Review of International Studies (2025), page 1 of 20
doi:10.1017/S0260210525101642

RIS

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Performative socialization in world politics

İsmail Yaylacı

Institute of Middle East and Islamic Countries, Marmara University, Istanbul, Türkiye
Email: ismail.yaylaci@marmara.edu.tr

(Received 7 February 2025; revised 15 September 2025; accepted 30 September 2025)

Abstract

Norm contestation has become a defining characteristic of our time and a major interest in International Relations (IR) scholarship. However, researchers often view contestation as a repudiation of norm socialization and thus overlook the ways in which contestation occurs within socialization. This article advances an interpretive account based on performativity to capture the role of cultural translation and appropriation as practices of contestation within processes of norm socialization. It makes three key interventions. First, it redefines norm socialization as a process of cultural translation rather than straightforward transition. Second, it investigates various strategies through which actors appropriate norms by disjointing a norm's normative appeal from its normalizing power – its prevalent interpretation. Third, it underscores how such contestations destabilize the relationships of authority and hierarchy in normative engagements. To illustrate the analytical purchase of this framework, the paper analyses the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's discourses of 'Islamic democracy' and the 'Islamic civil state' as examples of their performative socialization into the norm of democracy. The paper concludes by reflecting on the democratic promise as well as the precariousness of performative socialization in world politics.

Keywords: appropriation; contestation; cultural translation; Islamism; norms; performativity; socialization

Introduction

When the Taliban recaptured Afghanistan in 2021, a senior spokesperson of the group declared that their new regime would be based on Islamic *shari'a* and that 'there would be no democratic system at all'.[1] Such outright rejection of a global norm, in this case democracy, is rather rare in world politics. Instead, much of world politics hinges on contestations over the meaning, validity, and application of norms that enjoy widespread appeal. For instance, another Islamist movement, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, aspires to democracy as a norm, yet one that is expressly non-liberal and non-secular – an 'Islamic democracy'. Drawing on distinct historical and ideological repertoires, Islamist regimes and movements challenge some of the norms, institutions, and power structures of the liberal international order.[2] However, most mainstream Islamist movements contest liberal norms not by rejecting them outright but by claiming them differently. They at once adopt and contest liberal norms. This marks a key ideological difference between Salafi-jihadi

[1]Reuters, 'Exclusive: Council may rule Afghanistan, Taliban to reach out to soldiers, pilots', *Reuters*, 18 August 2021.

[2]M. Ayoob, 'Challenging hegemony: Political Islam and the north–south divide', *International Studies Review*, 9:4 (2007), pp. 629–43. Some, conversely, argue that despite their rhetoric and identity politics, Islamists are in fact deeply implicated in the global operations of Western political, economic, and military power – hence, they socialize into the norms of liberal international order rather than contest them. See, Samir Amin, 'Political Islam in the service of imperialism', *Monthly Review*, 59:7 (2007), pp. 1-19; Timothy Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil* (Verso Books, 2011); Cihan Tugal, 'NATO's Islamists: Hegemony and Americanization in Turkey', *New Left Review*, 44: March–April (2007), pp. 5-34.

© The Author(s), 2025. Published by Cambridge University Press on behalf of The British International Studies Association.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210525101642 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Islamists, who renounce liberal norms entirely, and moderate Islamists, who negotiate rather than negate these norms through inserting cultural and historical difference into them.

Such contestations of global norms are not new but increasingly shape today's world, deepening uncertainties about the future of the liberal international order.[3] In these situations, state and non-state actors contest norms not by rejecting them but by disjointing a norm's normative power (its desirability and appropriateness) from its normalizing power (its dominant interpretation and implementation). The key question for them is not whether to accept or reject norms, but rather how to inhabit them. This suggests that actors may contest norms as they socialize into them. But how does contestation operate within socialization? Which strategies do actors use when they at once adopt and challenge international norms?

To address these questions, I develop an interpretive framework that attends to the performative dynamics of norm socialization in world politics, particularly through contestatory practices of cultural translation and appropriation. In International Relations (IR) scholarship, socialization and contestation are two distinct frameworks used to analyse normative engagements. While the former treats (often non-Western) 'norm-takers' as passive recipients of norms, the latter highlights their agency in modifying international norms through various strategies. In this paper I analyse the ways in which contestation and socialization are mutually imbricated. I argue that when actors lay conflicting claims to international norms, this points to some form of socialization that has already taken place – otherwise, why invoke democracy in the first place? Such normative engagements, however, exemplify what I call performative socialization – a kind of norm adoption that is inherently contestatory.

