

assistance contingent on democratic reforms. The end of the Cold War, argues Dunning, "marked a watershed in the politics of foreign aid in Africa."[65]

The Soviet collapse also transformed the expectations about states' internal commitments not only to human rights but also to democratic values – such as the expectation of free elections supported by international election monitoring. As a result, the number of election monitors spiked in the early 1990s:
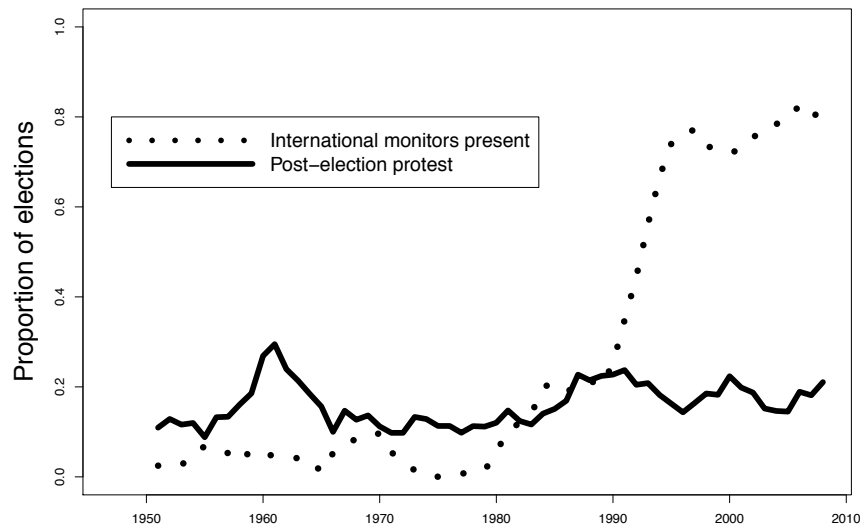

Figure 1: Trends in election monitoring and post-election protests in autocracies and transitional democracies (five year moving annual averages). Data: Hyde and Marinov (2012).

Figure 1 reproduced from Luo and Rozenas 2016. The number of election monitors spikes after the Soviet collapse.

"Particularly since the end of the Cold War," writes Hyde, "international norms have changed such that leaders are also expected to hold elections and seek international scrutiny of their elections by inviting foreign election monitors."[66] More generally, the collapse of the Soviet Union undercut the ideological appeal of state-led modernization as a viable path for developing states. As Levitsky and Way argue, "Western liberalism's triumph and the Soviet collapse

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[65] Dunning 2004:409.
[66] Hyde 2011c:274.

undermined the legitimacy of alternative regime models and created strong incentives for peripheral states to adopt formal democratic institutions."[67]

Case Study: The Great Depression

The Great Depression was another instance of a hegemonic shock that led to widespread changes in norms surrounding democracy, capitalism, and the state's role in both the global and the national economy. In the wake of the Depression, democracy suddenly appeared moribund and corrupt. Its failure, writes Arthur Schlesinger, aroused "contempt for parliamentary dithering," for "bourgeois civility and cowardice, for pragmatic muddling through."[68] As an American economist lamented in 1933, "democracy is neither very expert nor very quick to action," and cannot resolve "group and class conflicts easily."[69]

As Dobbin (1993:1) argues, the economic collapse "disproved cultural paradigms of industrial rationality," and in doing so overturned many long-standing norms surrounding the economic management of the state:

> the unprecedented severity of the economic downturn called traditional industrial cultures into question and, like scientists rejecting failed scientific paradigms, [Western] countries rejected industrial orthodoxy. Instead of utilizing traditional policy paradigms to restore economic growth, these countries adopted policies that were contrary to their traditions.[70]

Amidst the decay of the period, Nazi Germany emerged as an alternative ideological model for elites and masses alike. It had loudly rejected the conventional practices of democratic states, and achieved great success in doing so. If 1989 was the great turning point for modern democracy, 1933 would prove to be the fascist *annus mirabilis*. The ascent of the National Socialists inaugurated a long period of German recovery, economic expansion, and the swift end of unemployment. By 1939 the country had a labor shortage of two million people, while industrial production had more than doubled.

