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## International Leadership and Norm Evolution

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Since the end of the Cold War, fast-paced globalization has increased interaction among states and promoted development of international norms in many fields. Constructivists argue that international interactions can only advance international norms towards a Kantian culture of friendly mutual help and could not propel any regression to a Hobbesian culture of hostile confrontation.<sup>1</sup> We can observe, however, that the reality of international politics does not support this argument. Although certain interactions have promoted international cooperation, others have intensified international conflicts. For instance, China, the United States, Russia, Japan, South Korea and North Korea held during the five years from August 2003 to December 2008 seven rounds of Six Party Talks on nuclear issues on the Korean Peninsula. The six nations' continuous interaction during this period, however, resulted not in North Korea's acceptance of the norm of non-proliferation, but in its conducting on May 25 2009 its second nuclear test.<sup>2</sup> This example calls to question whether or not interaction among states drives international norms in one specific direction. Drawing on the Pre-Qin philosophers' idea that the type of monarch has different impacts on relations among states, this article analyses how the different types of leadership of a leading power influence the process and direction of evolution of international norms.

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 250–1.

<sup>2</sup> 'Liufang huitan' ('The Six Party Talks'), <http://baike.baidu.com/view/529755.htm#1>; 'Chaohe diqi lun liufang huitan tuanzhanghui zai Beijing juxing' ('The Delegation Chair's Meeting of the Seventh Round of the Six Party Talks on the Korean Nuclear Issue is Held in Beijing'), <http://news.cctv.com/world/20081208/107870.shtml>; 'Jiu Chaoxian xuanbu jinxing dier ci heshiyan, Zhongguo waijiaobu fabiao shengming' ('The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs Issues a Statement on the North Korean Announcement of a Second Nuclear Test'), *Renmin ribao* (*People's Daily*), May 26, 2009, p. 3.

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## Defects in Explanations of the Role of Leadership

A leading state refers to a first-class power in the international system. Early studies of the role of leadership in international politics mainly took the form of theories on decision-making. In the 1960s, behaviourist scholars studied foreign policy-making from the perspective of political leaders' personal characteristics, educational background, religious beliefs, political experience, and professional knowledge. Research during that period barely touched on how various types of leading states have different impacts on international norms, but its conclusions on types of leaders are helpful in addressing this question. One such typology which Robert C. Snyder and fellow scholars developed during the 1960s is useful in this light. It distinguishes two types of leader—one identifiable through in-order-to motives, the other through because-of motives. Snyder et al argue that leaders who operate according to in-order-to motives are those that establish new international norms, and those who lead under the principle of because-of motives are not.<sup>3</sup>

One major defect in this typology is that it cannot explain antithetical actions by similar types of leader in enacting the same international norms. Take for example, US Presidents Lyndon Baines Johnson and George W. Bush, both of whom are leaders typified by in-order-to motives. Johnson advocated the *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons* (NPT) and restricted cooperation with illegitimate nuclear powers, yet George W. Bush violated the NPT by engaging in nuclear cooperation with India, which is not a party to the treaty.<sup>4</sup> To understand the impact that different world leading states have on the evolution of international norms, therefore, we obviously need to pinpoint a typology that categorizes international leadership according to the principle upon which the conduct of leading states is based.

Theorists on international norms universally agree that changes in world leadership are prerequisite to changes in international norms. They hold that formulation of new international norms usually happens in three phases; (i) leading states propose new norms; (ii) a majority of states follow the proposal; and (iii) the norms are internalized or socialized as universal principles guiding international behaviour.<sup>5</sup> In her study of the evolution of the norm of humanitarian intervention over the 150-year period starting from 1821,

<sup>3</sup> James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfaltzgraff, Jr., *Contending Theories of International Relations: A Comprehensive Survey* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, Inc., 2001), p. 559.

<sup>4</sup> The 'in-order-to-motives' type refers to initiating a policy to realize a goal. Lyndon Baines Johnson initiated the Vietnam War in order to prevent Southeast Asian states from falling into communist hands and George W. Bush initiated the Iraq War in order to expand American domination of the Middle East.

<sup>5</sup> Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, 'International Norms Dynamics and Political Change', *International Organization*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (1998), pp. 887–917.

Martha Finnemore argues that the evolution of this norm relates to the changed attitude of Europeans towards Africans in seeing them as equals.<sup>6</sup> Finnemore holds that it was only after Europeans thus changed their outlook that interventions outside of Europe came to be regarded as humanitarian. Finnemore's argument implies her belief that changes in the attitudes of leading states bring about changes in international norms. This is not to say that she regards changes in the views of leading states as a condition sufficient to bring about the evolution of international norms; she also argues that a successful challenge to the international consensus is another important condition, whose absence precludes any change in international norms.<sup>7</sup> Theorists on international norms now universally believe that there is rivalry between older and newer norms, and that the newer norms are by no means those guaranteed to win the game.<sup>8</sup>

Unfortunately, Finnemore's explanation of the relationship between leading states and the evolution of international norms suffers the same flaw as that in modern constructivist theories; it fails to clarify the process through which concepts and norms are mutually constructed. She argues that changes in people's views change international norms, and at the same time that international norms construct people's views of national interests.<sup>9</sup> Yet, she fails to study either the process through which people's concepts construct norms or that through which norms construct people's concepts. As such, it is impossible for her to explain the conditions under which changes in the views of leading states can result in changes in international norms. To avoid this pitfall, we must explore the relationship between the changes in leading states' actions and changes in international norms. In other words, we take a leading state's actions as a criterion for determining the type of its leadership, and whether or not that state's actions correspond to subsequent changes in international norms as a criterion for determining whether or not its leadership plays a role in changing international norms.

Having found that the new norms which leading states promote sometimes succeed but can also fail, G. John Ikenberry and Charles A. Kupchan studied the processes and conditions under which hegemons successfully advance new international norms. They identify three universally accepted mechanisms, whereby hegemons socialize states into new international norms. They are: normative persuasion, external inducement, and internal

<sup>6</sup> Martha Finnemore, 'Constructing Norms of Humanitarian Intervention', in Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 160.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 159–60.

<sup>8</sup> Ronald L. Jepperson, Alexander Wendt, and Peter J. Katzenstein, 'Norms, Identity, and Culture in National Security', in Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 56.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 154, 159.

reconstruction.<sup>10</sup> Normative persuasion involves elites first internalizing the hegemon's norms and accordingly adopting new policies; external inducement and internal reconstruction involve first changing smaller states' policies and then causing change through these states' acceptance of the new norms.<sup>11</sup> They argue that there are two necessary conditions under which these three mechanisms cause the international community to accept a new norm. The first is that the new norm benefits the hegemon, the second that political conditions in other states permit local elites to recognize the importance of the new norm.<sup>12</sup> Their research improves our understanding of the evolution of international norms.

Two problems, however, arise with respect to the mechanisms Ikenberry and Kupchan raise through which hegemons advance new international norms. The first is that normative persuasion, external inducement and internal reconstruction are not all on the same conceptual levels. External inducement and internal reconstruction are on one level, but external inducement might easily be subsumed under that of normative persuasion. The second problem is that normative persuasion confuses the process and outcome of socialization. Ikenberry and Kupchan argue that normative persuasion consists of a secondary state first internalizing new norms and later changing its policies. This mechanism does not include any process of internalization, but directly assumes such an outcome. In fact, the internalization of a norm is in itself a process of socialization. That decision makers of a secondary state accept the persuasion of leading states does not imply that they have internalized the new norm, as inducement or internal reconstruction could also be the cause of such change. Decision makers' acceptance of a new standard, regardless of whether they are persuaded, coerced or threatened into doing so, represents only the beginning of the socialization process, and cannot be confused with the outcome.

Ikenberry and Kupchan identify in their case studies the failure of American President Woodrow Wilson's efforts after World War I to promote a new international norm as being rooted in the decision of European elites not to accept it.<sup>13</sup> This is a very weak explanation. European views aside, Wilson's new norm had not even obtained domestic support in the United States, as Congress ultimately vetoed US participation in Wilson's League of Nations.<sup>14</sup> Methodologically speaking, in determining the type of international leadership, we should look at the actions of the world leading power rather than the norm it proposes. In international politics, it is very

<sup>10</sup> G. John Ikenberry and Charles A. Kupchan, 'Socialization and Hegemonic Power', *International Organization*, Vol. 44, No. 3 (1990), p. 290.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 290–2.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 292.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 295–9.

<sup>14</sup> Wang Shengzu, ed., *Guoji guanxi shi (History of International Relations)*, Vol. 4 (Beijing: Shijie zhishi chubanshe), pp. 97–101.

common for states to say one thing while doing the exact opposite. As such, this article will take the actions of a leading state as criteria for assessing the type of its international leadership. Wilson might have convinced himself, but without the support of Congress, the United States as a state did not accept the new norm. This case demonstrates that persuasion cannot be an independent mechanism for constructing new international norms. This article will replace persuasion as a mechanism with that of the role of the model.