Drawing on postcolonial and poststructural insights, this interpretive account makes three theoretical contributions. First, it treats socialization as a process of cultural translation of norms through different social imaginaries and historical traditions, leaving them open to differential interpretations and contestations – rather than taking socialization solely as a process of transition into the prescribed meanings and authorized practices of norms. Second, it delineates various strategies of appropriation, such as performative contradiction and inscription of difference, through which actors endorse the normative power of a norm (hence socialize into it) while contesting its normalizing power.[4] Third, it highlights how such contestations within norms might complicate and potentially destabilize the relationships of hierarchy and structures of authority established around international norms.

I illustrate the analytical purchase of this account by analysing the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's discourse of 'Islamic democracy' and the'Islamic civil state' as an example of their contestation of the norm of democracy through cultural translation and appropriation – that is , their performative socialization into the norm. This draws on primary and secondary sources on the movement and its (currently banned) political party, as well as the ethnographic data collected during my fieldwork research in Egypt, including semi-structured interviews with Brotherhood members, leaders, and critics.

[3]David A. Lake, Lisa L. Martin, and Thomas Risse, 'Challenges to the liberal order: Reflections on ınternational organization', *International Organization*, 75:2 (2021), pp. 225–57. Similarly, China portrays its regime as an 'extensive, whole-process socialist democracy' that presents 'a new model of democracy' to the world. See Qin Gang and Anatoly Antonov, 'Russian and Chinese ambassadors: Respecting people's democratic rights', The Center for the National Interest, available at: {https://nationalinterest.org/feature/russian-and-chinese-ambassadors-respecting-people%E2%80%99s-democratic-rights-197165}, accessed 24 December 2021; The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, 'China: Democracy that works', available at: {http://english.scio.gov.cn/whitepapers/2021-12/04/content_77908921.htm}, accessed 24 December 2021.

[4]For a discussion of the relationship between the normative and normalizing aspects of a norm, see Partha Chatterjee, *Lineages of Political Society: Studies in Postcolonial Democracy* (Columbia University Press, 2011); *The Black Hole of Empire: History of a Global Practice of Power* (Princeton University Press, 2012).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210525101642 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Norm socialization and contestation

IR norms research understands socialization as a process through which actors are 'inducted (…) into the norms and rules of a given community',[5] whereby their 'identities and interests get formed' in convergence with the expectations of international society[6] and the norms of international order.[7] Through socialization, state and non-state actors come to adopt the constitutive norms, identities, values, and interest perceptions of a particular international society.[8] Therefore, it is a key mechanism through which subjects are produced as actors with particular identities, interests, and resources.

While illuminating aspects of interest and identity formation and transformation, earlier socialization literature had three key shortcomings. First, it tended to treat socialization as a hierarchical relationship between Western norm-setters and non-Western norm-followers,[9] positioning the West as the driving force and the rest as recipients.[10] Accordingly, socializers and socializees take on asymmetrical subject positions such as 'teachers versus pupils'[11] and even 'nannies versus children',[12] effectively infantilizing[13] and stigmatizing[14] the targeted socializees. This tendency was encapsulated in its ideal formula: 'successful nannies, good pupils, smooth socialization'.[15] Second, it treated socialization as a process of transition into international norms, without considering how these transitions may also entail cultural translation. Dominant models – constructivism's norm diffusion,[16] sociological institutionalism's 'expanding Western world-culture',[17] and the English School's expansion of Western international society [18]–rested on a 'diffusionist teleology'[19] that constantly predicted uniformity around liberal norms and institutions, overlooking the role of cultural translation. Third, the literature suffered from what Zimmermann calls 'the linearity problem', which anticipated either complete rejection or full adoption of norms from actors and thus failed to explore the diffusion outcomes that fall in between them.[20] Actors were either to

[5] Jeffrey T. Checkel, 'International ınstitutions and socialization in Europe: Introduction and framework', *International Organization*, 59:4 (2005), p. 804.