As the relative power of democratic regimes declined, democracy increasingly became seen as outdated, and inefficient, and undesirable. At the same time, as Germany began to increase its share of relative power and eliminate unemployment, other states began to look toward fascism as

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[67] Levitsky and Way 2002:61; see also Levitsky and Way 2010. For example, Marinov and Goemans (2014) argue that the end of the Cold War increased the costs of coups by eliminating superpower competition.
68 Schlesinger 2005:107
69 Lorwin 1935:116, 117.
70 Dobbin 1993:7.

a model for emulation. "The mere *efficiency* of such a system, the elimination of waste and obstruction, is obvious. In seven years it has built up the most powerful war machine the world has ever seen," wrote George Orwell in 1941. "However horrible this system may seem to us, *it works*."[71]

As a result of its successes, according to Judt:

> [F]ascism was not only respectable but—until 1942—the institutional umbrella for quite a lot of innovative economic thinking. It was uninhibited about the use of the state, bypassing political impediments to radical policy innovation, and happy to transcend conventional restrictions on public expenditure.[72]

In the preface to the 1936 German edition of his *General Theory*, Keynes himself suggested that his policies were "much more easily adapted to the conditions of a totalitarian state" than to a democracy.[73] In 1940, he rejected an offer to broadcast a critique of the Nazi economic plan, finding himself sympathetic to many of its suggestions. "In my opinion about three-quarters of the passages quoted from the German broadcasts would be quite excellent if the name of Great Britain were substituted for Germany or the Axis," he wrote in response. "If [Nazi economic minister] Funk's plan is taken at face value, it is excellent and just what we ourselves ought to be thinking of doing."[74]

As a result of the hegemonic transition, when traditional authoritarian leaders sought ideological for domestic reforms, the fascist model presented a natural path for development. Germany's growing power led nominally nonfascist regimes to adopt what Payne calls "varying degrees of 'fascistization'—certain outward trappings of fascist style—to present a more modern and dynamic image, with the hope of attaining broader mobilization and infrastructure."[75] This process was not synonymous with fascism, but as he notes "it would be grossly inaccurate to argue that this process proceeded independent of fascism."[76] It had borrowed the public aesthetics, the choreography, and the semiotics of fascism, along with a new approach to political economy that emphasized the primacy of political will over the national economy.

Germany's unexpected renaissance sharply set the country apart from the stagnating democracies. In his 1937 book *The Third Reich*, Franco-German intellectual Henri Lichtenberger described the Nazi regime as "animated by a powerful dynamism, in possession of a military

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71 Orwell 1941:80, 81, original emphasis.
72 Judt 2012:170.
73 Quoted in Frieden 2006:212.
74 Quoted in Mazower 1998:186.
75 Payne 1995:290.
76 Payne 1995:15. Even when authoritarianism did not mean fascism, he notes, "it became common for authoritarian regimes to imitate certain aspects of the fascist style." Payne 1995:290.

establishment of formidable efficiency," and headed by a "leader who disposes of an immense popularity."[77] Even would-be liberals were persuaded by the seemingly miraculous German recovery. "In my view what China needs is an able and idealistic dictator," wrote a Chinese political scientist in 1934:

> There are among us some people, including myself, who have undergone long periods of liberal education. These people naturally find undemocratic practices extremely distasteful. But if we want to make China into a strong modern nation, I fear there is no alternative except to throw aside our democratic conviction.[78]

Likewise, the Japanese theorist of fascism Nakano Seigo argued that democracy had "lost its spirit and decayed into a mechanism which insists only on numerical superiority without considering the essence of human beings," and asserted that the Italian and German models offered "a form of more democratic government going beyond democracy."[79] As a result, the statist features of the Nazi economy became increasingly attractive to outside observers. It "offered the best of all possible worlds," argues Mosse: "[O]rder and hierarchy would be maintained, private property would not be expropriated, but social justice would be done nevertheless."[80] Fascism, according to Berman, "charged onto the stage, offering a way out of the downward spiral, a new vision of society in which states put markets in their place and fought the atomization, dislocation, and discord that liberalism, capitalism, and modernity had generated."[81]

