Domestic Norms and Foreign Policy: A Research Note

By Assist. Prof. Dr. Husrev Tabak*

Abstract

The constructivist research agenda on norms has been dominated by international norms research with studies only rarely focusing on domestic norms. The research agenda on domestic norms, however, is dominated by the use of norms in explaining the domestic construction of foreign policies. Domestic norms’ internationalisation and functioning in an overseas setting has thus been a neglected research domain. This research note, based on the experience of the author in his doctoral research on domestic norms, has been written to shed some light on domestic norms research and to encourage more studies in the field. Accordingly, the paper, while reflexively visiting the relevant literature, brings about answers to the issues debated around the following questions: ‘How could an existent norm that is guiding a foreign policy practice be identified’? And ‘how can the overseas diffusion and implications of a domestic norm be traced and reported’? The responses to these questions will show the reader where to start a domestic norm-guided foreign policy enquiry and how to trace internationalisation of domestic norms thus the functioning of foreign policy-guiding domestic norms in an overseas setting.

Keywords: Domestic Norms, Foreign Policy Analysis, Norm-guided Foreign Policy, Overseas Norm Diffusion, Socialisation.

* Dr. Hüşrev Tabak is Assist. Prof. of International Relations at Recep Tayyip Erdoğan University in Turkey. He holds M.A. in Sociology and Politics from UCL (University College London) and Ph.D. in Politics from the University of Manchester. He is the author of the “Kosovar Turks and Post-Kemalist Turkey: Foreign Policy, Socialisation, and Resistance” (I.B.Tauris, 2016). His research interests include norms, ethnicity, ethno-politics, and foreign policy analysis.
Domestic norms – a neglected research domain

In IR, the norm scholarship focuses its attention chiefly on international norms. Looking simply at the most recent literature reviews by Hoffman, Windmaier and Park, Wunderlich, and Hofferberth and Webber will reveal this self-evidently. Several reasons could be listed for this. The first and the foremost reason would be that international norms matter to more countries and localities and most of the time changes of an international norm affect several state and non-state actors. Domestic norms on the other hand emerge most of the time ‘isolated’ from the international environment. This, however, should not invoke the sense that norm emergence in general is confined to the domestic processes. International, transnational, or regional processes and mechanisms are also exemplified intensely in the literature as the creators or builders of norms. Secondly, concomitant to the strengthening of global civil society and to the broadening of the agenda of international governmental organisations towards issues concerning depravities of humans in terms of rights and resources for survival, international norm dynamics have come to be challenged and restructured by multi-actor involvements. Therefore, along with governments, non-state actors including advocacy networks and governmental organisations alike have become overwhelmingly involved in norm construction and diffusion and have declaredly acted as teachers of norms. Domestic norms, at this juncture, have come to the scene mostly as the ones subject to be replaced by international norms as a result of international governmental and NGO entrepreneurship. Thirdly, domestic norms have appeared to be less salient in the international arena than international norms. This might be because of the fact that domestic norms are often debated and challenged with reference to domestic cultures and values, on the other hand, international norms are presented to be catering to the whole of humanity. In relation to this, fourthly, since norms are present in different forms in different societies, cultures, institutions, or states, the emergence of domestic norms has become contextual and dynamically variable. This has resulted in scholars qualifying norm emergence and the relevant processes differently.

Yet, it should also be borne in mind that, as acknowledged in the literature, most of the time international norms first emerge domestically and become international ones as a result of norm cascade. In Finnemore and Sikkink’s words: “[m]any international norms began as domestic norms and become international through the efforts of entrepreneurs of various kinds”. Christine Ingebritsen exemplifies this in her study on the domestic construction of global norms such as the norms of eco-politics, conflict resolution, and aid provisions with reference to the unique domestic structures of Scandinavian states.

Nevertheless, since the norm scholarship focuses its attention chiefly on international norms, the mechanisms and dynamics of domestic norms’ functioning remains under-researched, particularly the dynamics of international mobilisation and overseas functioning. Accordingly, those who studied domestic norms have been mostly interested in explaining the domestic institutional and cultural sources of change or sustenance in foreign policies. Thus most of the studies are focused on the emergence and institutionalisation of domestic norms and the ability of norms to mould decision making in foreign policy and national interests.
norms’ cross-border diffusion and functioning via the foreign policy mechanisms however have had relatively less attention. Among the rare studies conducted are those by Anne-Marie Burley\(^{11}\) and Robert Herman though even these are far from presenting a complete story of how domestic norms are functioning overseas. Burley, for example, studied the norms of the New Deal, which directed attention to liberal social welfare and institutional design programmes in the domestic realm and their role in US foreign policies in the post-WWII era. As she suggests, this shift in domestic politics had eventually led to the establishment of liberal international institutions at the international level at the behest of the United States. Consequently, the norms of New Deal became internationally consequential after gaining a high degree of validity in domestic politics.\(^{12}\) Robert G. Herman argues that during the Mikhail Gorbachev era “Soviet international policy was the product of cognitive evolution and policy entrepreneurship by networks of Western-oriented in-system reformers coincident with the coming to power of a leadership [refers to Gorbachev here] committed to change”.\(^{13}\) It was, therefore, the dominance of the norm of ‘New Thinking’ that promoted the cognitive evolution of intellectual and policy-making circles and eventual policy changes. Moreover, Herman argues that adherence to the norm of New Thinking in USSR meant that “Gorbachev actively encouraged Warsaw Pact governments to emulate Moscow in introducing greater liberalization in economic and political life”.\(^{14}\) The New Thinking therefore was diffused, thanks to governmental involvement, to other states.