[6] Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 170.

[7] Alastair I. Johnston, *Social States: China in International Institutions, 1980–2000* Princeton University Press, 2008).

[8] Martha Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society* (Cornell University Press, 1996); Frank Schimmelfennig, 'Introduction: The impact of ınternational organizations on the Central and Eastern European States – Conceptual and theoretical ıssues', in Ronald Haly Linden (ed.), *Norms and Nannies: The Impact of İnternational Organizations on the Central and East European States* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002), pp. 1–32.

[9] Amitav Acharya, 'How ideas spread: Whose norms matter? Norm localization and institutional change in Asian regionalism', *International Organization*, 58:2 (2004), pp. 239–75; Charlotte Epstein, 'Stop telling us how to behave: Socialization or infantilization?', *International Studies Perspectives*, 13:2 (2012), pp. 135–45; Lisbeth Zimmermann, 'Same same or different? Norm diffusion between resistance, compliance, and localization in post-conflict states', *International Studies Perspectives*, 17:1 (2016), pp. 98–115; *Global Norms with a Local Face* (Cambridge University Press, 2017).

[10] Barry Buzan, 'Culture and international society', *International Affairs*, 86:1 (2010), pp. 1–25.

[11] Alexandra Gheciu, 'Security institutions as agents of socialization? NATO and the "New Europe"', *International Organization*, 59:4 (2005), pp. 973–1012.

[12] Schimmelfennig, 'Introduction'.

[13] Epstein, 'Stop telling us how to behave'.

[14] Ayşe Zarakol, 'What made the modern world hang together: Socialisation or stigmatisation?', *International Theory*, 6:2 (2014), pp. 311–32.

[15] Schimmelfennig, 'Introduction', p. 18.

[16] Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, 'International norm dynamics and political change', *International Organization*, 52:4 (1998), pp. 887–917; Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Cornell University Press, 1998); Thomas Risse-Kappen, Stephen C. Ropp, and Kathryn Sikkink (eds), *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change* (Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[17] John W. Meyer, John Boli, George M. Thomas, and Francisco O. Ramirez, 'World society and the nation-state', *American Journal of Sociology*, 103:1 (1997), pp. 144–81.

[18] Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, *The Expansion of International Society* (Oxford University Press, 1984).

[19] Sudipta Kaviraj, 'An outline of a revisionist theory of modernity', *European Journal of Sociology / Archives Européennes de Sociologie*, 46:3 (2005), pp. 497–526.

[20] Zimmermann, 'Same same or different?', p. 28.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210525101642 Published online by Cambridge University Press

socialize into or reject norms, a framing that fell short of registering contestations that occur *within* socialization. In reality, socialization is relational and deeply fraught with friction. World politics abounds with instances of contestation whereby actors adopt a norm but dispute its meaning or application, rather than its validity.[21] As such, contestation thoroughly permeates socialization.[22]

The second wave of IR norms research has paid substantial attention to the role of contestation in norm dynamics such that it has become 'one major field of research on international norms'.[23] Antje Wiener highlights norms' inherently contested nature and points to instances of 'contested compliance', where actors challenge the compliance conditions of a norm while adopting it.[24] Others examine how often non-Western actors localize,[25] vernacularize,[26] appropriate,[27] and translate international norms,[28] highlighting the agency of local and regional actors in actively reworking these norms. They explore how contestation occurs in the interaction between divergent interpretations of norms and surrounding normative environments[29] and in the gap between general norms and specific situations.[30] Recent scholarship categorizes different types of contestation alongside their varying effects on the robustness of norms.[31] In contrast to the earlier literature's treatment

[21]Jonas Wolff and Lisbeth Zimmermann, 'Between Banyans and battle scenes: Liberal norms, contestation, and the limits of critique', *Review of International Studies*, 42:3 (2016), p. 518.