This "new vision of society" was rooted not only in material recovery—although this formed the prerequisite basis of its appeal—but also in its spiritual promise. Orwell called Nazism "one of the most appealing demagogic inventions of the twentieth century."[82] It enticed the masses by supplanting the populist appeal of democracy with the promises of a purer body politic—united in national spirit, purged of plutocratic corruption, and incarnated through gigantic public spectacles. As the Italian fascist Giovanni Gentile wrote, the fascist state "is a people's state, and, as such, the democratic state *par excellence*."[83] Fascism promised a version of fairness more substantive than the sterile impartiality of the liberal rule of law—whose majestic equality, in Anatole France's sardonic phrase, forbids the rich and the poor alike from sleeping under bridges and begging for bread. For all its high-minded promises of intellectual freedom, democracy had regressed into "the freedom to starve," wrote Rosie Waldeck, a Jewish-German

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77 Quoted in Pollock 1939:121.
78 Quoted in Kurzman 2008:253.
79 Seigo 1995:239.
80 Mosse 1964:21.
81 Berman 2006:5.
82 Quoted in Conquest 1999:83.
83 Gentile 1928:302.

countess turned *Newsweek* correspondent. One in ten Europeans, she estimated, actually cared for individual freedom; the rest were "partly unaware of the real nature of Hitler's menacing shadow, partly indifferent to it, and partly ready to take a chance on the Fuhrer."[84]

At a time of such widespread disillusionment, fascism blandished the promise of an undiluted political community comprised of a people "capable of mastering a common fate."[85] This sense of *Volksgemeinschaft* embodied a spiritual purpose that no written constitution could hope to supersede. Despite its rejection of liberal ideals and the subjugation of the personal into the collective, fascism managed to acquire the tenor of an ideologically emancipatory doctrine.

In short, the Great Depression led to massive (and now sometimes-forgotten) changes in the legitimacy of long-standing norms. It took another hegemonic shock – World War II – to restore the normative legitimacy of democratic capitalism and curb the legitimacy of war and conquest as "natural" components of modern politics.

Comparisons with Other Cases

The hegemonic transition that accompanied the Soviet collapse contributed to changes in a variety of global norms dealing with sanctions, democracy assistance, aid conditionality, humanitarian intervention, and international election observation. In this regard the Soviet collapse was not unique. The Great War triggered a number of changes in norms related to national self-determination, producing a "Wilsonian moment" of national creation in central Europe and anti-colonialism in Asia and the Middle East. (Manela 2009) Colonial subjects perceived the Fourteen Points as a clarion call for national independence, and saw national self-determination as both a valuable organizing principle and a way of securing America's help in breaking the colonial yoke. As Manela points out, the adoption of American principles by anticolonial nationalists was not merely ideological, but driven by the recognition of American power and the desire to ensure American aid. "Your moral outlook," wrote the Indian leader Lajpat Rai to Wilson in 1919, "assures us of your sympathy; your position, the most commanding in the world today, gives you the power... to protect all who suffer under alien and undemocratic rule."[86]

This view was shared by independence movements in China, Korea, Egypt, Vietnam, and elsewhere – all of whom saw the rise of American power as crucial for their self-assertion. The call for self-determination was obviously compatible with the moral and ideological elements of anti-

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84 Waldeck 1942:14–15.
85 Müller 2011:4.
86 Quoted in Manela 2009:93.

colonialism. As CPI China's station chief observed, "my work was very simple," since Wilson's speeches "provided ideal propaganda material."[87] At the same time the normative transformation of the Wilsonian moment depended on America's hegemonic power, "both real and perceived." Wilson's proclamations found a keen audience because "they came from a man widely viewed at the time as the most powerful leader in the world arena, whose influence on the shape of the postwar international order, it was assumed, would be decisive."[88] More generally, the outcome of the war transformed the norms surrounding the legitimacy of a modern state. The transition from monarchy to democracy as the organizing principle of political legitimation was a "seismic shift" in Europe's history that was made possible by WWI.[89]

The war's outcome thus dramatically raised the prestige of democratic institutions inside old and new states alike. It made democratic regimes more powerful, more able to exercise global influence, and more normatively appealing all at once. It was the Great War, argues Fritz Stern, "that saw the elevation of democracy into a universal ideal."[90] The unexpected defeat of autocratic monarchies demonstrated that democratic institutions were an effective way to organize modern society.