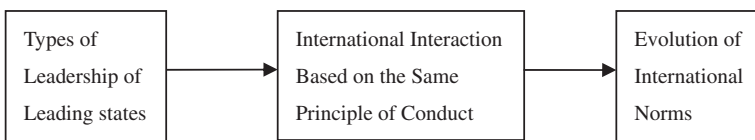
## Types of Leadership and International Norms

### Puzzles and Hypotheses

The main puzzle this article raises is: What role does the type of leadership of leading states play in the evolution of international norms? This core question can be split into four sub-questions: (i) How should the characteristics of international leadership be categorized? (ii) Through what mechanisms do the types of international leadership influence the evolution of international norms? (iii) What impact do changes in the leadership of leading states have on the evolution of international norms? (iv) What is the difference, quantitatively and qualitatively, between the conditions under which the leadership of world powers changes international norms?

The article hypothesizes that the type of leadership of a leading state determines its international actions, and its actions encourage other states to adopt the same principle of conduct in international interactions. As the majority of states adopt that principle, it so becomes socialized into an international norm (Figure 1).

The principle under which a leading state conducts foreign policy will change in accordance with a change in its leadership, regardless of the cause of such change. There are three mechanisms through which leading states' actions influence international interaction among states. They are: (i) setting up a model for other states to imitate; (ii) supporting states that enact a similar principle of conduct; and (iii) punishing those that violate that principle. When the majority of states convert their principle of conduct to comply with that of the leading state, it can be said that such a principle has evolved into an international norm.



**Fig. 1** Types of Leadership of Leading States and the Evolution of International Norms.

## Major Variables

This article develops a theory with three key variables. The dependent variable is that of international norms; it can take on the three values of power norms, double-standard norms, and moral norms. The independent variable is that of the type of leadership of the leading state (leadership type), and can take on the three values of tyranny, hegemony, and humane authority. Changes in leadership type do not directly result in changed international norms, but a leading state's interaction with other states does have impact on the evolution of international norms. As such, interaction between leading states and other states (interaction) is an intermediary variable between changes in leadership types and the evolution of interactional norms. This variable can take on the values of conventional interaction and extraordinary interaction.

### *International Norms*

This article borrows from Stephen D. Krasner's definition of international norms, which is: 'Norms are standards of behaviour defined in terms of rights and obligations.'<sup>15</sup> Based on that definition, this article also regards norms as the behavioural standards observed by the majority, not the dominant member, of a community. The foreign policy principles of a leading state which the majority of states do not accept hence do not constitute international norms. This article defines international norms as 'behavioural standards in terms of rights and obligations accepted by the majority of states.' This includes norms of both violent and non-violent conduct.<sup>16</sup>

The international community is a human society, and its social system is composed of both natural and social characters. This article, therefore, distinguishes types of international norms according to their natural and social characters.

Driven by their natural character, states follow the norm of survival of the fittest, or of power. The power norm refers to the principle of achieving national interests through material strength. For example, when competing for colonies from the 16th to the 19th centuries, European states practiced the principle of the right of first occupation.<sup>17</sup> The power norm is inherent

<sup>15</sup> Stephen Krasner, 'Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables', in Stephen Krasner, ed., *International Regimes* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1983), p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> Some scholars regard 'behavioural norms' as a belief in nonviolent cooperation. The author deems it improper to exclude all violent interactions between states from the concept of the 'behavioural norm.' From a historical perspective, military cooperation between states might also correspond to international norms. That is why there is a distinction between just and unjust wars.

<sup>17</sup> An Guozheng, Guo Chongli and Yang Zhenwu, eds., *Shijie zhishi da cidian (Dictionary of World Knowledge)* (Beijing: Shijie zhishi chubanshe, 1998), pp. 1, 542.

behaviour within states; without social intervention it naturally becomes a standard of state behaviour. It can be compared with the law of nature, whereby water flows downward on the path of least resistance. Confucius believed it natural for rulers to protect their power with military might. He said: 'The origins of wounding lie far back. It was born along with mankind . . . Wasps and scorpions are born with a sting. When they see danger they make use of it so as to protect their bodies. Human beings are born with joy and anger; hence, troops arise, and they came into being at the same time human beings did.'<sup>18</sup> In other words, it is human instinct to use violence as a means of self-protection.

States also observe moral norms through their social characters. Moral norms refer to the principles of protecting state interests and are also ethically applicable to specific historical periods. For example, by 1997, 165 states had signed the *Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction* (CWC).<sup>19</sup> Moral norms are acquired standards of social behaviour that are formed on the basis of the common ethical standards of states. When moral norms are able to overcome power norms, moral norms will be followed. Again using water as an example, moral norms might be thought of as water channels built to regulate water flow. When moral norms are weakened, power norms will automatically resume their status as a universal behavioural standard. Xunzi said: 'The life of human beings cannot be without communities. If there are communities without distinctions, then there will be conflicts, and if conflict, then disorder, and if disorder, then poverty. Hence, the failure to make distinctions is the bane of human life, whereas having distinctions is the basic good of all under heaven. The ruler is the key to the management of distinctions.'<sup>20</sup> He also argued: 'The early kings hated disorder and so they determined the distinctions of rites and norms.'<sup>21</sup>

As the international community consists in both natural and social characters, power norms and moral norms often simultaneously direct the behaviour of states. This is commonly seen in the power norm being applied to enemies, and to moral norms prevailing in relations between allies. We refer to such a scenario as double-standard norms. For instance, the United States hardly criticized its ally Saudi Arabia for its poor human rights record, but imposed sanctions on its enemy, Myanmar. Regardless of whether considered theoretically or on the basis of empirical observation,

<sup>18</sup> Yan Xuetong and Xu Jin, eds., *Zhongguo xianqin guojiajian zhengzhi sixiang xuandu* (*Pre-Qin Chinese Thoughts on Foreign Relations*) (Shanghai: Fudan daxue chubanshe, 2008), p. 236.

<sup>19</sup> An Guozheng, Guo Chongli and Yang Zhenwu, eds., *Dictionary of World Knowledge*, p. 728.

<sup>20</sup> Yan Xuetong and Xu Jin, eds., *Pre-Qin Chinese Thoughts on Foreign Relations*, p. 43.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*



double-standards have been predominant international norms for most of history.

### *Types of Leadership*

Types of leadership refer to the character of the policy-making of leading states. In the same way as spitting in a public place testifies to a low level of cultural refinement, a leading state's foreign policy is the external expression of its type of leadership. This article, therefore, will define the leadership type of a leading state according to its foreign policy. It is quite possible for a leading state to apply power norms, moral norms, or double-standard norms to different issues according to concrete situations. The foreign policy of a leading state can nevertheless be characterized as one of these three types according to its main conduct. We can thus make an assessment of a state's leadership type on the basis of the norms that the comprehensive foreign policy of a state follows. Xunzi once categorized different types of leadership as those of human authority, hegemony and tyranny according to their foreign policies. He said: 'States of humane authority aim at winning people's hearts, states of hegemony make allies, states of tyranny conquer others' lands.'<sup>22</sup> Borrowing from Xunzi, this article divides leadership into the same three types. Tyranny refers to states following power norms; humane authority refers to states abiding by moral norms; hegemony refers to states adhering to double-standard norms.<sup>23</sup>

### *Interaction*

The dictionary definition of 'interaction' is that of 'mutual or reciprocal action or influence.'<sup>24</sup> In international politics, interaction refers to the response of a state to the actions of other states. Interaction between states is the concrete expression of international relations, and there can be no such thing as international relations without interaction. Before the 15th century, there was almost no interaction among the states of Europe, Asia and Africa. Each continent thus had its own international system. Most scholars agree that before the 15th century the world simultaneously consisted of several different international systems and that a global international system did not yet exist.<sup>25</sup> Both global and regional systems exist on the prerequisite of interaction among states in the system. Nevertheless, we should not simply say that interactions are actions conforming to international norms, because any one state may respond to another's action

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> For Xunzi's analysis of human authority, hegemony, and tyranny, see Yan Xuetong, *Ancient Chinese Thought, Modern Chinese Power* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), pp. 86–91.

<sup>24</sup> *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1977), p. 601.

<sup>25</sup> Barry Buzan, *Shijie lishi zhong de guoji tixi (International Systems in World History)*, trans. Liu Debin (Beijing: Gaodeng jiaoyu chubanshe, 2004), pp. 211–216.



according to different behavioural standards. An action following international standards is affiliated with the category of conventional interaction, while that violating such standards is referred to as extraordinary interaction. Conventional interaction serves to strengthen existing international norms, while extraordinary interaction functions to change existing international norms.

## The Evolution of International Norms

Before considering the logic through which the leadership of leading states has impact on the evolution of international norms, we must distinguish between the process and outcome of internalization of behavioural principles. Certain scholars have suggested three types of internalization of international norms—those of force, price and legitimacy.<sup>26</sup> We, however, argue that this classification obfuscates the processes and outcomes of internalization. Internalization refers to the process of conscious behaviour becoming subconscious behaviour. As such, both force and price are pathways to internalizing norms rather than the outcomes of internalization. And legitimate behaviour, to the contrary, refers to subconscious actions which are the outcomes but not the means of internalization. We next discuss the pathways through which types of leadership have impact on the internalization of international norms and on changes in leadership.