[22]Of course , earlier scholarship was not entirely oblivious to norm contestation. For example, in *National Interests in International Society*, Finnemore identifies contestation as the stuff of domestic and international politics. Yet, the focus of this literature has been on the displacement of prior local norms by new international ones and on the 'fit' between local and international norms. See Finnemore and Sikkink 'International norm dynamics and political change'; Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*; Risse et al., *Power of Human Rights*; Jeffrey T. Checkel, 'Norms, Institutions, and National Identity in Contemporary Europe', *International Studies Quarterly*, 43:1 (1999), pp. 83–114; Andrew P. Cortell and James W. Davis Jr., 'Understanding the domestic ımpact of ınternational norms: A research agenda', *International Studies Review*, 2:1 (2000), pp. 65–87. Therefore, contestations are coded as instances of incomplete internalization or decoupling of commitments and practices. See Ryan Goodman and Derek Jinks, 'Incomplete ınternalization and compliance with human rights law', *European Journal of International Law*, 19:4 (2008), pp. 725–48; Emilie M. Hafner-Burton and Kiyoteru Tsutsui, 'Human rights in a globalizing world: The paradox of empty promises', *American Journal of Sociology*, 110:5 (2005), pp. 1373–411.

[23]Gregor P. Hofmann and Lisbeth Zimmermann, 'Introduction: Norm contestation and its effects: Challenges to the responsibility to protect and the responsibility to prosecute', *Global Responsibility to Protect*, 11:2 (2019), p. 137.

[24]Antje Wiener, 'Contested compliance: Interventions on the normative structure of world politics', *European Journal of International Relations*, 10:2 (2004), pp. 189–234; *The Invisible Constitution of Politics: Contested Norms and International Encounters* (Cambridge University Press, 2008); *A Theory of Contestation* (Springer-Verlag, 2014).

[25]Acharya, 'How ideas spread'.

[26]Peggy Levitt and Sally Merry, 'Vernacularization on the ground: Local uses of global women's rights in Peru, China, India and the United States', *Global Networks*, 9:4 (2009), pp. 441–61.

[27]Marcos Tourinho, 'The co-constitution of order', *International Organization*, 75:2 (2021), pp. 258–81.

[28]Gregorio Bettiza and Filippo Dionigi, 'How do religious norms diffuse? Institutional translation and international change in a post-secular world society', *European Journal of International Relations*, 21:3 (2015), pp. 621–46; Sally Engle Merry, *Human Rights and Gender Violence: Translating International Law into Local Justice* (University of Chicago Press, 2006); Holger Niemann and Henrik Schillinger, 'Contestation "all the way down"? The grammar of contestation in norm research', *Review of International Studies*, 43:1 (2017), pp. 29–49; Zimmermann, 'Same same or different?'; Susanne Zwingel, 'How do norms travel? Theorizing ınternational women's rights in transnational perspective', *International Studies Quarterly*, 56:1 (2012), pp. 115–29.

[29]Mona Lena Krook and Jacqui True, 'Rethinking the life cycles of international norms: The United Nations and the global promotion of gender equality', *European Journal of International Relations*, 18:1 (2012), pp. 103–27.

[30]Wayne Sandholtz, 'Dynamics of ınternational norm change: Rules against wartime plunder', *European Journal of International Relations*, 14:1 (2008), pp. 101–31.

[31]Gregorio Bettiza and David Lewis, 'Authoritarian powers and norm contestation in the liberal ınternational order: Theorizing the power politics of ıdeas and ıdentity', *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 5:4 (2020), pp. 559–77; Nicole Deitelhoff, 'What's in a name? Contestation and backlash against international norms and institutions', *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 22:4 (2020), pp. 715–27; Nicole Deitelhoff and Lisbeth Zimmermann, 'Norms under challenge: Unpacking the dynamics of norm robustness', *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 4:1 (2019), pp. 2–17; 'Things we lost in the fire: How different types of contestation affect the robustness of ınternational norms', *International Studies Review*, 22:1 (2020), pp. 51–76; Averell Schmidt and Kathryn Sikkink, 'Breaking the ban? The heterogeneous ımpact of US contestation of the torture norm', *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 4:1 (2019), pp. 105–22.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210525101642 Published online by Cambridge University Press

of contestation as a barrier to norm socialization, later scholarship often views it as enhancing the democratic legitimacy of norms by enabling participation and shared understandings.[32]

The question of contestation has also become central to current debates on the crisis of global governance and the decline of the postwar liberal international order.[33] Scholars examine how and under what conditions the increasing instances of norm contestation, both inside and outside the West, undermine this order.[34] Some attribute the increase in the 'level and variety' of contestation in the post-Cold War era as a product of this period's intrusive post-national liberal character[35] or as an outcome of the ideological challenges posed by populist and nativist movements within and outside the West.[36] Others see norm contestation as a power-political strategy whereby non-Western great powers engage in 'ideational counterbalancing' against the West.[37] The next section unpacks the performative dynamics of contestation in norm socialization processes.