Surprisingly, a serious contribution to the study of domestic norms came from the peace research literature. Despite the fact that most of the time the discussions were similarly focused on the socialisation of domestic politics into international norms and on domestic norm contestation, the literature managed to demonstrate accurately that the same norm has similar policy implications in both domestic and foreign policies – something that the norms literature in IR would do well to learn from.

Peter Trumbore and Mark A. Boyer, for instance, argue that “[t]he democratic peace literature essentially argues that the norms inherent in democratic societies, particularly those of peaceful dispute resolution, are transferred to the international arena, resulting in the peaceful resolution of international conflicts”.\(^{15}\) Here, the emphasis is on that “states duplicate patterns of domestic politics in the international arena, applying the same political norms in both their domestic and international affairs”.\(^{16}\) This process is called ‘normative transfer’\(^{17}\) suggesting that “the normative/cultural explanation for the democratic peace rests on the contention that states’ domestic political culture and norms are externalized as international behaviour”.\(^{18}\) Accordingly, for example, “states sharing peaceful norms are more peaceful in their interactions” or “internal norms supporting the subjugation or active dehumanization of domestic groups make the subjugation of other state actors likewise acceptable”.\(^{19}\) Caprioli and Trumbore explain this situation in their important work as follows “higher levels of discrimination against ethnic minorities increase the likelihood of violent state behavior when engaged in international disputes”.\(^{20}\) In another version of this thesis, for instance, Hayes Jarrod argues that “[d]emocratic states behave in the international system according to domestic norms” suggesting that democratic states’ projection of their domestic norms onto the international system “create a zone of shared norms that enables peaceful transactions” thus empower the arising of the democratic peace.\(^{21}\) In another example Edwards et al., argue that in the example of democratic peace and particularly at the regional level “states tend to externalize norms that characterize their domestic political environment”, which both increases the number of democracies in a region and the importance given to democratic norms in that specific region.\(^{22}\) Equally relevant to them, an opposite dynamic is also promoted as possible: “in regions with a larger percentage of autocracies, the importance of democratic norms will be slight. In these regions, autocratic norms like coercion and repression will dominate”.\(^{23}\) Accordingly, for Edwards et al., similar to democratic norms, authoritarian domestic norms have been externalized, particularly at the regional level.
Though the extensive focus on democratic norms within the peace studies is partly obscuring a fuller understanding of domestic norms’ internalisation. Edwards and colleagues’ calling to attention the dissemination of authoritarian domestic norms at the regional level suggests that such theorizing would be applicable to other domestic norms too. Here a problem emerges because of the fact that democratic norms’ domestic character is contested; as they are in essence international norms, their transforming into domestic norms and later functioning in foreign policy is not theorized in peace studies. However, the link established among domestic norms, foreign policy and domestic norms’ externalization in the peace studies is indeed helpful for us to think about other domestic norms’ internationalisation and domestic norms’ having of similar policy implications on both domestic and foreign policies. This link is a guide also in studying other domestic norm contexts where domestic norms are not suggested to be diffusing outwards and impacting upon the ‘entire international system’. This is important because most studies of international/domestic norm interaction are much more focused on the big-picture – that is, they are focused on how a domestic norm of one or more powerful actors diffuse out and affect all or most other actors. The literature tends to neglect these smaller yet still-important processes taking place within more-discrete contexts, like within regions or between members of a single ethnic group which can be found in several different states.

With all these in mind, in order to contribute to a better understanding of domestic norms and foreign policy interaction, I conducted a doctoral-level research on domestic norms’ internationalisation and overseas implications based on first-hand information I collected between 2012 and 2014 during my scoping and fieldwork visits to Kosovo (and partly Turkey). Within the scope of my domestic norm enquiry, I studied the emergence and subsequently diffusion of post-Kemalist norms from Turkey to the ethnic Turkish locality in Kosovo via foreign policy mechanisms, as well as the local responses to the functioning of these post-Kemalist norms in Kosovo. I thus had a chance to elaborate the domestic norm mechanisms during norm emergence, diffusion, and later functioning in an overseas setting, in the scope of which my data and findings led me to test, challenge, and confirm certain theoretical and methodological prepositions within the norm literature regarding domestic norm processes and foreign policy formation and conduct. I am writing this research note to share some of these findings, particularly the methodological and theoretical implications, with the reader. I believe that the way I dealt with the methodological and theoretical challenges pertaining to norms I came across throughout my foreign policy research will shed some light on future research on the issue of domestic norms and their internationalisation via foreign policy mechanisms. This research note, accordingly, reflexively visits the relevant literature and brings about answers to the issues debated around the following questions: (i) How can one be sure about the presence of a norm (how could an existent norm be identified)? (ii) How can the overseas diffusion and implications of a domestic norm be traced and reported? My response to the former question will show the reader where to start, while to the latter will facilitate tracing the internationalisation of foreign policy-guiding domestic norms and their functioning in an overseas setting.

Where to start a domestic norms research: methodological challenges

There exists a consensus among the norm scholarship that there is a general problem in the measurement of norms and that there are theoretical and methodological challenges the studies on norms encounter and have to be dealt with.