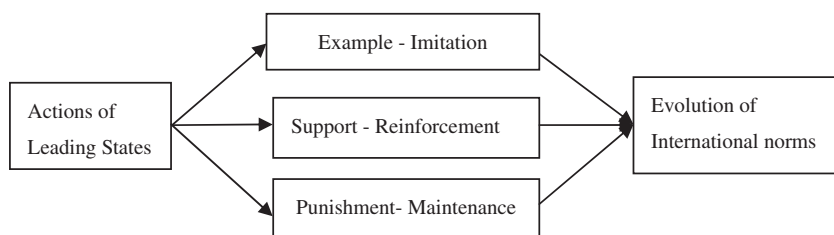
### Mechanisms of Interaction

The behavioural standards of leading states are expressed through their actions, and their actions influence the behavioural standards of other states through three mechanisms. They are: example–imitation, support–reinforcement and punishment–maintenance (Figure 2).

The example–imitation mechanism refers to other states imitating the behavioural standards of the leading state. The international status of a leading state causes other states to see its behavioural standards as one of the reasons for its success; they will hence imitate the leading state's behaviour. The model of leading states has impact on both the targets and observers of its actions. During the Spring and Autumn Period, the Minister of Zheng State, Zijia told Zhao Xuanzi, Executor of the Jin State in a letter: 'Small states follow the great states in a human way when large states have virtue; small states will behave like deer and risk danger in desperation when great states have no virtue.'<sup>27</sup> Especially in conflicts with other states, a leading state's adoption of negotiations as a means of resolution will encourage other states to follow moral norms, while its decision to use force to resolve the problem will drive other states to resort to power norms. The former

<sup>26</sup> Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, p. 268.

<sup>27</sup> Yan Xuetong and Xu Jin, eds., *Pre-Qin Chinese Thoughts on Foreign Relations*, p. 93.



**Fig. 2** Mechanisms through which Actions of Leading States Effect Evolution of International Norms.

promotes the internalization of moral norms; the latter that of power norms. For instance, the George W. Bush administration adopted a confrontational policy towards Russia after its unilateral withdrawal from the *Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM)*, manifest in the US announcement that it would deploy an anti-missile system in Poland. Russia's response to the US action was to deploy short range offensive missiles in Kaliningrad. The Barack Obama administration, in contrast, proposed a dialogue with Russia on the issue of anti-missile systems in Eastern Europe, evoking the response, whereby Russia removed some of its missiles.<sup>28</sup>

Example-imitation differs fundamentally from the normative persuasion as proposed by Ikenberry and Kupchan. The former means that a leading state's actions attract other states to follow its suit; the latter refers to a leading power using diplomacy to induce other states to accept the international norm it proposes. The persuasion mechanism can be one of inducement or threat, while making a model of one's own actions can make others follow a leading state of their own will. Note also that a leading state can persuade other states to follow a norm to which it does not itself adhere. For example, the United States violated the NPT treaty by engaging in nuclear cooperation with India, but in response to North Korea's nuclear tests, meanwhile, dissuaded Pyongyang from developing its own nuclear weapons. It is important to point out that the example-imitation mechanism plays a role which accords with the type of norms guiding the leading state's actions.

The support-reinforcement mechanism means that a leading state's support of other states' action in consistence with a certain norm will reinforce other states' belief in that particular norm. For example, after World War II, the United States consistently supported Israeli military attacks on its neighbours, a policy that reinforced Israel's belief in power norms. After the Cold War, the United States constrained from supporting separatist movements

<sup>28</sup> Zhang Guangzheng, 'Eluosi fangqi zai Jialininggele bushu daodan' ('Russia Abandoning Deployment of Missiles in Kaliningrad'), <http://world.people.com.cn/GB/1029/42356/10082437.html>.

in Western states, yet encouraged Western states' support of separatism in non-Western states. This double standard policy encouraged Western states to follow universally a double-standard norm on separatist issues. Leading states' support of other states in following an existing international norm will hence reinforce that norm, and their support of other states' violation of an existing international norm will result in the evolution of other types of norm.

The punishment–maintenance mechanism refers to a leading state adopting punitive policies towards states that violate the type of norm which that leading state advocates. Whether punishment promotes moral norms or power norms depends on the objective of such punishment. If the action of a state violating moral norms is the target of the punishment, its function will be to make that state internalize moral norms. Taking punitive measures against states that violate moral norms will increase the costs of such violations and encourage them and other states to adapt their behaviour so as to conform to moral norms. When Iraq annexed Kuwait in 1990, it violated the Fourth Geneva Convention and UN Charter on the use of force violating the territorial integrity or political independence of a sovereign state.<sup>29</sup> In January 1991, the United States punished Iraq through the Persian Gulf War,<sup>30</sup> a punitive measure to make Iraq and other states abide by relevant UN conventions. Punishment aimed at making states observe moral norms, however, will conversely renew those states' belief in power norms and weaken their consciousness of moral norms.

Punish–maintenance has broader impact than Ikenberry and Kupchan's internal reconstruction, and has influence on the international community as a whole rather than solely on the target state. Internal reconstruction refers to changing the government of a state for the sake of internalizing the norms which a leading state advocates in that country. As such, it is just a part of the punishment–maintenance mechanism. A leading state can adopt many different punishments, such as economic sanctions, military embargo, political condemnation and breaking off diplomatic relations, to promote its preferred international norm. Regime change might be considered the most severe punishment.

## Evolution of International Norms

In this section, we will analyze the relationships between types of leadership and the direction of norm evolution and the changes of types of international norms, based on the knowledge that the leadership of a leading state determines that state's behaviour and that its actions, in turn, influence the

<sup>29</sup> Li Tiecheng, *Lianheguo de licheng (The History of the United Nations)* (Beijing: Beijing yuyan xueyuan chubanshe, 1993), p. 647.

<sup>30</sup> *Shijie zhishi nianjian 1991/92 (World Affairs Almanac 1991/92)* (Beijing: Shijie zhishi chubanshe, 1992), pp. 1–4.

evolution of international norms through the three mechanisms of example–imitation, support–reinforcement and punishment–maintenance.

### *Direction of Evolution of International Norms*

Tyrant states practice power principles; their actions thus erode moral norms and at the same time strengthen power norms. When the leading state is a tyranny, the function of its actions is often to encourage more states to adopt power principles. Leading tyrant states support or encourage their allies in taking aggressive stances towards their enemies, which increases their allies' belief in power principles. When leading tyrant states adopt power principles in response to others' moral actions, they actually punish the states that behave according to moral principles. This weakens the belief of other states in moral principles and pushes them towards making decisions according to power principles. During the latter half of the Warring States period, the State of Qin was a typical leading tyrant state. In acting according to power principles, the Qin came to be seen by other kingdoms as a predator state<sup>31</sup> that violated agreements and annexed the territory of states which adhered to treaties. This behaviour caused other states to adopt violent policies in their interactions with Qin. For example, in peace negotiations with the State of Zhao, the State of Qin proposed to Zhao that Zhao could end the war by ceding six cities to Qin. Minister of the State of Zhao Yu Qing advised King Huiwen of Zhao: 'The Qin is a state of beasts and has no respect for the rites. Qin's requests are endless while our lands are limited. The state of Zhao will vanish if we try to meet the Qin's endless demands with our limited lands.'<sup>32</sup> The King of Zhao accepted the advice of Minister Yu Qing, in the belief that continuing the war against the Qin was more conducive to survival than signing a peace treaty with it. He thereby formed an alliance with the State of Qi to carry on the resistance war against the Qin.<sup>33</sup>

States of humane authority follow moral principles; their actions function to promote moral norms at the expense of power norms. When states of humane authority take moral actions, their behaviour encourages the belief in other states that following moral norms is beneficial to their strength and prosperity. Xunzi said: 'He who establishes morality becomes the humane authority.' This statement reflects an understanding of the correlation between promoting moral norms and becoming a humane world leader.<sup>34</sup> States of humane authority had huge material means through which to promote moral norms. They were capable not only of rewarding the states that adhered to moral norms but of punishing violations in the interests of

<sup>31</sup> Li Weiqi, *Guoyu zhanguoce (History of States and Stratagems of Warring States)* (Changsha: Yuelu shushe, 1988), pp. 12, 122.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> Yan Xuetong and Xu Jin, eds., *Pre-Qin Chinese Thoughts on Foreign Relations*, p. 59.

maintaining moral norms. Observance of moral norms by states of human authority legitimized their use of force to maintain moral norms. As observed during the Pre-Qin period: 'The ancient sage kings used military force for justice and never abandoned troops.'<sup>35</sup> This reflects Chinese thinkers' realization that the just policies of a leading state legitimize its military promotion of moral norms. An ancient case illustrating this view is the war that Yu, the first King of Xia Dynasty, launched against three minority tribes in 2200 BCE. Even Mozi, the ancient Chinese philosopher regarded as a pacifist who was opposed to all wars, believed that this was a just war.<sup>36</sup>

Hegemony is a type of leadership falling midway between tyranny and humane authority. A hegemon practices double standards, namely by adopting a moral policy towards allies and using power principles to deal with enemies. The behaviour of a hegemon functions to promote double-standard norms. The moral policy of a hegemon primarily influences the norms of interaction between itself and its allies, because to maintain hegemony, a hegemon must establish strategic confidence among its allies through adopting moral policy. As Zhifu Huibo said: 'Trust is of supreme importance to alliance',<sup>37</sup> *The Chronicle of Zuo* also notes, 'Without true credibility, even exchanging royal members as hostages cannot help to make alliance reliable'.<sup>38</sup> To expand and consolidate its alliances, a hegemon protects the security of its allies according to moral norms. The pathways through which a hegemon promotes moral norms among its allies are the same as those of states of humane authority; both use carrots and sticks. The ancient Chinese scholar Xi Que once said: 'Without punishing defecting states, how can a hegemon display its authority? Without conciliating to obedient states, how can a hegemon display its loving care? Without authority and loving care, how can a hegemon display its virtue? And without virtue, how can a hegemon lead an alliance?'<sup>39</sup>

A hegemon's actions guided by power principles primarily have impact on norms of interaction between itself and its enemies. This type of action functions to compel enemies to respond in a similar manner, thus also establishing power norms among them. For instance, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Russian President, Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin planned to join Western countries and to act according to the internal norms of the Western camp. American-led North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), however, took advantage of Yeltsin's practice of Western norms to expand eastward and compress Russia's strategic space. NATO's aggressive response to Russia's respect for Western norms caused Russia to lose

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>36</sup> Zhou Caizhu and Qi Ruirui, *Mozi quanyi (Complete Translation of Mozi)* (Guiyang: Guizhou renmin chubanshe, 1995), p. 149.