Performativity, socialization and contestation

Coined by John L. Austin, the term 'performative' defines speech acts that do not report or describe but do the action they name, as in the examples of promising, apologizing, or declaring. Performatives are utterances that enact a world-creating power. For Austin, the force that performatives command derives from their compliance with the conventions that authorize them (illocutionary force) and from their effect on the relevant audience (perlocutionary force). For performatives to achieve what they refer to – to be 'felicitous' and 'successful' – they must be uttered by proper actors, through proper procedures, in proper circumstances, and with proper intentions. If they do not conform to the established social conventions, performatives fail or 'misfire'.[38] Jacques Derrida interprets this aspect of conventionality of performatives as their 'iterability' and 'citationality', that is, their simultaneous repeatability and alterability. Since performatives are iterable, they are always haunted by the structural possibility of failure.[39] The prospect of what Austin calls unsuccessful performatives opens the space for different possibilities.[40] Performatives can break with their contexts and create new ones by authorizing themselves without being authorized by existing conventions. Previously unauthorized performatives can trouble existing norms, and hence they may inaugurate change.

Drawing on this insight, Judith Butler argues that social norms and institutions have a performative character, deriving stability from repeated citations.[41] Since performatives are citational and therefore historical, they enable political intervention by introducing difference and reinscribing new meanings into the very norms they cite. The stability of norms depends on their 'felicitous' repetitions, which means that 'infelicitous' repetitions may potentially destabilize the ordinary meanings and the normalizing power of norms. For example, drag performances exemplify how

[32] Antje Wiener, 'The dual quality of norms and governance beyond the state: Sociological and normative approaches to "ınteraction"', *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 10:1 (2007), pp. 47–69; Wolff and Zimmermann, 'Between Banyans and battle scenes'.

[33] G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order* (Princeton University Press, 2012); 'The end of liberal international order?', *International Affairs*, 94:1 (2018), pp. 7–23.

[34] Stacie E. Goddard, Ronald R. Krebs, Christian Kreuder-Sonnen, and Berthold Rittberger, 'Contestation in a world of liberal orders', *Global Studies Quarterly*, 4:2 (2024), pp. 1-12. For an extensive discussion of the contestations of the liberal international order, see the special issue of *Global Studies Quarterly* 4:2 (2024), titled *Its Worst Enemy: Liberal Order and Endogenous Sources of Contestation*.

[35] Tanja A. Börzel and Michael Zürn, 'Contestations of the liberal ınternational order: From liberal multilateralism to postnational liberalism', *International Organization*, 75:2 (2021), p. 282.

[36] Rebecca Adler-Nissen and Ayşe Zarakol, 'Struggles for recognition: The liberal ınternational order and the merger of ıts discontents', *International Organization*, 75:2 (2021), pp. 611–34.

[37] Bettiza and Lewis, 'Authoritarian powers and norm contestation in the liberal ınternational order', pp. 9–11.

[38] John Langshaw Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 25-27.

[39] Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc* (Northwestern University Press, 1988).

[40] Katarina Diana Sjöblom, 'Agamben's politics of the performative', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 42:2 (2025), pp. 101–16.

[41] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Routledge, 2006).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210525101642 Published online by Cambridge University Press

social norms that shape one's gender identity through stylized repetition of acts can be troubled when actors parody those norms.[42] What the IR norms research calls 'smooth socialization' is the process through which actors are made to enact felicitous repetitions of norms in ways that reproduce their normalizing logic. In contrast, the performativity of socialization involves differential or infelicitous repetition of norms – their simultaneous adoption and contestation – that destabilizes their normalizing logic.