Kowert and Legro inform us about four of these. The first challenge is about “how one can be certain that a norm is present”, in other words, how can we know about norms? For them, there are two main positions in the literature: The first group places emphasis on ‘what actors do’ in order to figure out whether actor behaviour complies with the norms or not. In
the second approach, scholars focus on what actors say and how they justify their actions. A third and alternative approach proposed by the authors is related to the necessity “to study both rhetoric and behaviour over time”. The second challenge, Kowert and Legro further argue, is that too many norms may be present simultaneously and “multiple norms can influence actors – with competing or even contradictory prescriptions… [therefore] it is difficult to predict which norms will be most influential”. To overcome this, they propose integrating different levels of analysis. However, as they observe, scholars more often prefer to stick to one level (either domestic or international) to transcend this problem. The third challenge is that norms account for both continuity and change. Holding a constructivist position may help here since such an approach studies the interaction among agency, structure, and action overtime and provides the relevant methodological tools to study both the change and the continuity. Finally, Kowert and Legro argue that “specifying the relationship between normative and material worlds” is difficult, meaning that measuring whether the norms or material factors are influencing the actor behaviour is hard. Here the relation of norms to material reality becomes important along with the material and normative environment of the actors.

There are other scholars dealing with the problem of measuring norms. Their propositions sometimes overlap with those of Kowert and Legro. Among them, Goertz and Diehl propose a norm measurement model. To measure the presence and functioning of norms, their model firstly identifies the “behaviours that are congruent with the norm as well as those that violate its prescriptions”; secondly they propose looking at the “political and de-ontological history of the norm”; thirdly, they take the meaning and character of norms as stable as possible because “although norms change, they do so usually quite slowly and the weight of the past is strong in determining the current status of the norm”; and, lastly, they consider that the “strength of the norm varies according to the actor it is supposed to influence”. One prominent scholar in the field, Peter Katzenstein, suggests that it is the institutionalisations of certain practices, in governmental and/or public sectors that reveal the norms. Böekle and colleagues similarly suggest interrogating and uncovering the tacit and hidden or even explicit political and institutional discourses to identify the norms those drive actor behaviour. Some of these indicators include the constitutional and legal order of a society, party programmes and election platforms, parliamentary debates, and survey data.

In a similar vein, Annika Björkdahl poses the question how it is empirically possible to recognize a norm?. She suggests that this question is necessary to raise because “there is only indirect evidence of the existence of a norm”. For her,

[i]he influence of norms can… be studied by analysing the norm-induced pattern of behaviour… [and] because norms by definition are shared and intersubjective and relate to shared moral assessments… evidence for the existence of norms can be found in the discourse addressing a particular behaviour, i.e. rhetoric. Because norms are held collectively, they are often discussed before a consensus is reached… The manner in which states talk about norms is often as important, if not more so, than how they act. Hence, an exclusive focus on action would recognise norms only after states decided to adhere to the norm in question or act upon it.

She therefore offers two ways to measure norms: (i) Analysing the norm-induced patterns of behaviour (which is also and interchangeably called norm-guided behaviour or norm-driven foreign policy) and (ii) analysing the discourses addressing a particular behaviour. A similar position is taken by Finnemore and Sikkink; as they argue norms provide justifications for action and leave a trail of communication that can be studied. Nonetheless, in tandem with Goertz and Diehl, they favour conceptual precision in meaning and content that for them “is essential for both meaningful theoretical debate and defensive empirical work”. Differing from these, however, Björkdahl – in line with Kowert and Legro’s work – suggests that keeping the focus merely on action is not always feasible to conducting research on, since
talking about a norm might be more important than acting upon it. Therefore, for Björkdahl, looking at the process of reaching a consensus would enable a researcher to begin such a research project.

Likewise, Audie Klotz suggests that norms could be identified “not solely through behavioural outcomes but also through communicative processes”. Hence “by analysing communication, we can identify norms nonautologically through both justifications and actions”. Therefore, to understand the communicative interaction “we need to analyse actors’ words and intensions separately from their behaviour”. In other words, “examining discourse”, particularly in terms of finding out the prevailing discourse “is a key area” to trace the policy process and for “applying process-tracing methodologies”.

To Ann Florini, in order to identify whether a behaviour is driven by a norm, one should firstly seek whether the action is a result of an “obligation”. Moreover, the researcher may seek whether the oughtness of the action is shared/recognized by both the actor and the external audience; because the source of legitimacy is both the internal and external audience. Therefore, whether a behaviour is considered as legitimate evokes the functioning of a norm. Identifying legitimate kind of behaviours thus may help to start an enquiry on the functioning of norms. Ann Florini’s position differs from Annika Björkdahl on two points. Firstly, Björkdahl considers only the internal audience (or those who have to reach a consensus to act) while Florini considers both the internal and external audience and their sense of legitimacy regarding the performance of behaviour. Secondly, while Björkdahl argues that action is not always necessary to be taken and that the discursive debates of action are enough; Florini, on the other hand, clearly states that norms are about behaviours and to be able to start an analysis the behaviour has to be performed. A ‘logic of action’ choice matters here.

Related to this choice, Wiener shifts the focus to one of the logics, the logic of contestedness, in the scope of which norms are suggested as being contested by default; therefore, the meaning of norms and their validity cannot be assumed as stable in all cultural contexts. Wiener argues, accordingly, that “while norms may be considered as valid and just under conditions of interaction in one cultural context, that perception cannot be generalized”. In this logic, how then can one be sure about the presence of a norm? Having focused mostly on established and powerful norms such as human rights, democracy or rule-of-law, Wiener suggests that it is the contestation for the validity that invokes the norm; accordingly, they are the dynamics of formal validity, social recognition and cultural validation, in which the meaning-in-use of the norm is enacted and debated, that enable us to observe the functioning of norms. Such validity processes are necessary to observe because “norms entail an inherently contested quality and therefore acquire meaning in relation to the specific contexts in which they are enacted… [which also suggests that] norm contestation is a necessary component in raising the level of acceptance of norms.”