Female suffrage was another global norm that spread rapidly as a result of the Great War. Before the war only two European countries, Finland and Norway, had allowed women to vote. But between 1917 and 1924, over 30 countries adopted female suffrage, making it, in the words of some historians, the "most conspicuous innovation" of the postwar period.[91] Charles Beard, writing in 1927, noted that World War I, "supposed to demonstrate manly valor at its highest pitch, accelerated the movement for woman suffrage. Nearly all the new states created after that conflict conferred on women the right to vote." He concluded: "The feminist genie is out of the bottle."[92]

The Three Sovereignties

Given the above, how can we conceptualize norm evolution within the framework of hegemonic transformations? I argue that the evolution of global norms can often be characterized

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[87] Quoted in Schmidt 1998:6.
[88] Manela 2009:10.
[89] "The recognition of the national principle's legitimacy marked one of the major seismic shifts in the international order established in 1919." (Steiner 2005:84.)
[90] Stern 1997:15.
[91] Palmer Colton, and Kramer 2002:744.
[92] Beard 1927:681.

as an ongoing struggle between three distinct and competing types of sovereignty – state, national, and individual.

State sovereignty emphasizes the importance of a monopoly on territorial rule, territorial integrity, and external non-interference. It is anti-secession, against territorial conquest, and against alternate domestic sources of private violence like warlords or mercenaries. Today, China is the most consistent supporter of state sovereignty, condemning secession movements within its borders but also in places like Kosovo or South Sudan.

National sovereignty emphasizes the right to national self-determination, minority group rights, and ethnic federalism. It is anti-colonial and pro-secession. Most great powers take a mixed (a.k.a. Krasner's "hypocritical") view on state vs. national sovereignty, depending on their strategic interests. Thus Russia is pro-national sovereignty in Abkhazia, Crimea or Transdnistria but against it in Kosovo or Chechnya. The United States, likewise, is pro-national sovereignty in Kosovo or Taiwan but against it in Crimea.

Individual sovereignty is a bundle of liberal human rights, including freedom from torture and right to free and fair elections. According to these norms, the rights of individuals are paramount to the rights of states, and failure to abide by human rights voids the sovereignty rights of offending states. Thus genocide or purposeful starvation are ground for foreign invasion and overthrow. Norms upholding individual sovereignty have a fairly long history, although they have become important only recently. Britain's campaign against slavery and slave-trading in the early 19th century is one of the earliest examples of great powers spreading a norm of individual sovereignty. They began to be formalized in international law only after World War II in documents like the UN Declaration of Human Rights, although the Cold War constrained the adoption of these practices.

The general trend over the past century has been the rise of national sovereignty (as marked by the collapse of empires and colonies, accompanied by the steady rise in the number of nation-states) and an increased assertion of individual sovereignty (through the expansion of suffrage and the protection of human rights as grounds for sanctions or external intervention).

National sovereignty, by emphasizing the rights of groups, frequently conflicts with norms of individual sovereignty. As a principle of international law, argues Dahrendorf (1990:138), "self-determination is one of the more unfortunate inventions."

It ascribes a right to peoples when rights should always be those of individuals. As a result, it invites usurpers to claim this right on behalf of peoples in whose name they speak while at the same time trampling on minorities, and sometimes on the civil rights of all.