The IR scholarship has employed the concept of performativity to analyse various aspects of international politics, such as the contingent production of state identities in and through foreign policy representations,[43] practices of statecraft,[44] performances of status-seeking,[45] discursive production of imaginative geographies in security strategies,[46] and responses to crises.[47] Others have drawn on performativity to analyse the question of agency in IR,[48] the institution of international order,[49] the world-creating functions of research methodologies,[50] the construction of the state as a gendered subject,[51] the agency of the objects and devices of security,[52] and the participation of different conceptions of risk and uncertainty in the production of economic reality.[53] Some have subjected performativity's analytical purchase to critical scrutiny.[54] The concept of performativity is also central to the securitization literature[55] and the constructivist scholarship on the linguistic construction of rules in international politics.[56] Some of the recent research treats performativity as a low-cost and insincere effort at international virtue-signalling on popular norms[57]

[42]Butler, *Gender Trouble*.

[43]David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).

[44]Roxanne L. Doty, *Anti-Immigrantism in Western Democracies: Statecraft, Desire and the Politics of Exclusion* (Routledge, 2003); Kevin C. Dunn, 'There is no such thing as the state: Discourse, effect and performativity', *Forum for Development Studies*, 37:1 (2010), pp. 79–92.

[45]Ali Bilgic, 'Becoming a humanitarian state: A performative analysis of "status-seeking" as statecraft in world politics', *Review of International Studies*, 50:4 (2024), pp. 700–19.

[46]Luiza Bialasiewicz et al., 'Performing security: The imaginative geographies of current US strategy', *Political Geography*, 26:4 (2007), pp. 405–22.

[47]Iver B. Neumann and Ole Jacob Sending, 'Performing statehood through crises: Citizens, strangers, territory', *Journal of Global Security Studies*, 6:1 (2021), pp. 1-16.

[48]Benjamin Braun, Sebastian Schindler, and Tobias Wille, 'Rethinking agency in International Relations: Performativity, performances and actor-networks', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 22:4 (2019), pp. 787–807.

[49]Badredine Arfi, 'Rethinking ınternational constitutional order: The auto-immune politics of binding without binding', *Millennium – Journal of International Studies*, 39:2 (2010), pp. 299–321.

[50]Claudia Aradau and Jef Huysmans, 'Critical methods in International Relations: The politics of techniques, devices and acts', *European Journal of International Relations*, 20:3 (2014), pp. 596–619.

[51]Cynthia Weber, 'Performative states', *Millennium – Journal of International Studies*, 27:1 (1998), pp. 77–95.

[52]Anthony Amicelle, Claudia Aradau, and Julien Jeandesboz, 'Questioning security devices: Performativity, resistance, politics', *Security Dialogue*, 46:4 (2015), pp. 293–306; Claudia Aradau, 'Security that matters: Critical infrastructure and objects of protection', *Security Dialogue*, 41:5 (2010), pp. 491–514.

[53]Oliver Kessler, 'Performativity of risk and the boundaries of economic sociology', *Current Sociology*, 55:1 (2007), pp. 110–25.

[54]John H. S. Aberg and Derick Becker, 'The world is more than a stage: Foreign policy, development and spatial performativity in Ethiopia', *Territory, Politics, Governance*, 9:1 (2021), pp. 1–16; Mark Laffey, 'Locating identity: Performativity, foreign policy and state action', *Review of International Studies*, 26:3 (2000), pp. 429–44; Erik Ringmar, 'How the world stage makes its subjects: An embodied critique of constructivist IR theory', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 19:1 (2016), pp. 101–25.

[55]Thierry Balzacq, 'The three faces of securitization: Political agency, audience and context', *European Journal of International Relations*, 11:2 (2005), pp. 171–201; Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, and Jaap De Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Lynne Rienner Pub, 1997); Lise Philipsen, 'Performative securitization: From conditions of success to conditions of possibility', *Journal of International Relations and Development*, 23:1 (2020), pp. 139–63.

[56]Friedrich V. *Kratochwil, Rules, Norms, and Decisions: On the Conditions of Practical and Legal Reasoning in International Relations and Domestic Affairs* (Cambridge University Press, 1991); Nicholas Greenwood Onuf, *World of Our Making: Rules and Rule in Social Theory and İnternational Relations* (University of South Carolina Press, 1989).