Panke and Petersohn, on the other hand, having treated norms as rule-like self-evident procedures, remind us of the necessity of precision of meanings when explaining the degeneration of norms. This is because, to them, “precise norms have detailed procedures without complex undefined concepts, without overlapping regulations, and have precisely defined applicatory scopes since they do not grant exceptions”. In their approach both violation and the cascade of non-compliance are observable, therefore, discussions about those practices reveal the presence of norms. Norms, however, can no longer be traceable when new practices are “no longer framed as non-compliance”, which comes to mean that a norm is degenerated.

Therefore, as the literature suggests there are several methodological problems, one of the key ones of which relates to measuring norms and being sure about the presence of a norm. The debate centres on treating norms as material settings or not. Treating norms as material
settings – considering norms as rules making states obliged to act in certain ways – definitely makes them observable. This is because, such reasoning suggests that violating a norm will incite punishment and thus simply tracing the constraining and punishment mechanisms would reveal the norm.\textsuperscript{52} Such a position may overcome all of the above listed pitfalls. However, it comes with its own baggage of methodological dilemmas. This is because in such studies norms are depicted as the \textit{causes} of certain types of behaviours “which can be ascertained analogously to that of Newtonian laws governing the collision of two bodies”.\textsuperscript{53} This means that if a norm is present, the foreign policy or behavioural outcome is predetermined; both interests and preferences are fixed. The norm in this sense loses its capacity to possess an independent explanatory power.

Approaching norms as ideational settings, on the other hand, reduces the methodological dilemmas, as well as providing tools to overcome measurement issues and to increase norms’ explanatory capacities. Taking norms as contested by default, as Wiener does, however, further blurs any identification and measurement attempt. While ignoring the contested character of norms brings several other methodological handicaps, embracing it as the sole explanatory variable in measuring norms provides little help. The above-listed ways to transcend the methodological problems regarding identifying or measuring the norms – such as examining the discourses addressing a particular behaviour, analysing the norm-induced patterns of behaviour, studying the consensus reaching processes, and tracing the institutionalisations of certain practices – can thus lead us towards conducting more coherent studies on norms. To be sure, this is what I have seen in my own research.

Having admitted that there is no direct evidence for the presence of norms and that the meanings are nonetheless still contested\textsuperscript{54} and ambiguous\textsuperscript{55}, I argue that assuming a certain level of precision in their meaning is necessary to identify norms.\textsuperscript{56} With this insight, one is able to attribute the same meanings to the practices and patterns of repetition. Moreover, I have drawn an important conclusion from my examination that diffusion of norms to an overseas setting and the following socialisation practices also function as the stage where norm presence could be validated and clearly observed. This is because the behavioural, discursive, and representative trails of practices (either in the form of compliance or resistance) left by the functioning of norms are evidently visible and recognizable during this stage. In this sense, I have seen that Björkdahl’s suggestions relating to tracing norms-induced foreign policy practices are certainly facilitative in identifying norms.

As an exemplification of this, accordingly, in my own research, I have identified four dominant post-Kemalist domestic norms relevant to Turkey’s imagining of the kin communities abroad; namely Ottomania, de-ethnicized nationhood, Turkish Islam, and Islamic Internationalism. I did so through interrelatedly examining communicative processes and prevailing discourses, and tracing the patterns of behaviour over time, which suggested to me the possible norm-induced patterns of behaviour. Accordingly, the first norm, \textit{Ottomania}, suggests that over the course of the last two to three decades the Ottoman Empire and culture have become reference points for institutional, cultural, historical, political, and even in artistic expressions in Turkey. This has been reflected in popular culture, fashion, and architecture and to the very formulation of political solutions to on-going ethno-religious problems in the country. Indeed, the Ottomans became a point of reference and justification in managing inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations, in reimagining both the co-national and kin communities abroad, and in developing relevant policies towards these communities. Accordingly, both in domestic and foreign policy imaginations, the idea of ‘Ottomans’ (or \textit{Ottomania} as anthropologist Jenny White\textsuperscript{57} calls it) has gradually become a prominent cognitive frame.

\textit{De-ethnicized nationhood}, the second norm, suggests that, in the last two decades, the idea of ethnicity has lost its weight in policy-making as the main reference point in Turkey and that there emerged a de-ethnicized tendency in defining the broader Turkish nation. With this process, the Ottoman-Islamic sources of Turkish nationhood were revived and ethno-
nationalist references were minimized. Turkishness is now used frequently devoid of ethnic connotation.

As the third norm, *Turkish Islam* refers to the post-Kemalist practices relating to the authenticity of the ‘Turkish practice of Islam’, which reveals that from the post-1980s onwards, state-bodies and religious groups have championed and promoted a certain way of performing Islam both within and outside of Turkey. This manifests itself, for instance, in the reaction of religious groups’, political parties’, and governments’ approach to the threat of ‘Wahhabism’. This is also related to the Ottoman and Turkish Islamic cultural heritage abroad. Turkey’s religious authority (Diyanet) and many religious groups thus share a concern for conveying a ‘Turkish way of practicing Islam’ abroad.

