

REVIEWS

International Organizations and Internal Conditionality: Making Norms Matter

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International Organizations and Internal Conditionality: Making Norms Matter by Rick Fawn, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013, ISBN: 9781137305480, 335 pages.

This book examines a problem that all international organizations face: how to engage with member states that disagree with aims of the organization. Rick Fawn studies this important question in the context of the Council of Europe (CoE) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). Unlike other European organizations, these two organizations lack the material benefits or formal enforcement mechanisms that would otherwise motivate states to adopt their norms, and this complicates compliance.

The author uses the concept of internal conditionality to identify the processes through which states and organizations navigate the issues over which their values clash. Taking a bottom-up approach, Fawn defines internal conditionality as the processes used by international organizations to “meet the challenges” of recalcitrant member states (p. 7). Fawn’s interpretation of internal conditionality differs from external conditionality, which is exercised toward new member states during the accession process. Thus, he builds on previous scholarly accounts of internal conditionality as “institutional strengthening demanded by new circumstances”¹ or states’ capacity to honor existing norms² to show that institutional norms can sometimes be effective at influencing even those states that typically disagree with them. In this sense, while the book ties together scholarship on norms, European studies, and practices of international organizations, in essence, it is a study of norm diffusion.

The book then offers five case studies, each examining an issue on which the values of a member state and those of an international organization conflict. Fawn assesses each case along six factors. The first three concern the importance of values to the organization and the recalcitrant member states, while the last three factors are used to evaluate the effectiveness of incentives and sanctions. In the case studies, one learns about the costs and benefits considered by states evaluating the extent to which their policies should match those of the respective organization. For example, by internalizing the norm of abolishing the death penalty, states could increase their prestige and opportunities for economic cooperation (chapter 4). However, when norms conflict with its national interests (chapter 5), the state may choose to pursue domestic policies regardless of norm diffusion within the international organization.

Evidence includes some two hundred interviews with practitioners from the CoE and the OSCE, and the book contributes to the emerging literature on the practices of international

1. Gianni Bonvicini and Stefano Silvestri, “The New ‘Arc of Crisis’ and the European Community,” *The International Spectator* 27, no. 2 (November 26, 1992): 31–43.

2. Iavor Rangelov, Bulgaria’s Struggle to Make Sense of EU Human Rights Criteria (Open Society Institute, 22 February 2010), 2.

organizations.³ Through its in-depth case studies, the reader has the opportunity to understand how different mechanisms translate or fail to translate norms into policy shifts. Another strength lies in the book's definition of what Fawn refers to as "target" or "recalcitrant" states. Previous scholarship has referred to states whose values do not align with the organization as "bad actors"⁴ or "bully states."⁵ In places, the book inappropriately lumps post-Communist states together as recalcitrant states, even though variation exists in their respect for human rights or the extent to which they hold free and fair elections. Nevertheless, Fawn provides insights into the motivations and actions of these states within the CoE and within the OSCE. The author's descriptions of their behavior could be better categorized as offensive or defensive. For example, states may act to undermine the international organization or act to defend their own set of values against a perceived imposition of Western-created values. Another strength of the book comes from investigating the informality of practices within international organizations. The lack of formalization offers more opportunities for an agreement that is more than the sum of its parts (p. 242). The book concludes with a call for further research into the "balance between legality and flexibility" (p. 241). The author uses interviews to identify how, even in situations that led to disappointing outcomes, states chose through informal processes to permit adjudication at the international level when target states have neither the will nor resources to do so (e.g., Russia's participation in the European Court of Human Rights, p. 161). The attention to the two-level game is critical to understanding the conditions under which states cooperate or not; however, more discussion of domestic politics could have further advanced the debate on each of these cases.

In addition, the author praises the CoE and the OSCE for their inclusive approach to membership without considering the costs of such an approach, including states that flout the organizations' rules diminishes the organizations' perceived legitimacy. Other international organizations have reacted to such situations by suspending members, such as the recent G8 suspension of Russia for its involvement in the Ukraine conflict. Inclusion may guarantee dialogue among states, but it is less obvious why a state like Kazakhstan, which "had not fulfilled the most basic democratic and human-rights commitments of the Organization" (p. 195), was awarded such a prestigious position in the international community as the OSCE chairmanship. One should also question the assumption that inclusion will inevitably have positive effects on states' domestic policies as some of the cases presented led to policy shifts while others did not.

From a methodological point of view, the book would have benefited from a clearer justification of case selection and process tracing. The author only notes that cases were selected to demonstrate the "resourcefulness and resilience" in different issue areas (p. 233). But the five cases, ranging from OSCE election monitoring to the CoE's efforts to abolish the death penalty, seem difficult to compare. It also would have been helpful to see a breakdown of the results of the two hundred interviews (p. 14), such as the use of discourse analysis across subjects' responses.

Nonetheless, some of the lessons summarized in the conclusion could surely apply to other international organizations beyond Europe. Existing and emerging scholarship on the African Union and the Organization of American States is applicable in that some of the member states exhibit similarly deviant behavior. ASEAN would offer a particularly interesting comparison given its design as a more informal organization.

Ultimately, Fawn's book offers insights into the ways in which two understudied organizations function in practice. The book reminds us that norm diffusion can and does continue

3. Vincent Pouliot, *International Security in Practice: the Politics of NATO-Russia Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot, *International Practices*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Heidi Hardt, *Time to React: the Efficiency of International Organizations in Crisis Response* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

4. Ryan Goodman and Derek Jinks, "How to Influence States: Socialization and International Human Rights Law," *Duke University School of Law* 54, no. 3 (3 April 2008): 629.

5. Hardt, *Time to React: the Efficiency of International Organizations in Crisis Response*, 184.

to occur within international organizations even in the face of recalcitrant states. The CoE and the OSCE were founded on the principle of equality. As a result, Fawn's conceptualization of internal conditionality indicates that all member states should be subject to the same accountability, whether they are "well-behaved" or not (p. 7).