[57]Lindsey A. Goldberg, 'International virtue signaling: How female combatants shape state support for armed rebellion', *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 42:2 (2025), pp. 107–30.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210525101642 Published online by Cambridge University Press

or strategic image-building for status,[58] while others highlight the ways in which performativity of norm-expressivist practices may help create the pathway for penal accountability in international law.[59] There is a nascent and insightful literature which draws on practice theory and performativity to analyse norm translation, appropriation, and contestation.[60] However, the implications of the analytics of performativity for norm-socialization and -contestation research have not been sufficiently investigated. This is quite puzzling given performativity's thorough engagement with questions of normativity and thus its potential to open up new interpretive possibilities for IR theorizing. As Cynthia Weber points out, 'normativity is always bound up with performativity' and performativity 'takes up a critical position in relation to normativity'.[61] Performativity offers a way to approach these questions, as it is a model for thinking about social norms, identity, social change, agency, and subjectivity.[62] These questions are central to much of the constructivist and critical IR theory and have significant ramifications for norms research.

To unpack the performativity of socialization is to explore the ways in which international norms are simultaneously claimed and contested through various strategies such as cultural translation and appropriation, especially – but not exclusively – by those who are positioned on the margins of liberal international order. Performative socialization is about 'how marginal groups are challenging the pedagogical delimiting' of globally aspired-to constitutive norms such as equality, democracy, human rights, freedom, and citizenship and 'are appropriating these terms for quite different projects'.[63] It is about how actors negotiate, rather than negate, international norms.

In that sense, the relationship between socialization and contestation is akin to the relationship between the two kinds of history that Dipesh Chakrabarty introduces. For Chakrabarty, History 1 is the universal history of the diffusion of modern norms and institutions and History 2s are the histories of cultural difference that always interrupt and modify History 1.[64] He stresses that History 1 is 'indispensable' to understanding how the homogenizing logic of modernity transformed the world, yet it is 'inadequate' since it falls short of accounting for History 2s. In other words, History 2s do not reject or transcend History 1, but rather supplement and provincialize it.[65] One can think of History 1 as the history of socialization of actors into modern international norms, and History 2s as the various contestations of these norms based on historical and cultural difference. In that sense, norm contestation does not necessarily reject but supplements socialization. This suggests that History 1 and History 2s – or socialization and contestation – are in constant tension, which leaves us at 'the restless and inescapable politics of historical difference'.[66] Just as subaltern histories cannot be thought of outside the global forces of capital, performativity of socialization cannot be thought of outside the disciplinary and normalizing forces governing norm processes.

[58] Federico Salvati, 'Authenticity, performativity, and profilicity in international relations: Autocracies and the evolution of the liberal world order', *Review of International Studies* (2025), pp. 1–21.

[59] Cornelia Baciu, 'Norm expressivism and punishment in International Relations', *Review of International Studies* (2025), pp. 1–21.

[60] Anke Draude, 'Translation in motion: A concept's journey towards norm diffusion studies', *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal*, 2:5 (2017), pp. 588–605; Holger Stritzel, 'Security as translation: Threats, discourse, and the politics of localisation', *Review of International Studies*, 37:5 (2011), pp. 2491–517; Wiener, *The Invisible Constitution of Politics*; Antje Wiener, 'Agency of the governed in global international relations: Access to norm validation', *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal*, 2:5 (2017), pp. 709–25; Lisbeth Zimmermann, Nicole Deitelhoff, and Max Lesch, 'Unlocking the agency of the governed: Contestation and norm dynamics', *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal*, 2:5 (2017), pp. 691–708.

[61] Weber, 'Performative states', p. 82.

[62] Jonathan Culler, *The Literary in Theory* (Stanford University Press, 2006), p. 161.

[63] Ajay Skaria, 'The project of provincialising Europe: Reading Dipesh Chakrabarty', *Economic and Political Weekly*, 44:14 (2009), p. 58.

[64] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 68–70.

[65] Skaria, 'The project of provincialising Europe', p. 56.