<sup>37</sup> Li Weiqi, *History of States and Stratagems of Warring States*, p. 49.

<sup>38</sup> Yan Xuetong and Xu Jin, eds., *Pre-Qin Chinese Thoughts on Foreign Relations*, p. 86.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

confidence in Western norms. Following Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin's rise to power, Russia resumed power principles in its foreign policy.<sup>40</sup> In 2008, as the United States turned a blind eye to Georgia's use of military means to resolve the South Ossetia issue, Russia not only sent troops into Georgia, but supported Southern Ossetia and Abkhazian in becoming independent from Georgia.<sup>41</sup>

The double-standard norms followed by hegemonies are determined on the basis of relations with allies and enemies. The logic of double-standard norms thus turns on itself, and hegemon actions cause no conflicts as regards the direction of norm evolution. Hegemonies' double-standard actions encourage other states also to adopt double standards in foreign policy making, namely applying moral norms towards allies and power norms towards enemies. Double standard behaviour is a universal phenomenon. At present Western countries universally tolerate Israel's possession of nuclear weapons, but cannot tolerate the nuclear programs of Iran or North Korea. Dual standards are applied not just in relations with allies and enemies, but vis-à-vis relations with similar and non-similar types of states. For example, the NPT of 1968 is a treaty based on a double-standard principle distinguishing between nuclear and non-nuclear states. This treaty has already become a widely accepted global norm.<sup>42</sup>

### *Qualitative Change in International Norms*

The evolution of international norms can result in either quantitative or qualitative changes. As sudden or unexpected factors might cause qualitative changes, we cannot say that they are a result of a gradual process. Qualitative changes in international norms, however, do occur over a long period of time, and one type of norm generally maintains predominance for a hundred or more years. We must, therefore, make observations over a long period of world history before making any judgment on the role that leadership types play in qualitative changes in international norms.

Changes in international leadership are a possible cause of qualitative changes in international norms, because such changes imply a change in the principles guiding a leading state's foreign policy. A sudden change in the behavioural principles of a leading power has obvious impact on the direction of the evolution of international norms. For example, in 1945, after the end of World War II, the United States and the USSR replaced the

<sup>40</sup> Working Group on the Assessment of Strategic Environment of Russia, 'Eluosi qiangshi jueqi shuping' ('On Russia's Forceful Rise'), *Xiandai guoji guanxi* (Contemporary International Relations), No. 2 (2009), pp. 19–24.

<sup>41</sup> Zhu Feng, 'E-Ge chongtu de guoji zhengzhi jiedu' ('An Interpretation of the Russia-Georgia Conflict from the Perspective of International Politics'), *Xiandai guoji guanxi* (Contemporary International Relations), No. 11 (2008), pp. 6–12.

<sup>42</sup> An Guozheng, Guo Chongli and Yang Zhenwu, eds., *Dictionary of World Knowledge*, p. 227.

European powers as global leaders. Different from the European tyranny states of World War I and World War II, the United States and the USSR were both hegemons and adopted double standards in foreign policy making. In 1949, the United States established NATO and in 1955 the USSR established the Warsaw Treaty Organization of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance (Warsaw Pact), thus splitting the world into Western and Eastern camps.<sup>43</sup> In attempts to gain the upper hand, both the United States and the USSR adopted the strategy of supporting allies and opposing enemies. Their foreign actions throughout the Cold War period rapidly raised double standards to the level of a predominant international norm. Even today, double standards remain the most influential international norm.

The durability of one type of international leadership promotes the socialization and internalization of the international norm it espouses. When one type of international leadership does not change for a long time, the implication is that leading states continuously interact with other states according to a given type of behavioural principles. These interactions enable that particular norm to be socialized internationally and internalized domestically in many countries. For example, American culture has a born belief in democracy.<sup>44</sup> In the 60 plus years since 1945, US policy towards democratic countries has been on the basis of moral norms and that towards autocratic governments on the basis of power norms. After attaining solo superpower status in 1991, the United States increased its efforts to promote democracy and oppose autocratic regimes. By the beginning of the 21st century, all countries of the world claimed to be democratic polities, regardless of their actual political institutions. It became very popular for states to support democratic movements and oppose autocratic regimes in enemy states. The term 'humanitarian intervention' was coined for that type of policy. In fact, no one either supports the democratic movements or opposes the autocratic regimes of their allies.

### *Changes of Leadership Types*

This section analyzes the pathways through which types of leadership change, because these changes have significant impact on the evolution of international norms. The change of leadership type of a leading state can result from internal changes within the regime itself. For instance, the leadership of the Xia Dynasty changed when King Jie succeeded the throne from human authority to tyranny, as did that of the Shang Dynasty when Zhou became king. The change of leadership types can also result from regime change, as when the hegemonic leadership of the Han Dynasty replaced that

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 155, 637.

<sup>44</sup> Robert Art, *Meiguo da zhanlue (A Grand Strategy for America)*, trans. Guo Shuyong (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2005), pp. 88–94.



of the tyrannical Qin Dynasty. Changes in types of leadership can moreover be the outcome of the shift of leading status from one type of state to another, such as the power transfer after World War II from European states to the United States and the USSR, bringing about the change in international leadership from tyranny to hegemony. Xu Jin's work finds that the European Renaissance of the 13th century brought about a shift in the laws of war from unlimited to limited violence. This finding shows that changes in types of international norms might well be determined by factors beyond international relations, and could be sudden and unexpected.<sup>45</sup>

Wendt argues: 'In conclusion, I address the question of progress over time, suggesting that although there is no guarantee that international time will move forward toward a Kantian culture, at least it is unlikely to move backward.'<sup>46</sup> Such a linear view of history not only defies logic but lacks historical evidence. If we were to limit our observations of history to the period since the Peace of Westphalia Treaties of 1648, the direction of the evolution of international norms might support Wendt's view. But from a broader historical perspective, we find that international norms are not evolving towards any ultimate end. For instance, King Jie of the Xia Dynasty and King Zhou of Shang Dynasty present two cases of changes of leadership from humane authority back to tyranny.

Unless the direction of change in leading power leadership is beyond doubt, the evolution direction of international norms cannot be certain, as any change inevitably influences its direction. Historically, we see that types of leadership of leading powers randomly changed between humane authority, hegemony and tyranny. An example is that of the changes in norms among the states making up the pre-Qin Chinese inter-state system. The leadership types of leading powers undergo probable changes even in modern democratic societies. If we compare the foreign policies of Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and Barack Obama, we find substantial differences in their foreign policy principles. The principle of multilateralism adopted by Clinton and Obama is one of hegemony while Bush's unilateralism represents a tyranny. That the principles of Obama's foreign policy represents a return to the Clinton era implies that changes in leadership are not necessarily in any particular direction. Pulling together the above analysis of the effects that changes of leadership types of leading powers impose on the evolution of international norms, we obtain Figure 3.

<sup>45</sup> Xu Jin, *Baoli de xiandu: zhanzhengfa de guoji zhengzhi fenxi* (*The Limits of Violence: An International Political Analysis of the Laws of War*), PhD Dissertation, Tsinghua University, 2008, pp. 28–30.

<sup>46</sup> Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, pp. 250–1.

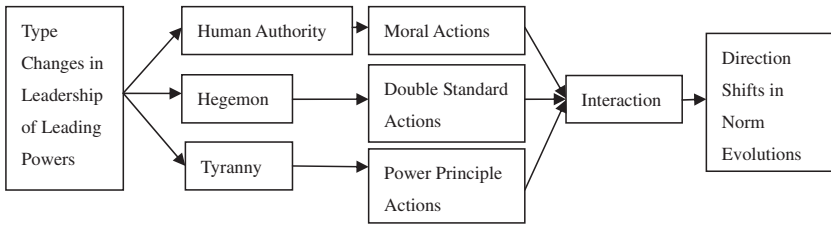


Fig. 3 Direction Shifts in Norm Evolutions.