Finally, the *Islamic Internationalism* suggests that in post-1980 Turkey, cross-border concerns extended beyond a focus entirely on ethnic kinship and there slowly began to emerge a religiously-based and ummah-oriented sense of solidarity. State-level concerns for Bosnian and Albanian Muslims, Iraqi Kurds, and Palestinians, and the sense of Islamic solidarity shown by NGOs from Turkey and people during the humanitarian crises in Muslim countries of South East Asia, the Caucasus, the Balkans and Africa indicate that the idea of *ummah* has been revitalized. This coincides with geographical rediscovery of the ummah. Accordingly, seeing that this internationalist concern for Muslim communities has been institutionalised, the source of solidarity between Turkey and ethnic Turks abroad has, to some extent, become focused more on a sense of Muslim identity and constituted by an *Islamic internationalist* concern.

In identifying these four norms, the behavioural, discursive, and representative practices have altogether been traced, yet it was particularly the discourses of legitimizing (justifying) or denouncing that left an ample trail of communication to be traced and which facilitated my examination. Accordingly, these post-Kemalist discourses, such as recognizing the ethnic and confessional diversity in Turkey, or as suggesting and envisioning a new multicultural form of state-society and inter-communal relations both inside and outside the country – the justifications of which have been based on denouncing the crises of Kemalism – have become common practice. Moreover, this new multiculturalism, for instance, has resulted in the lifting of restrictions on use of Kurdish and other minority languages and paved the ways for the restoration of the destruction wrought on inter-communal relations in the country by Kemalism. Indeed, this has replaced the suppressive Kemalist-inspired nation-building policies, with a bold emphasis on the sense of Islamic and Turkish/Ottoman civilisational responsibilities. This led me to conclude that while Kemalist norms suggests a nationalist, homogenous, societally and ideologically exclusive country and set of actions, post-Kemalist norms stimulate a multicultural, anti-nationalist, atavist (Ottoman nostalgia), diverse, and mostly Muslim identity-driven foreign policy actions.

Nevertheless, my tracing of the trails of the functioning of such norms in foreign policy was fruitful and made me further confident about the presence of post-Kemalist norms. This is because the behavioural, discursive, and representative trails left by the functioning of post-Kemalist norms are evidently visible and recognizable during this stage. Accordingly, (post-Kemalist) Turkey, in its relation to the ethnic Turkish community in Kosovo, framed the Ottomans as a model for the peaceful coexistence of different ethnicities and promoted it as a cure to the virulent nationalism, which had led to war in the Balkans in the 1990s. The idea of the Ottoman Empire was, accordingly, presented as the solution to the challenge of nation-building in post-war Kosovo. Moreover, Turkey did not show any concern for the ethnic Turkish community’s expectations for a bold ethno-politics, but rather acted upon anti-nationalism and championed the idea of going beyond ethnicity through the introduction of frames such as religious brotherhood, religious identity, and *ummah* to the ethnic Turkish community.
As a final point, however, while all these patterns of practice were convincing enough to highlight the presence and functioning of post-Kemalist norms in both domestic and foreign policies, it was a methodological choice, which made my scrutiny conclusive. I thus argue that in order to be able to identify norms, a certain level of precision in their meaning is necessary; this is because only then can the same meanings be attained to practices and patterns of repetition. This argument, consequently, necessitates holding mostly a logic of appropriateness – at least in relation to the debates on the meaning of norms. Such position holds particular importance for domestic norms. This is because domestic norms – unlike international norms – tend to be more ambiguous and to be harder to identify. It is even harder to ‘name’ a domestic norm. Indeed, unlike the international norms, in a domestic norms scrutiny once the norm scholar starts observing patterns of meaningful practices, s/he may be required to name them, thus to ‘invent’ them, which brings several other methodological concerns in to existence. At this point, as a ‘writer’ of norms, it was me who ‘named’ the above listed repetitive patterns of practices as post-Kemalist norms (of Ottomania, de-ethnicized nationhood, Turkish Islam, and Islamic Internationalism). Therefore, and following Engelkamp and Glaab58, I shall admit that others might have written these norms differently. This would have been the case especially if morality and moral responsibility would have come to be attached to thinking about and writing of the norm, which I clearly abstained from. Morality has become an issue only in reporting how entrepreneurs justify their enacting of norms, other than as an intrinsic feature to norms.

Tracing domestic norms’ overseas mobilisation: theoretical challenges

Once the norm under scrutiny is identified or at least the trails of the functioning of it become clearer and traceable, for the researcher, an equally complex process begins; tracing the mobilisation of the domestic norms. Not every norm has implications in foreign policy, therefore, it is assumed that the IR researcher is intrinsically in search of norms concerning foreign policy and of diffusive actions making norms gain international mobilisation. This process is mostly studied under the mechanism of norm diffusion or cascade. Having agreed that it is indeed such mechanisms which are functioning, they alone are incapable of explaining the translation of norms into practices of overseas socialisation. I argue that they are rather the inherit characteristics of norms and the norm-induced practices (as Björkhdahl calls them) that provide such mobilisation. Accordingly, in the literature the translation of norms into [foreign] policy practices has been explained mostly by addressing the role of norms in policy-making. Accordingly, several roles or functions have been attributed to norms in IR, which are grouped around the subscription to a logic of action. For instance, the followers of the logic of consequentialism (mostly the realists and liberals in IR) suggest that norms determine the behaviours of states in the international arena, they therefore embody the qualities and the relevant coercive mechanisms to mould the decisions of actors, which come to mean that the conclusions of actions of actors are predetermined.59 The translation of the dominant norms into foreign policy practice, in this view, is explained via the idea that norms function as rules that govern behaviour and that foreign policy is thus simply a rule-guided action. The logic of appropriateness (shared mostly by the mainstream constructivists in IR), on the other hand, suggests that norms have two core roles regarding the actor behaviour – they regulate the behaviour through setting standards or collective expectations for conduct and construct the identities and interests of the actors on which such expectations are built.50 In foreign policy, therefore, the translation of a norm to action comes to mean that a government will act based on its identity and on the collective expectations intrinsic to or inherent in the norm itself. Here identifying the collective expectations and the actor-identity may well reveal the norm. The logic of arguing, subscribed to by critical constructivists, thirdly, suggests that norms are the means by which actors “pursue goals, share meanings, communicate with each other, criticize assertions, and justify actions”.61
Thus norms, as argumentative constructs, both give meaning to actions along with guiding behaviour. The meaningful actions in foreign policy for both the conductor and the addressee are the norm-driven ones, thus the meaning reveals the norm. The logic of contestedness (held by postmodern constructivists), finally, suggests that “norms may achieve a degree of appropriateness reflected by changing state behaviour”; yet, since they are contested, their role in the conduct of the behaviour becomes contextual and depends on cultural validation. Norms, accordingly, reveal the contestation, argumentation and negotiation in foreign policy making and vice versa.

