

The Psychological Effects of Socialization: IGO Membership and Respect for Human Rights

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Motivation

Do international institutions impact human rights practices without the help of domestic institutions? When considering formal sanctions against states that violate human rights, the impact of international institutions appears conditional on domestic institutions (Dai 2014; Powell and Staton 2009; Murdie and Davis 2012; Risse and Sikkink 1999), but we suggest that international institutions provide informal social mechanisms that encourage compliance with international human rights standards (Greenhill 2010). When states lose these social ties, we expect that they will also lose the benefits that come with "playing by the rules" and will be less constrained by international norms and standards that emphasize respect for human rights.

Theory and Contribution

How do international institutions affect state behavior toward human rights?

- Previous studies find that socialization occurs at the international level such that a "world society" exists that influences state behavior (Boli and Thomas 1997; Meyer et al. 1997; Ingram et al. 2005; Greenhill 2010).
- Socialization among states occurs largely through international governmental organizations (IGOs) (Johnston 2001), and interactions within IGOs lead to a convergence of interests over time (Bearce and Bondanella 2007) whereby members adopt and conform to the rules and norms of the community (Checkel 2005).
- We build off the international socialization literature and address another piece of the story: what happens when these social ties are lost?
- Social exclusion theory within psychology offers a possible answer: exclusion from a community takes away the reason for conforming to the norms and standards of behavior set by that community (Baumeister et al. 2005; Maner et al. 2007; Twenge et al. 2007).
- We suggest that this psychological effect applies to states as they interact within IGOs: if states lose social ties within global society, it becomes less beneficial to align behavior with expectations held by global society.

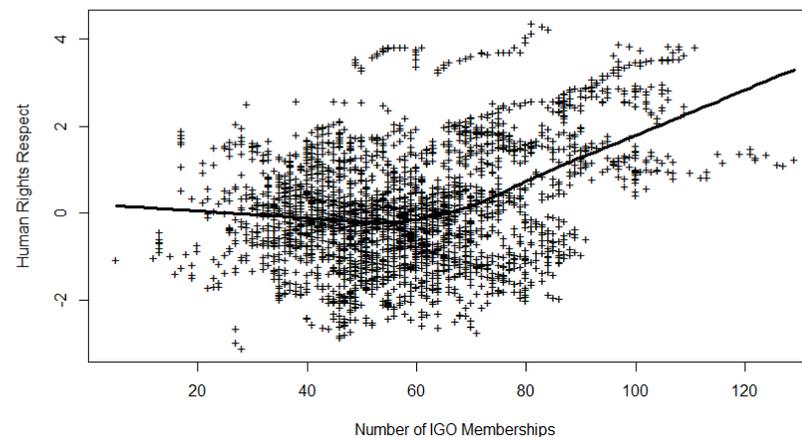
How does this expectation translate to human rights practices at home?

- Protection of human rights is a widely shared, legitimate international norm (Risse-Kappen, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999; Wotipka and Tsutsui 2008), and repressive states risk losing political legitimacy within international society (Koo and Ramirez 2009).
- When weighing the benefits of repression to maintain domestic power against the costs to international legitimacy, we expect more socially connected ("embedded") states will be less likely to violate human rights (against the norms and values of international society) when the opportunity arises.

Hypothesis: All else being equal, when states lose membership in international governmental organizations, they engage in more repressive behavior.

Data

Relationship between IGO Membership and Human Rights Respect



n = 2666 country-years from 1979 - 2000; smoother span = 0.8
 DV: Human Rights Respect Latent Mean (Fariss 2014)
 EV: # of IGO Memberships (Pevehouse et al 2004)

Statistical Strategies

1. Generalized additive model with non-parametric functional form for IGO membership
2. Linear regression with preprocessed data
 - Preprocess data: 1-1 nearest neighbor matching
 - Treatment variable: IGO membership loss

Data Balance

Table 1: Covariate Balance

	Before Matching		After Matching	
	Mean Treated	Mean Control	Mean Treated	Mean Control
Propensity Score	0.158	0.101	0.149	0.149
HROs	37.855	23.138	36.383	36.530
Shaming	5.619	4.686	5.495	5.157
Exec Const	3.811	1.927	3.758	4.0214
NHRI	0.367	0.255	0.363	0.384
IGO Membership	67.591	57.563	67.886	68.295
ln(GDP)	24.196	23.351	24.140	24.250
ln(Population)	16.259	15.983	16.241	16.295
n	306	2690	296	296

Results

Table 2: Statistical Estimates

Explanatory Variable	Expectation	Estimate	p-value [†]
# of IGO Memberships	(+)	5.319	0.049
IGO Membership Loss	(-)	-0.026	0.016
Long Run Membership Loss	(-)	-0.839	—

†: One-tailed

Discussion and Conclusions

- IGO memberships embed states in international society, and socially connected states are more likely to follow social norms such as protecting human rights.
- Conversely, excluded states abuse rights more often. A loss of membership exerts a negative (albeit substantively small) effect on human rights practices, with this effect being enhanced in the long-run. Bearce and Bondanella (2007) find that IGO member-states' interests converge over time; it stands to reason that interests would also diverge over time.
- Future steps:
 - Does the form of membership loss matter (e.g., quitting vs. expulsion)?
 - Does membership loss impact compliance with other international norms such as territorial aggression or corruption?