## Historical Cases

As changes of types of international norms take place over long periods of time, we have selected four historical cases, each covering a minimum 50 years of history, for analysis. They are: the Western Zhou Dynasty; the Spring and Autumn Period; the period covering the lead-up to World War I until the end of World War II; and the period since the end of World War II. These four cases encompass a broad range of historical settings, science and technology, culture and thinking, power structure, political systems, and geography. As such, if our analysis finds that different types of leading states have acted as role models for the evolution of norms across the four periods, we can argue that the three types of international leadership—humane authority, hegemony and tyranny—are universally relevant to the evolution of international norms.

### Western Zhou Dynasty

The leadership of the Western Zhou Dynasty (1066–770 BCE) shifted from humane authority to hegemony to tyranny. Norms guiding interactions among states making up the Chinese international system shifted, in tandem, from moral norms to double-standard norms to power norms.

Around 1066 BCE, King Wu of Zhou ended the Shang Dynasty and established the Zhou Dynasty. This marked the beginning of the Western Zhou inter-state system,<sup>47</sup> wherein the so-called five services norms acted as the conventional principles guiding relations among feudal princes. King Tang of the Shang Dynasty had established at the Jinghao Conference in the 17th century BCE the *Hou*, *Dian*, *Nan*, *Cai* and *Wei* five service norms universally guarded by all feudal princes.<sup>48</sup> King Wu of Zhou revised these norms as the *Dian*, *Hou*, *Bin*, *Yao* and *Huang*<sup>49</sup> and strictly enacted them, as

<sup>47</sup> Yang Kuan, *Xizhou shi (History of Western Zhou)* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2003), p. 871.

<sup>48</sup> He Maochun, *Zhongguo waijiao tongshi (A General History of Chinese Diplomacy)* (Beijing: Zhongguo shehui kexue chubanshe, 1996), pp. 13–14.

<sup>49</sup> 'The system of Five Services refers to states within the Kingdom being treated as *Dian*, states immediately external to the Kingdom as *Hou*, states protecting the Kingdom as *Bin*, barbarians as *Yao*, and the tribes of the remote periphery as *Huang*,' see Yang Kuan,

did the succeeding Zhou Kings Cheng and Kang. All three investigated any shortcomings on their part or made reasonable revisions to the norms when other states failed to observe them. It was after making such investigations or carrying out norm reforms that these kings issued warnings to any states that violated the norms. Force was only used against states that failed to observe the norms after receiving a warning.<sup>50</sup> The Zhou hence took the lead in enacting the five service norms, and initiated wars only to protect them. States mainly observed the Five Service norms; there were few instances of war under the rules of King Wu, King Cheng, and King Kang.<sup>51</sup> There were military conflicts between feudal princes and between feudal princes and tribes during the reigns of King Wu and King Cheng, but few in comparison to those that broke out after the accession of King Zhao.

King Zhao ascended the Zhou throne in 1001 BCE, from which time rulers of Zhou did not strictly observe the Five Services norms and persistently initiated wars against tribes living on the periphery of the Zhou system.<sup>52</sup> A typical case is that of King Mu of Zhou. He launched a war against the Quanrong tribes which, according to the Five Services, needed only occasionally pay respects to the King of Zhou and were not required to present quarterly tributes. King Mu rejected Jigong Moufu's expostulation about the importance of observing this norm and launched a military attack, on the grounds that the Quanrong had failed to present quarterly tribute. The Zhou Dynasty won this war, but in so doing undermined the norm with respect to the periphery (*Huang*). Consequently, the Quanrong tribes stopped paying respects to Zhou.<sup>53</sup> The Zhou Dynasty still carried on following the norms with respect to the states of Hou and Bin and did not wage war against them at will. The norms guiding inter-state relations shifted during this period from moral norms to double-standard norms.

It was when King Li took the throne in the year 858 BCE that the Zhou Dynasty violated norms with respect to feudal lords as well as to tribes on the periphery. King Li made no attempt to prevent members of the royal family from undermining the norm whereby feudal lords could share the marsh areas, which resulted in rebellions by several feudal lords.<sup>54</sup> By the time King Xuan took the throne in 827 BCE, the Zhou Dynasty leadership had become a tyranny, to the extent that it no longer observed norms with respect to feudal states such as the State of Lu that shared a common ancestry. King Xuan also violated the primogenitary norm by requiring the State of Lu to name Xi, the youngest son, as crown prince. Outraged, the

*Western Zhou History*, p. 453; Shanghai Normal University Ancient Materials Research Team, *Guo yu* (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1978), p. 4.

<sup>50</sup> Shanghai Normal University Ancient Materials Research Team, *Guo yu*, pp. 1–3.

<sup>51</sup> He Maochun, *A General History of Chinese Diplomacy*, p. 23.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23; Yang Kuan, *History of Western Zhou*, p. 453.

<sup>53</sup> Shanghai Normal University Ancient Materials Research Team, *Guo yu*, pp. 1–8.

<sup>54</sup> Yang Kuan, *History of Western Zhou*, pp. 840, 841, 849.

people of the Lu State killed Xi and named the eldest son, Boyu, as their monarch. King Xuan's response was to declare war on the State of Lu in 795 BCE (the 32nd year of his reign). He was the victor, but relations between the Zhou Dynasty and its feudal states worsened, and military conflicts became commonplace.<sup>55</sup> The conventional principles guiding inter-state relations evolved from double-standards to power norms. King You came to the throne in 781 BCE. He not only violated the primogenitary norm but deposed the crown prince and replaced him with a bastard child. King You also openly violated norms between allies. In 779 BCE, the third year of his reign, for the sake of pleasing his favourite concubine, King You lit the war beacons and fooled feudal lords into thinking nomads were about to attack.<sup>56</sup> In the aftermath of these events, feudal lords seldom followed alliance norms. Most of the Zhou allies refused to respond to King You's call for help when the Quanrong tribes invaded central China in 770 BCE. The Quanrong army eventually slew King You on Mount Li.<sup>57</sup>

### The Spring and Autumn Period

Chinese scholars generally argue that the main political difference between the Western Zhou and the Spring and Autumn Periods was that there was no hegemonic rivalry during the former period and that it was a main feature of the Spring and Autumn period.<sup>58</sup> Western scholars have a similar view on this difference, arguing: 'In the latter period of the Chou [Zhou] dynasty, there was considerable discrepancy between the official rules, traditions, and myths that were supposed to govern relations between political units and the actual behaviour of independent states . . . . But the practice during the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods did not accord with the myths and customs appropriate to the feudal order. In a system of many powerful, ambitious and independent states, such rules were anachronisms. Instead, the main units developed rules or customs that reflected the major political and military characteristics of the system.'<sup>59</sup> As treaties applied only to signatory states, double-standards appeared as the norm for inter-state relations. Norms for resolving conflicts within an alliance thus differed from those applicable to non-allied states.

<sup>55</sup> Huang Yongtang, *Guoyu Quanyi (Complete Translation of Guo Yu)*, p. 20; Yang Kuan, *History of Western Zhou*, p. 842.

<sup>56</sup> Yang Kuan, *History of Western Zhou*, p. 850.

<sup>57</sup> Gu Derong and Zhu Shunlong, *Chunqiu shi (History of the Spring and Autumn Period)* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2001), pp. 41–2; Yang Kuan, *History of Western Zhou*, p. 851.

<sup>58</sup> Gu Derong and Zhu Shunlong, *History of the Spring and Autumn*, p. 21; Yung Kuan, *Zhanguo shi (History of the Warring States)* (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2003), p. 2.

<sup>59</sup> K. J. Holsti, *International Politics: A Framework for Analysis* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc. 1995), p. 33.

In the early Spring and Autumn Period, the State of Qi and the State of Chu respectively established an alliance which became an important factor in the predominant influence of double-standard norms. The hegemonic bipolarity of the Qi and Chu replaced the unipolarity of the Zhou Dynasty in the Chinese inter-state system. To resolve hegemonic rivalry during their rise, the two states expanded their temporary military cooperation into durable political alliances which reinforced the stability of other alliances. In the year 651 BCE (9th year of the reign of Duke Xi of Qi State), the State of Qi established alliances with the States of Song, Lu, Wei, Xu, Cao and Zheng, all of whom reached a covenant that included principles on domestic affairs, diplomacy, ideology, and certain other fields. The covenant, for example, stipulated: 'Upon entering the alliance, all allies will forget past grudges',<sup>60</sup>—a provision which restricted members of the alliance from annexing one another. The alliance reiterated laws issued by the King of Zhou. For instance, it forbade obstructing rivers or springs, storing excessive grains, deposing the crown prince, marrying concubines, and women's political participation.<sup>61</sup> These stipulations improved political confidence among allies and also the consistence of their political system. Such norms as no military invasions between members of the alliance lessened wars among them and made the inter-state system far more stable than it had been under power norms.<sup>62</sup> Norms guiding relations within the alliance did not, of course, apply to relationships outside it, as manifest in the long-standing double-standard norms of the Kuiqiu Alliance. This was largely due to the State of Qi which, as leader of the alliance, consistently observed the covenant, and whose foreign policy was to annex only the lands of non-allies.