These roles therefore are facilitative in understanding how norms are translated into policy practices. Studying the role of norms therefore gives clues about the functioning of norms and mostly explains the formation of norm-guided foreign policy. This however remains inconclusive in tracing and explaining the overseas mobilisation of the norms. Here, as I have seen in my own domestic norm enquiry, I must mention what is imperative and carry explanatory capacity for norm mobilisation, that is, to understand and identify the functions of norm-guided behaviours (policy conduct). Here, foreign policy is suggested to be composed of at least two intertwined processes: policy formation and policy conduct. The role of norms alone is mostly explanatory for domestic construction of foreign policy. To explain the norm-centred results and the constitutive ideational consequences of foreign policy conduct, the functions of norm-guided behaviours need to be identified and traced.

I have identified (and subsequently tested in my research) at least five functions of norm-guided behaviour: (i) norm-guided behaviour is a meaningful action and denotes the intentions of the conductor; (ii) norm-guided behaviour invokes the identity of the policy conductor; (iii) norm-guided behaviour conveys/transmits the norm; (iv) norm-guided behaviour urges the endorsement of the norm by the target actor/s; and (v) norm-guided behaviour leads target agents to internalise new roles, identities, and interests, therefore, it has a constitutive function. These functions therefore enable us to trace the ‘influences’ of domestic norms abroad and constitute a response to the question of how I traced and reported the internationalisation and mobilisation of the norms I studied in my own research.

According to the first function, a norm-driven foreign policy as a guided-action is a meaningful act for both the conductor and the receiver parties and even for the third parties. In relation to this, a norm-driven foreign policy, as the second function, becomes a representative of state/collective identity, which is invoked by the action and perceived by the receiver agent. Therefore, once a norm starts guiding behaviour, concomitantly, the attributed meaning and the constructed collective identity accompany the behaviour and become indicated and enacted by the conduct of the action. The third function of a norm-driven foreign policy is to convey a norm. Accordingly, for instance, Audie Klotz presents a self-evident example of norm conveyance by norm-guided behaviour. She explains that in South Africa it was both domestic and international pressures that ended the racist apartheid regime in 1994. As soon as the norm of racial equality became embraced globally, its teachings were translated into sanctions policies against South Africa. These policies forced South Africa to adhere to the norm of racial equality. This could be seen as a norm-guided behaviour whereby sanctions were working to force the target community to show endorsement to the norm of racial equality. It is seen here that a norm-guided behaviour conveys the norm and contains the qualities of convincing the target community to embrace the norm that guides it. In a similar vein, Robert Herman informs us that by adhering to the norm of ‘New Thinking’ in the USSR, “Gorbachev actively encouraged Warsaw Pact governments to emulate Moscow in introducing greater liberalization in economic and political life”. Here, again, norm-guided foreign policy was transmitting the norm to new realms and asking for the endorsement of these norms. Besides, there are also discursive practices within foreign policy (or as foreign policy) which also serve as mechanisms through which an international norm enters into a domestic arena.
practices and as norm-guided foreign policy practices, convey norms into new domestic fields and request validation and adherence.  

On a related note regarding the fourth function of norms, it can also be seen in the empirical studies produced by Burley, Klotz, and Herman that the transmission of a norm and the urging of its endorsement go hand in hand during the conduct of a norm-guided action. Socialisation of the target community/actor into a norm therefore stands as a self-evident proof of such functions, as it involves both the diffusion of a norm and the urging of endorsement to it. In a clearer example, Thomas Risse formulates the function of norm-guided behaviour as the translation of international norms into domestic practices in the target community. For Risse, norm-guided behaviour functions as a kind of transmission belt between the norm-setter community and the target community. Therefore, norm-guided behaviour both (i) conveys the norm and (ii) aims at increasing the endorsement to it. As for the final function of the norms, at this point, I can confidently argue that the functions of norm-guided behaviour exert influence on the target actor because norm-guided behaviours lead target agents to internalise new roles, identities, and interests. In the literature, this character of norms has been valued as a constitutive quality. To Checkel, “‘norms’ coming down to a [new] domestic arena has constitutive effects” by which the norm-guided behaviour request adherence to the norm and the roles and identities attached to it. This quality of norm-guided behaviour results in the occurrence of a response by the target either in the form of adherence, rejection, or something in-between, which constitutes the impact generated by the conduct of the norm-guided behaviour. This constitutive character analytically facilitates the formulation of a measurement tool to disclose the influence a norm-guided foreign policy exerts.