The evolution of norms thus unfolds as a kind of zero-sum contest between the three competing visions of sovereignty. There are often no clear paths or consistent applications of principles. After 1945, the US and USSR both promoted anti-imperialism; yet both interfered repeatedly in the sovereignty of other states; their support for governments and secessionist movements did not follow a consistent moral logic but depended on the loyalties of the actors involved. (Krasner 1999.) Griffiths (2014:559) argues that decades since World War II have seen a shift toward national sovereignty (always at the expense of state sovereignty and the norm of territorial integrity:

> The change from multipolarity, the development of the territorial integrity norm, the shift to nuclear deterrence, and the burgeoning global economy contributed to the milieu in which states evaluate the costs and benefits of holding territory, and this has enabled states to permit secession more frequently. The result has been an increase in the rate of peaceful secession and a corresponding proliferation in the number of sovereign states.[93]

The aftermath of the Soviet collapse saw increased drift toward anti-state sovereignty norms: the right to international election observers, protection of human rights, sanctions, humanitarian intervention, aid conditionality, etc. Critics of these norms argue they are merely cover for US intervention rather than the enforcement of individual-level norms. Economic globalization more generally undermines certain elements of state sovereignty such as control over regulation or fiscal policy.

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[93] Griffiths 2014. American dominance strengthened the norm of self-determination after the war, leading to "the age of secession" – a sustained period of new state creation. Griffiths 2016:525.
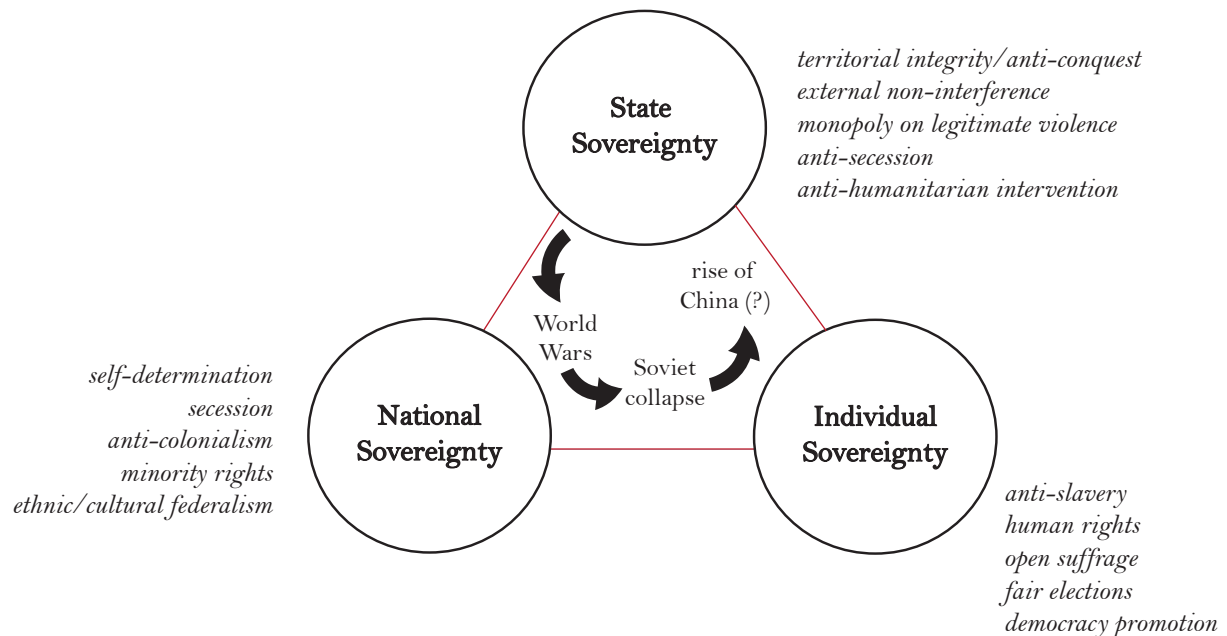
Figure 3. Norm change as the co-evolution of three competing visions of sovereignty.