Chinese scholars generally argue that, 'War primarily aimed at hegemonic rivalry during the Spring and Autumn Period but at annexation during the Warring States Period'.<sup>63</sup> I argue that the main difference between the Spring and Autumn Period and the Warring States Period was not that the former lacked annexation, but that annexation was regarded as violation of behavioural norms in the former period but became both prevalent and legitimate in the latter period. In fact, the norm of no annexing began to change at the end of the Spring and Autumn Period rather than from the start of the Warring States period. The State of Chu annexed certain states which shared the same ancestors and became major powers, to the extent of declaring their monarchs as king. The State of Qin annexed Western Rong and became a major power. Duke Zheng of the Wu State, Duke Zhuang of the Zheng State, Duke Xian of the Jin State, and Duke Wen of the Jin State

<sup>60</sup> Hong Liangji, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan jie (Heckling the Spring and Autumn Period and Zu's Commentary)* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1987), p. 285.

<sup>61</sup> Gu Derong and Zhu Shunlong, *History of the Spring and Autumn Period*, p. 85.

<sup>62</sup> K. J. Holsti, *International Politics*, p. 34.

<sup>63</sup> Yang Kuan, *History of the Warring States*, p. 2.

all annexed the territories of neighbours. Annexation of defeated states had already become a general policy in the late period of hegemonic rivalry between the State of Wu and the State of Chu. When the State of Wu rose to be a hegemon, King Fuchai of Wu defeated the State of Yue but did not annex Yue. When the State of Yue later became hegemon, however, King Goujian of Yue, who harboured hatred for the Wu, adopted in 473 BCE a tyrant policy to annex the defeated State of Wu.<sup>64</sup> Scrupling to the norm of no annexation formed in the Spring and Autumn Period, the State of Yue returned some conquered territory to small states. The State of Yue was nevertheless the last hegemonic power of the Spring and Autumn Period, and its annexation of the State of Wu accelerated the evolution of annexation as a general norm. The shift from hegemonic rivalry without annexation to annexation was thus the process of progression from double-standard norms to power norms.

During the period of history from the Western Zhou to the Warring States Period, the evolution of inter-state norms in then Chinese state systems was as follows: moral norms → double-standard norms → power norms → double-standard norms → power norms. This process demonstrates that international norms do not evolve in one way or towards a predetermined direction.

## Pre-World War I to World War II

Before World War I, the UK was the world's leading power, and took the tyranny approach to its international leadership. It consistently adopted power principles in carrying out its global colonial expansion, thus promoting the power norm to that of global expansion.<sup>65</sup> The UK's power principles are illustrated by the incredibility of its foreign policy and violation of international treaties. In 1896, the UK publicly acknowledged its 'glorious isolation' policy, signifying that its foreign policy would never be bound by international treaties under any circumstances.<sup>66</sup> This policy formulated Britain's diplomatic custom of not being bound by any treaties. In 1898, the UK and Germany signed an agreement on dividing Portugal's colonies between them. One year later, the UK signed another agreement with Portugal stating that it would not invade any Portuguese colonies, thus violating its commitments with respect to Germany.<sup>67</sup> In 1904, the UK

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>65</sup> From 1902 to 1911, Britain's military expenses reached a peak, the expenses of the next largest military powers of Russia, Germany, and France each representing only two-thirds or three-fourths of it, and those of Austria-Hungary and Italy less than half. After the United States won the Spanish-American War in 1898 and Japan won the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, the power of both increased greatly but could by no means compare with England. See: Wang Shengzu, ed., *History of International Relations*, Vol. 3, pp. 357-8.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 329.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 334.



made military commitments to France and similar commitments in 1907 to Russia, both targeted at Germany. Just two years later in 1909 Britain engaged in negotiations with Germany for a naval agreement. The behaviour of British violations of international agreements is similar to that of King Xuan of the Zhou Dynasty in violating the norms of the Five Service System.

The UK led the field in keeping none of its promises, its behaviour encouraging other powers to ignore international treaties. Before World War I, violations of international treaties were universal. International treaties were used as an excuse, rather than as a basis, for a particular policy, and diplomatic fraud and betrayal were rife. For example, Italy was a core member of the alliance between Italy, Germany and Austria. After war broke out on July 28 1914, however, Italy backed out of the alliance and announced on August 3 its neutrality.<sup>68</sup> On July 9, the UK notified the German Ambassador to Britain that it was not an ally of France or Russia, and that it was not bound by any commitments to these two countries. Two days before the War broke out, Britain stated that it would remain neutral and not participate in any war. Since betrayal of alliances was a widely accepted international norm at that time, Germany believed Britain had reneged on its commitments to France and Russia. When the UK announced on July 29 that it would join the War, the German Emperor, Wilhelm II cursed the UK for its trickery.<sup>69</sup>

Other major states imitated the power principles that the UK adopted in expanding its colonies. Division of other states' territory and colonies became an international norm during that period, comparable to the norm of annexation during the Warring States period. The many wars fought during this time over occupation of colonies, expanding territory, and invading other's territorial sovereignty included the Spanish-American War (1898), the Boer War (1899–1902), the Eight Allied Powers Invasion of China (1900), the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905), the Second Moroccan Crisis (1907), the Italo-Turkish War (1911–1912), the Agadir Crisis (1911), the Russian Invasion of Mongolia (1911), the First Balkan War (1912–1913), the Second Balkan War (1913), and World War I (1914–1918).<sup>70</sup>

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 410.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 402–3.

<sup>70</sup> The Spanish-American War resulted in Spain ceding Cuba, Puerto Rico, the West Indies, Guam, and the Philippines to the United States. The Anglo-Boer War resulted in the Boer Republics losing their independence and agreeing to come under the sovereignty of the British Crown; the British Empire established the Union of South Africa by bringing together the Cape, Natal, Transvaal, and the Orange Free State. The Russo-Japanese War saw Russia give its leasehold rights to Port Arthur and the Southern part of Sakhalin Island and nearby islands to Japan, and caused it to recognize Korea as part of the Japanese sphere of interest. In 1910, Japan went on to officially annex Korea. The Italo-Turkish War resulted in Turkey recognizing Tripolitania and Cyrenaica as Italian possessions. After the First Balkan War, the Ottoman Empire gave up all of its land on the European Continent that ran west of a line drawn from the Aegean Sea to the Black Sea



After World War I, the United States quickly replaced the UK as the world's most powerful state. Although the United States started the transition from a tyrant state to a hegemon, it was not capable of providing a type of leadership any different from that of the UK.<sup>71</sup> This represents an ironic point of history. American President Woodrow Wilson initiated the fourteen point system of collective security which later became known as *The Charter of the League of Nations*. Its articles included preserving the territorial integrity, political independence, and national self-determination of member states.<sup>72</sup> But the US Congress ultimately opted to veto the Treaty of Versailles and the United States rejected the idea of joining the League of Nations proposed by Wilson. America's own decision thus deprived its leadership of the chance to establish new international norms. Instead, after World War I tyrant states like the UK, Japan, France, and Italy retained the guiding role within international norms.<sup>73</sup> In other words, tyrant leadership continued after World War I, and power norms maintained their predominant role in international politics.

Violations of international treaties continued to be a popular behavioural norm, and the use of war as a means of territorial expansion remained prevalent during the post-World War I period. This was an era of global warring states. None of the major powers observed international treaties, despite the signing of a number of treaties limiting states' use of force, including the 1919 *Covenant of the League of Nations*, the 1922 *Convention of Washington Naval Arms Limitation*, the 1928 *Treaty for the Renunciation of War*, and the 1929 *Moscow Protocol*. Moreover, there were 15 members of the League of Nations, including Germany, Japan, and Italy, withdrawing from it.<sup>74</sup> This clearly demonstrates the popularity and legitimacy during that period of ignoring international treaties. After the Great Depression in 1929, major powers dramatically increased military expansion with a view to expanding territories. Japan invaded northeast China in 1931 and north

(with the exception of Albania) and the Island of Crete to Montenegro, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece. After the Second Balkan War, Greece, and Serbia split Macedonia, the Ottomans recovered Adrianople, Bulgaria lost the land that it had won in the first Balkan War and also some of its own territory. The Eight Allied Powers Invasion of China saw Russia's occupation of China's three northeastern provinces, and the obtaining of Russia, Italy, Britain, and Austria-Hungary of concessions in Tianjin. After the Second Moroccan Crisis, the French Army occupied Algerian territory. After the Agadir Incident, France handed over 27,500 km<sup>2</sup> of its possessions in the Congo to Germany, while Germany gave a piece of land east of Lake Chad to France. Following the Russian invasion of Mongolia, Russia occupied Chinese territory in Tannu Uriankhai. See Wang Shengzu, ed., *History of International Relations*, Vol. 3, pp. 274–394.

<sup>71</sup> The 1922 Covenant of Naval Arms Limitation between the United States, England, France, Italy, and Japan stipulated that the ratio of their navies would be 5 to 5 to 3 to 1.75 to 1.75. See Wang Shengzu, ed., *History of International Relations*, Vol. 3, p. 118.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 90–1.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 84–91.

<sup>74</sup> An Guozheng, Guo Chongli and Yang Zhenwu, eds, *Dictionary of World Knowledge*, p. 549.