These functions, taken together, thus enable the research to study both the international mobilisation of domestic norms and their functioning in an overseas setting; in particular, the last three functions of norm-induced actions carry particular importance as they also provide the mechanisms by which a domestic norm becomes internationalised and generate constitutive ideational consequences abroad.

Identifying such functions was extremely facilitative in my own research, too. This is because, only after taking these functions into consideration, did I become capable of explaining the transmission of post-Kemalist norms from Turkey to Kosovo via post-Kemalist norms-guided foreign policy practices and the target community’s socialisation into the teachings of these norms. To give more concrete examples, the post-Kemalist norm of Ottomania, for instance, was diffused to Kosovo via official promotion campaigns whereby Kosovo’s Ottoman cultural identity was mentioned, and the framing of the Ottoman as a model for peaceful coexistence of different ethnicities was promoted as a cure and solution to the challenges of nation-building in post-war Kosovo. The second post-Kemalist norm, that of de-ethnicized nationhood, on the other hand, was diffused to Kosovo through the constitutive involvement of norm entrepreneurs who did not show any concern for the ethnic Turkish community’s expectations for a bold ethno-politics. They rather, via diffusive acts, tried to act in anti-nationalist manners. The socialisation of the community into these norms has been done via a parallel process of championing going beyond ethnicity. The motto of these efforts has been championed by Turkey’s most famous politician, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and his direct call to the ethnic Turkish community for them not to bring their ‘Turkishness’ into the fore in building relations with majority Albanians.

Another post-Kemalist norm, that of ‘Turkish Islam’ and its diffusion, has mainly been done under the banner of preventing the spread of ‘Wahhabism’, which is thought to be gaining ground in Kosovo. In this respect, diplomatic bodies and religious groups have, for example, prevented so-called ‘Wahhabis’ from taking over Ottoman mosques in a bid to ‘defend’ Turkish/Ottoman culture, while religious groups from Turkey have also acted to ‘protect’ Ottoman religious legacy in the country, claiming that ‘Turks brought Islam to Kosovo and
they will sustain it’. The socialisation of the community to Turkish Islam, however, was done through more constitutive acts, such as re-institutionalising Turkish Islamic practices or forming alliances against the so-called Wahhabi threat. The final post-Kemalist norm, that of ‘Islamic Internationalism’, and its diffusion to Kosovo was about the introduction of frames such as religious brotherhood, religious identity, and the idea of the universal Islamic ‘ummah’ (community) to the ethnic Turkish community in Kosovo. These frames were an attempt to redefine the inter-ethnic relationship among the Muslim communities in Kosovo. The socialisation of the ethnic Turkish community into such a norm is part of an effort to transform the ethnically-acting Turkish community into a religiously-thinking and acting one. Within this scope, notions of Muslim sensitivity, religious solidarity, the idea of empathy with fellow Muslims and Islamic consciousness were promoted discursively and representatively. Moreover, norm entrepreneurs preferred to treat ethnic Turks as a religious community rather than an ethnic one. Through visits of senior government officials during religious festivals, the Muslim Turkish identity was performed and promoted by these actors, and has functioned as one of the most constitutive socialising acts conducted by Turkey.

By way of confirmation, the conduct of the post-Kemalist acts – as a post-Kemalist norm driven foreign policy – functioned as a means for both norm diffusion and socialisation. Accordingly, a norm-induced act conveyed the norm that drives such act and the conveyed norm called for adherence. In short, this is a brief account of the internationalisation and the functioning of domestic norms in an overseas setting.

In lieu of a conclusion

In this research note, I introduced a few methodological and theoretical ways that a research may consider in order to overcome two core challenges in the study of domestic norms and foreign policy: the question of where to start a domestic norm-guided foreign policy enquiry (how to measure/identify norms guiding a foreign policy), and, second, the issue of domestic norms’ overseas mobilisation (how to trace the internationalisation of domestic norms thus the functioning of foreign policy-guiding domestic norms in an overseas setting) – a particularly neglected research puzzle.

After introducing the debates on measuring norms in the relevant literature, I argued that although there is no direct evidence for the presence of norms, examining the discourses surrounding a particular behaviour, analysing the norm-induced patterns of behaviour, studying the consensus reaching processes, and tracing the institutionalisations of certain practices is likely to reveal the presence of a norm. For further assurance in this matter, and to be able to identify norms, assuming a certain level of precision of meaning associated with the norm is necessary; this is because only then can the same meanings be attached to practices and patterns of repetition. I further argued that the diffusion of norms overseas and the socialisation practices also function at the stage where norm presence could be validated and clearly observed. This is because the behavioural, discursive, and representative trails of practices left by the overseas functioning of norms, in the form of compliance and resistance, are evidently visible and recognizable during this stage.

Related to this, I also argued that in order to understand domestic norms’ mobilisation, both the translation of norms into foreign policy practices and subsequently their conveyance (thus diffusion abroad) should be studied; this requires an analysis of the role of norms and the functions of norm-guided behaviours. However, relaying only on the role of norms mostly explain the foreign policy formation processes thus the building of norm-induced practices. Accordingly, tracing the functioning of norm-induced practices (thus the conduct of norm-driven foreign policies) enables us to better understand domestic norms’ mobilisation. Among the functions of norm-induced behaviours I identified, particularly, three functions that facilitated my understanding of the internalisation and the functioning of domestic
norms in an overseas setting, as well as the ‘influences’ of domestic norms abroad. These functions are norm-guided behaviour conveys/transmits the norm, norm-guided behaviour urges the endorsement of the norm by the target actor/s and norm-guided behaviour leads target agents to internalise new roles, identities, and interests; therefore, it has a constitutive function. They accordingly constituted a response to the question of how to trace and report the internationalisation and mobilisation of norms.