More recently, the rise of China has generated a growing debate about potential Chinese challenges to the international order, including challenges to prevailing global norms. Implicit in all these discussions is the idea that the global normative order is shaped at least in part by the global hegemonic order. Schweller and Pu (2011:44) argue that as the international system moves away from unipolarity, "it is entering a deconcentration/delegitimation phase," in which China is seeking ways to delegitimize the US-led international order. Great power transitions raise questions about hegemonic legitimacy as well as capacity. As they note, China's "increasing material power—particularly its rapid economic growth—has boosted its ideational self-confidence. Accordingly, Chinese intellectuals are increasingly questioning the inevitability of what they regard as Western ideational dominance."[94] The main thrust of the challenge is a rejection of national and individual sovereignty in favor of state sovereignty. Griffiths (2016), for instance, argues that the rise of China will lead to a re-assertion of norms surrounding state sovereignty, and these will prove beneficial to the system's stability.[95]

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[94] Schweller and Pu 2011:59.

[95] See also China, the United States, and Global Order by Rosemary Foot and Andrew Walter [compares US and Chinese compliance with five sets of norms – use of force, mutual surveillance of macroeconomics policy, nuclear proliferation, climate change, global financial flows] See also China Orders the World: Normative Soft Power and Foreign Policy. William A. Callahan and

The overall effect on state sovereignty has been paradoxical; on the one hand, state power has been steadily eroded by nationalist claims, economic globalization, and the assertion of individual rights. On the other hand, since World War II the norm against territorial conquest has acquired an unprecedented dominance, such that even relatively minor violations trigger sanctions and condemnation. As a result, the concept of a state as an inviolable legal entity has become entrenched. But at the same time, the expectation that the *regimes* governing these entities should exercise full autonomy over their subjects has weakened.[96] Especially since 1945, the main goal of foreign invasions and interventions has been not to redraw borders but to replace the locus of authority within those borders. As a result, state death has virtually ceased even as violations of state autonomy have continued unabated.[97] To use Krasner's (1999) language, the norm of international legal sovereignty has become increasingly detached from its Westphalian and domestic variants; while the latter two have weakened in legitimacy, the former has only gained in strength.

Democracy promotion, for example, is fundamentally an anti-state sovereignty norm. In theory, it's a pro-individual norm, since its stated purpose is to enable people to live free of fear and intimidation from their governments. In practice, its critics often attack it as a pro-hegemony norm that benefits the American tendency toward foreign interference. Since the three sovereignties are in tension, norms can be portrayed as positive or negative depending on whether they violate or reinforce particular norm categories. A foreign invasion condemned as a violation of state sovereignty can be lauded as a humanitarian intervention that upholds individual sovereignty.

Conclusion

Great powers are heavily involved, both intentionally and not, in the creation and destruction of many common global practices. Yet the role of hegemony in shaping norms has rarely been examined in a systematic way. In this paper I take a step further and 1) examine the specific conditions under which great powers become especially salient for norm change, and 2) propose some recurring mechanisms through which they exercise their influence.

Elena Barabantseva. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011. See also Bader, China as patron. Also Foot and Walter in IS; Schweller and Pu.

[96] Since regimes generally desire to stay in power above all, many leaders facing an intervention may see this as a distinction without a difference. Globally, however, the legitimate purposes of intervention have narrowed to exclude conquest or other violations of territorial integrity.

[97] On the near-cessation of state death after 1945, see Fazal 2007.

I've argued that sudden hegemonic transitions create powerful incentives and opportunities for normative transformations. While norm cascades arise from upheavals in the material structure of global power, they are not simply the results of material forces. Great power transitions not only alter the capacity of leading states to impose and promote norms, but also force a deeper fundamental reconsideration of accepted practices. They alter the costs and benefits of practices and customs, but also cause states to update their beliefs about the viability and desirability of various norms. Norm evolution is therefore not just an actor-driven process of bargaining and persuasion, but is also deeply linked to changes in the structure of the international system. Moreover, focusing on the hegemonic sources of norm change can explain elements of norm evolution that traditional theories have difficulty explaining, such as norm death and sudden norm volatility. Developing more precise and rigorous systemic theories of norm change is work for future research.

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