China in 1933. Italy invaded Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in 1935; Japan launched a full-scale invasion of China in 1937; Germany invaded Czechoslovakia the same year, and its invasion of Poland in 1939 marked the start of World War II.<sup>75</sup>

## Since the End of World War II

The history of international politics since World War II is usually divided into the Cold War and Post-Cold War Eras, according to different international configurations, namely bipolarity and unipolarity. The period might be taken, however, as a single historical epoch with respect to international norms because the same type of international norms prevailed throughout both eras. During the Cold War, the United States and the USSR were both leading states providing hegemonic leadership, and the predominant international norm was that of double standards. After the Cold War, United States became the sole super-power, but its leadership type did not change and double standards continued to be the predominant world norm.

The double standards norm predominant during the Cold War was similar to that characterizing the hegemonic competition between the States of Jin and Chu during the Spring and Autumn Period. The United States and the USSR, the Jin and the Chu were all hegemonies but not tyrants. With regards to observance of treaties, the United States might be compared with the State of Jin and the USSR with the State of Chu. During the Cold War, the United States cultivated pro-US regimes and the USSR pro-USSR regimes around the world. Both engaged in proxy wars but did not annex others' territories. Both also established multilateral and bilateral alliances and provided security and economic aids to allies. At the same time, both took many actions aimed at toppling governments in enemy states, to the extent of initiating wars against those states.

The similarity between the United States and the Jin State lies in the responsible policies each adopted towards their allies. The United States initiated the Marshall plan in 1948 to help its European allies and also established the NATO in 1949. It has not since mounted any military interventions on its allies. As a result, the Western camp retained a relative degree of unity throughout the Cold War.<sup>76</sup> As regards responsibility to allies, the USSR fell short of the United States. In 1948, it withdrew its forces from Yugoslavia, and it failed in 1950 to provide military assistance to North Korea. In 1958, the USSR unilaterally stopped carrying out aid treaties with China, and in 1956 and 1968 it militarily intervened in Hungary and

<sup>75</sup> Wang Shengzu, ed., *History of International Relations*, Vol. 5, pp. 59–62, 83–6, 148–9, 184–7, 277–380; Vol. 6, 1939–1945, pp. 4–5.

<sup>76</sup> An Guozheng, Guo Chongli and Yang Zhenwu, eds., *Dictionary of World Knowledge*, p. 984.

Czechoslovakia, both members of the Warsaw Pact.<sup>77</sup> The behaviour of the USSR thus failed to meet Xunzi's criteria for a qualified hegemon whereby: 'Once an alliance is formed, regardless of gains and losses, it shall be preserved.'<sup>78</sup> The inability of the USSR strictly to uphold moral norms with allies weakened the solidarity of the socialist camp, and wars among Asian communist states broke out in the 1960s and 1970s. The Warsaw Pact finally collapsed in April of 1991.<sup>79</sup>

During the Cold War, the United States and the USSR both adopted power norms in dealing with states that were not allies. To enlarge spheres of influence, they not only supported proxy wars in Asia, Africa, and Latin America but participated in wars, such as the Korean War (1950–1953), the Bay of Pigs (1959), the Vietnam War (1961–1973), the Afghanistan War (1979–1988), and the Persian Gulf War (1990–1991). The United States and the USSR approach towards non-allies strengthened the power norm among enemy states. Practice of power norms between enemies is also illustrated in wars between regional powers, such as the three wars between India and Pakistan (1948, 1965, 1971), the five wars in the Middle East between Israel and its neighbours (1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, 1982), the Sino-Indian War (1962), the war between Vietnam and Cambodia (1978–1979), the China–Vietnam military conflict (1979), the two wars between Iran and Iraq (1980–1988), and several military invasions mounted by South Africa on its neighbours.

Although the United States became the sole leading world power after the Cold War, its leadership retained the character of hegemony and it continued to practice double standards. The status of sole global leader gave the United States the chance to strengthen the double standards norm. For example, on the issue of separatism, the United States and Western states have reached an implicit understanding that they will not interfere in one another's domestic politics, yet maintain a policy of supporting separatist movements in non-Western states. On the issue of non-proliferation of missile technology, the US and Western states prevent proliferation among or to non-Western states, but not among Western states themselves. Despite the fact that Saudi Arabia and Myanmar have equally poor human rights records, Western states have imposed sanctions on Myanmar but not on Saudi Arabia, which is one of America's allies.

Since the end of the Cold War, so-called 'Democratic Peace', meaning Western states go to war against non-Western states but not amongst themselves, is a typical manifestation of the double standards norm. From 1990

<sup>77</sup> Wang Shengzu, ed., *History of International Relations*, Vol. 8, pp. 309–10; Vol. 9, pp. 105–7.

<sup>78</sup> Yan Xuetong and Xu Jin, eds., *Pre-Qin Chinese Thoughts on Foreign Relations*, p. 60.

<sup>79</sup> *World Affairs Almanac 1991/92*, p. 846.

to 2002, a total of 58 major armed conflicts occurred in 46 different places around the world—none of them between Western states.<sup>80</sup> Since 1990, there have been nine major international wars, the Persian Gulf War (1991), the Somalia War (1992), the Eritrea–Ethiopian War (1998), the War in Kosovo (1999), the War in Afghanistan (2001), the War in Iraq (2003), the Israeli invasion of Lebanon (2006), the War in Georgia (2008), and the War in Libya (2011). Most of these wars involved Western states attacking non-Western states. Among these nine wars, only two are between non-Western states; the remaining seven are between Western and non-Western states, six of which include NATO members.

During 2000–2008, the Bush administration’s unilateralist policy moved US hegemony towards something resembling tyranny, in that it ceased observing certain US-promoted international norms. For example, in 2001, the Bush administration unilaterally announced its withdrawal from the United States–USSR Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty;<sup>81</sup> in 2006 it signed a nuclear cooperation agreement with India, although India is not a party to the NPT Treaty.<sup>82</sup> In 2003, the United States initiated the War in Iraq without the authorization of the United Nations and even in the face of criticisms from NATO members. The foreign policy of the Bush Administrations hence had extremely negative impact on the evolution of international norms. During 2000–2008, history witnessed no progress in negotiations on arms control or disarmament.

## Future Evolution of International Norms

Based on the above theoretical and historical analysis, this section predicts the impact that changes in international leadership will have on the future evolution of international norms. That international norms undergo certain annual changes is a given. Critical impact on the evolution of international norms in the coming decades will likely stem from changes in the power distribution between the United States and China. The 2008 financial crisis accelerated China’s rise and greatly expanded the country’s global influence.

<sup>80</sup> Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Yearbook 2003: Armaments, Disarmament and National Security*, trans. China Association for Arms Control and Disarmament (Beijing: Shijie zhishi chubanshe, 2004), pp. 127–30. The definition of a large military conflict is a military conflict in which at least 1000 armed people are killed, see Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, *SIPRI Yearbook 2003: Armaments, Disarmament and National Security*, p. 140.

<sup>81</sup> Liu Huaqiu, ed., *Junbei konghi yu caijun shouce (The Handbook of Arms Control and Disarmament)* (Beijing: Guofang gongye chubanshe, 2000), pp. 280–81; Wen Deyi, ‘Meiguo chushi de daodan fangyu nengli yu yingxiang’ (‘America’s Primitive Missile Defence Capability and Its Impacts’), in *2005: Guoji junbei kongzhi yu caijun baogao (2005: International Arms Control and Disarmament Report)* (Beijing: Shijie zhishi chubanshe, 2005), p. 117.

<sup>82</sup> Pei Yuanying, ‘Mei Yin he hezuo xuanji’ (‘The Mystery of U.S.–India Nuclear Cooperation’), <http://theory.people.com.cn/GB/49150/49152/4193314.html>.

It is possible that the Chinese economy will outstrip that of the United States, in terms of size, by 2025, and that China's comprehensive national power will catch up with, or even surpass that of the United States by 2050. As such, this section will forecast possible changes in international norms in the coming fourteen years and from 2026 to 2050, from the perspective of differences between China and the United States in leadership capabilities.

### Different Leadership Capabilities

Differing from economic determinists, my own view—inspired by ancient Chinese philosophers—is that the leadership capabilities of the Chinese and American governments will determine the pace of power-gap shrinkage over the next fourteen years. The Chinese government has shown a stronger political mobilization and economic development capability in dealing with the 2008 financial crisis than the United States, while the US government has preserved its diplomacy and national defence advantages.

China's fast recovery from the 2008 crisis has, ironically enough, demonstrated that the Chinese communist government is more capable than the American capitalist government of managing the market economy. Having achieved high economic growth, China has started reforming its economy from an export-oriented model to one of domestic consumption. During the same period, the United States has struggled with slow growth, high unemployment, and sovereign credit downgraded by one notch from AAA.<sup>83</sup>

China has smoothly brought effective reform of the national leadership system, changing it from a life-long tenure to a five-year term. Representatives at the 2011 National Congress talked more than ever about improvements to social security, a minimum wage, medical insurance, and medical care. US Congress, meanwhile, has constrained Obama's health care reform policies, and Democrats have lost their majority of seats in the House of Representatives.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, China has mobilized its national resources to host an Olympic Games, becoming the first nation since 1993 to win more gold medals than the United States.<sup>85</sup>

It is, however, clear that the US government outweighs China diplomatically. Although Obama's diplomacy achievements are less eminent than those of the Reagan or the Clinton administration, they are nonetheless remarkable compared to those of the Bush administration. Obama has restored deteriorating relations with European allies, increased the

<sup>83</sup> John Detrixhe, 'U.S. Losses AAA Credit Rating as S&P Slams Debt Levels, Political Process', Bloomberg, 7 August 2011, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-08-06/u-s-credit-rating-cut-by-s-p-for-first-time-on-deficit-reduction-accord.html>.