Having taken into account all the domestic norm processes listed above, it may be pertinent to conclude, following Peter Katzenstein, that “what is true of domestic norms holds also for international norms”. In fact, as my own research may suggest, they mostly do. However, researchers may also want to consider that there exist differences between domestic norms and international norms regarding their contextual functions, negotiation dynamics, international salience, influence, and the organisational platforms through they are institutionalised, diffused, and internationally advocated. It was these dissimilarities in the first place which led to the differences in studying domestic and international norms in the literature. Moreover, in thinking of domestic/international norms interactions, one should have some concerns about whether domestic and international norms could be equally equipped to function in international arenas. Similarly, the power relations inherent in the dissemination of international norms, as the postmodern constructivists suggest, must also be taken into account. Indeed, since domestic norms’ internationalisation is mostly studied with reference to the norms of powerful actors, norm internalisations taking place within more discrete contexts should also be taken into account. My doctoral research constitutes such an example. Finally, following the literature on peace research which has demonstrated that ‘the same norm has similar policy implications in both domestic and foreign policies’, the literature on norms in IR should also direct more attention towards the study of the dynamics and the consequences of such process with cases focusing on norms other than democracy.
Notes


5. While not every form of domestic norm has equal salience in international arena, the power of the norm-promoter actor in international politics matters in extend the salience of the norms. For a theory informed critique of this, see for instance Mackenzie M. and Sesay M. “No Amnesty From/For the International”; Inayatullah, Naeem and David L. Blaney “The dark heart of kindness: The social construction of
deflection”, *International Studies Perspectives*, Vol. 13, No 2, 2012, p. 164-175. Despite the critiques, in the literature, there is also an implicit acceptance that domestic and international norms are equally equipped to function.


12. Ibid.

23. Ibid. 395.
24. In a similar instance, the mainstream constructivist research agenda on normative change has been criticized for overwhelmingly focusing attention on “the actions, discourses, beliefs, and strategies used by liberal actors promoting liberal norms in international system” and taking liberalism as the only “possible ideological framework that can be used for framing actions”, which is suggested to be obscuring by Fiona Adamson (p. 547). Adamson, Fiona “Global Liberalism Versus Political Islam: Competing Ideological Frameworks in International Politics”, *International Studies Review*, Vol. 7, No 4, 2005, p. 547-569.
27. Ibid., p. 485, italic original.
28. Ibid., p. 486.
29. Ibid., p. 483.


34. Ibid.


36. Ibid., p. 891.

37. Björkdahl, Annika “Norms in International Relations”.


40. Ibid.

41. Ibid., p. 33.


43. Ibid.

44. Ibid., p. 364.

45. Since norms are theorized with reference to agency and agents’ actions, in the IR norms literature, all proposed definitions, in one way or another, subscribe to a *logic of action*. In other words, norms have been principally utilized to make sense of the actions of agency, therefore; the roles attributed to norms differ in each *logic of action* theorisation. In this sense, in IR norms literature there are four dominant ‘logics of action’ considerations: namely, *logic of consequentialism, logic of appropriateness, logic of arguing, or logic of contestedness*. All these logics offer different roles for norms and suggest different definitions; they are also embraced by different schools of thought in IR. Realist, Neo-realist and Neo-liberal schools, for instance, subscribe to a logic of consequentialism, while the mainstream constructivist school to a logic of appropriateness. The logic of arguing and the logic of contestedness, on the other hand, are embraced by critical and post-modern constructivist schools respectively.


47. Wiener, Antje “The Dual Quality of Norms”, p. 55.


51. Ibid., p. 723.


54. Other than Wiener there are others admitting the contested character of norms while not embracing the logic of contestedness, such as Katzenstein, Peter, *Cultural Norms and National Security* (1996b) and Risse, Thomas “Let’s Argue!”: Communicative Action in World Politics”, *International Organization*, Vol. 54, No 1, 2000, p. 1–39.

55. I have seen in my norm enquiry that the meanings of and the teachings attached to norms could be ambiguous and norm entrepreneurs may take advantage of this during norm diffusion and socialisation processes. Also see Engelkamp S. and Katharina G. “Writing Norms: Constructivist Norm Research and the Politics of Ambiguity”, *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, Vol. 40, N 3-4, 2015, p. 201-218.

56. Confirming Björkdahl, Annika “Norms in International Relations”. Even Wiener agrees with this through saying that “[a]s social constructs, norms may acquire stability over extended periods of time” while still holding that “they remain flexible by definition.” See Wiener, Antje “Enacting meaning-in-use”, p. 179-180.


68. Ibid., p. 76-77.

69. Finnemore M. and Sikkink K. “International Norm Dynamics”.

70. Risse, Thomas, “Let’s Argue!”, p. 28. Also see Risse et al., *The Power of Human Rights*. 


73. Here both governmental bodies and non-state actors have functioned as both organisational platforms for the institutionalization of the norms and as the mechanisms to transmit the norms abroad. Therefore, they were both norm entrepreneurs and “operate[d] within the structure and constraints of state identity” see Gurowitz, Amy “The Diffusion of International Norms: Why Identity Matters”, *International Politics*, Vol. 43, 2006, p. 311.

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