<sup>84</sup> Rich Edson, 'Republicans to Take Majority in House of Representatives', FoxNews, November 2, 2010, <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2010/11/02/republicans-majority-house/>.

<sup>85</sup> '2008 Summer Olympics Medal Table', [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2008\\_Summer\\_Olympics\\_medal\\_table](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2008_Summer_Olympics_medal_table).

demand of its East Asian allies for assistance, and attained leadership in the global climate change talks. The Obama administration enjoys much better relations, in terms of both quantity and quality, with the rest of the world than does the Chinese government. The United States has more than seventy formal military allies while China has none.

There is no comparison between the military capability of China and the United States. Although the Obama administration made strategic mistakes in simultaneously fighting the three wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Libya, these wars also demonstrate the extent of the US government's military capability. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) has not been involved in a war since 1985, and few of its high ranking officers, let alone soldiers, have war experience. Waging three foreign wars at the same time is hence beyond the imagination of Chinese leaders.

The ways in which China and the US influence the world over the next few decades will largely depend on what kind of leadership they can provide. As the United States is now the only country in the world able to provide global leadership, many countries accept its captaincy. World expectations as to China's possible leadership diverge into three categories. One group, comprising countries such as Pakistan, Cuba, and Zimbabwe, hopes that China will take more international responsibility in balancing Western domination. The second group, which includes Tanzania, Yemen, and Laos, looks to China for more economic aid as a new leadership because, unlike that from the West, Chinese aid carries no political conditions. The third group includes countries such as the UK, Japan, and South Korea that worry China will take over global leadership position from the United States and so hope to engage China in Western community.

United States leadership today is one of hegemony based on the strategic credibility of its alliances. To shape a friendly international environment in which to rise, China needs to develop higher-quality relations than the United States. No world leading power is able to maintain friendly relations with every country; the core competition between China and the United States hence hinges on which has more high-quality friends in the world. To achieve that goal, China must provide a leadership of humane authority which will help win it more international support than the United States.

China may become as competitive in next 14 years as the United States, in terms of economic leadership, but not with regards to diplomacy. How long China takes to catch up with the diplomatic capability of the United States will depend largely on the policy of China's new leadership. Many misbelieve that China can only improve its foreign relations by dramatically increasing its economic aid. This is actually an economic determinist view which can be of little help to China. International support for a rising power springs, according to ancient Chinese philosophy, from the security



protection that it provides for weaker countries, and from making itself a role model state, rather than from giving economic aid. This means that China cannot win others' hearts if it is reluctant to provide security protection for its surrounding countries, and to shift its domestic priorities from economic development to establishing a harmonious society.

Making predictions about the type of Chinese or American leadership after 2012 is not easy, but one thing is clear: if China gains a new leader of the calibre of Emperor Wu of the Han Dynasty,<sup>86</sup> it may take over from the United States as the new world leader within one generation; and if a Roosevelt style of leadership emerges in the United States, America's world leadership will either continue or improve. In reality, enhancing China's world leadership and maintaining the US international leadership is a zero-sum game. Anyhow, the winner will have predominant influence on the evolution of international norms.

## 2012–2025

If China keeps up its 9% annual growth rate, the Chinese economy could possibly continue to surpass the US economy, in terms of GDP, before 2025. But as China's military capabilities lag far behind those of the United States it can hope only to reduce the gap between it and the United States; there is no chance in the next fourteen years that China can catch up the United States in this respect. This also means it is impossible for China's comprehensive national power to become equal to that of the United States by 2025. The implication is thus that US foreign policy will continue to have predominant influence on the evolution of international norms over the next 14 years. Before 2025, the relative decline in US power and changes in the views of American leaders will be the two main factors influencing America's foreign policy.

The relative decline of American power may result in its isolationism. During the Obama Administration, America's influence on international norms could come to mirror that of Wilson in the Post-World War I era. Obama has proposed idealistic principles to the international community but has been unable to obtain support for them from the US Congress. His inability to keep his promises to the international community will undermine US strategic credibility throughout the world and also observation among US allies of moral norms. Obama might fail to halt the relative decline of the United States, and the political election of a conservative as president after him is quite possible. This scenario will advance isolationism

<sup>86</sup> Emperor Wu (156 BC–87 BC) was the seventh emperor of the Han Dynasty, and ruled from 141 BCE to 87 BCE. He is best remembered for his effective governance, which made the Han Dynasty one of the most powerful states in the world at that time. He adopted Confucianism as the governmental ideology.



and unilateralism in the United States to the extent that the United States might undertake fewer international responsibilities and, for the sake of its own interests, withdraw from international treaties. This will mean a decline in America's positive impact and increase in its negative impact on the evolution of international norms.

Over the coming 14 years, the United States will become less committed to improving current international norms and more resistant to change. America will be far less active than it was in the 1990s in establishing world order. Although China will still have less influence than the United States on the evolution of international norms over the next 14 years, it may take more initiative than the United States in talking about new world order. To prevent China from guiding the evolution of international norms, the United States will likely adopt a policy of resisting reform of international norms. Bearing in mind that after the 2008 financial crisis, we saw the United States resist reforms to international financial institutions, America is also likely in the foreseeable future to act as an obstacle to reforms of international norms in other fields.

The author believes that the competition for leadership between China and the United States over the next 14 years will not be harmful to the world as long as mutual nuclear deterrence exists. For the sake of winning more friends around the world, these two giants must compete to provide the world with a more favourable leadership. That means that both countries must undertake more global responsibilities, provide their allies with more public goods and offer them more security protection and economic support. This type of competition may cause diplomatic tensions, but there is no danger of military clashes between them. China–United States competition in the foreseeable future will be different from that between the Soviet Union and the United States during the Cold War. Neither China nor the United States needs proxy wars to control strategic resources because of their advantages in science and technology. In general, their vying for international leadership will be more beneficial than harmful to the world community. The world should therefore embrace rather than express fear of this competition. Instead of skirting around their competitive relationship, China and the United States should demonstrate to the world the advantages of their different leaderships.

## 2026–2050

As for the period 2026–2050, many factors will have impact on changes in international norms; it is beyond our ability accurately to assess that far ahead in time how international norms will evolve. Instead, we look here specifically at how the process of China outstripping the United States with respect to comprehensive power might have impact on the evolution of international norms. If during this period, China's comprehensive national

power surpasses that of the United States, strategic conflicts between these two giants will intensify. A bipolar configuration is possible during that period, because the two superpowers will dramatically widen the power gap between the two of them and other major world powers. In the new bipolar world, if China's comprehensive power eclipses that of the United States, its impact on the evolution of international norms will be greater than that of the U.S. All in all, China's impact will be determined by both the type of its leadership and the speed of surpassing the U.S. comprehensive power.

China's comprehensive power completely surpassing that of the United States in a 10-year period within 2025–2050 implies a process that will occur under a single leader; also that China will adopt proactive policy towards reforming international norms. China will not shy away from talking about a new world order, and might consistently propose new norms. As the largest gap between China and the United States is in economy, China might have the strongest influence on reform of international norms in the economic field. If, on the other hand, it takes China 25 years to surpass the United States, this implies a process that will happen under the governance of three to four leaders. In that case, China will be far less enthusiastic about reforming international norms. China's influence over international security norms might be much weaker than that over economic norms if it only slightly surpasses the American military capability.

There is no way of knowing whether China's leadership from 2025 to 2050 will be one of humane authority, hegemony, or tyranny. The life experiences of then political leaders, however, might help us to make a guess. The periods 2025–2035 and 2035–2050 will see those born in the 1970s and 1980s, respectively, take control of China's foreign policy. Both of these generations have grown up during the period of reform and opening-up and will be supportive of humanism, materialism and pragmatism. Their preference for humanism will mean support for the norms of humanitarian intervention; of materialism for norms of limited violence for the sake of economic interests; and of pragmatism for norms of pluralism for the sake of transition from double-standard norms to multiple-standard norms. Based on Chinese traditional culture, foreign policy debate might occur between the schools of humane authority and hegemony as China obtains to the world leading position. We cannot know which group will drive China's foreign policy, but we do know that China will promote moral norms if the humane authority school prevails, and that it will otherwise strengthen double-standard norms due to hegemonic thinking.

The evolution of international norms is determined by both international and domestic factors. This article looks only at how international leadership influences the evolution of international norms. As the leadership of a leading state does not constitute a sufficient condition for the majority of states

to follow a relevant norm, we must also consider the role that domestic factors in secondary powers play in bringing to bear impact on the evolution of international norms. We need also to study the mechanisms for states of humane authority, hegemony and tyranny, to develop their preferences for a given norm.