[66] Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, p. 254.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210525101642 Published online by Cambridge University Press

A performative reading of socialization thus concurs with Epstein's call to shift our focus from norms to processes of normalization.[67] It seeks to capture the creative agency of local actors while accounting for the deeply conditioned nature of their subjectivity.[68] This rests on the recognition that 'agentive capacity is entailed not only in those acts that resist norms but also in the multiple ways in which one inhabits norms'.[69] The optic of performativity offers neither a narrative of heroic postcolonial agency to escape or transcend normalization, nor an account of 'smooth socialization' whereby non-Western actors simply succumb to the pedagogical powers of normalization. Rather, it is an account that seeks to capture how the productive tension between the dynamics of normalization and contestation shape normative engagements. Performative socialization therefore speaks to the paradox of subjection: actors are simultaneously being subjected to the normalizing power of norms while being made the subject of norms. Through cultural translation and appropriation, actors interject difference into – and hence contest – the norms they adopt, yet do so in ways that are deeply conditioned by the normalizing forces of socialization.

The subsequent sections elaborate on two major processes whereby we can detect the performative dynamics of socialization in world politics: cultural translation and strategies of norm appropriation.

Cultural translation

Translation is a metaphor for, and a mechanism of, norm socialization and contestation, especially – but not exclusively – in cross-cultural settings. Translation refers to the travel of meanings and signs across languages and cultures,[70] and cultural translation is 'the translation of one culture into terms intelligible to another'.[71] Translation is not solely an interlingual process or a linguistic practice. It is also a 'social practice'[72] that comprises non-linguistic practices. In translation, pre-existing local norms, institutions, discursive traditions, and social imaginaries function as social textures through which international norms are negotiated and reworked. The meaning of international norms gets contested and negotiated through translation in ways that enable their reinterpretation. Cultural translation is thus an open-ended process with uncertain outcomes,[73] one that 'resists the straightforward sociology of transition'[74] – 'smooth socialization'.

Translation is a performative practice for two related reasons. First, translations 'invent rather than represent culture'.[75] Translation does not simply register an already existing equivalence between meanings but rather *creates* them. Second, translation produces a relationship of difference rather than equivalence between traditions, and any articulation of difference is performative.[76] Translation never reproduces the original; instead, it transforms the original by assigning it 'new genealogies of thought and action from the new language'.[77] Such displacements and

[67] Charlotte Epstein, 'The postcolonial perspective: an introduction', *International Theory*, 6:2 (2014), pp. 294–311.

[68] Vivienne Jabri, 'Disarming norms: Postcolonial agency and the constitution of the international', *International Theory*, 6:2 (2014), pp. 372–90.

[69] Saba Mahmood, 'Agency, Performativity, and the Feminist Subject', in Ellen T Armour and Susan M St. Ville (eds), *Bodily Citations: Religion and Judith Butler* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), p. 186.

[70] Lydia H. Liu, 'Introduction', in Lydia H. Liu (ed.), *Tokens of Exchange: The Problem of Translation in Global Circulations* (Duke University Press, 1999), p. 2.

[71] Tejaswini Niranjana, *Siting Translation: History, Post-Structuralism, and the Colonial Context* (University of California Press, 1992), p. 47.

[72] Liu, 'Introduction', p. 2.

[73] Benjamin Brake and Peter J. Katzenstein, 'Lost in translation? Nonstate actors and the transnational movement of procedural law', *International Organization*, 67:4 (2013), pp. 725–57; Zwingel, 'How do norms travel?'.

[74] Skaria, 'The project of provincialising Europe', p. 56.

[75] Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, p. 81.

[76] Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (Routledge, 2004), p. 3.

[77] Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction: An ethnography of global connection* (Princeton University Press, 2005), p. 224.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210525101642 Published online by Cambridge University Press

transformations turn cultural translation into a 'struggle',[78] and a 'ground of intervention'[79] into the homogenizing force of norms.[80] Liberal norms, institutions, and discourses that command a global relevance do not travel in thin air but 'encounter pre-existing concepts, categories, institutions, and practices through which they get translated and configured differently'.[81] As Chakrabarty points out, History 1 (the universal history of the expansion of modern norms and institutions) and various History 2s (diverse ways of being human) coexist and perpetually seek to interrupt each other.[82] Translation enables norms to diffuse across linguistic and cultural borders while exposing them to resignification in ways that may put their normalizing force – their prevalent interpretation and implementation – at risk. Hence, translation is at once a process of socialization and a terrain of contestation.

Recent IR norms research has shown substantial interest in translation – understood as the process of reinterpreting a norm in a new context[83] – as a means of analysing the cross-cultural dynamics of norm diffusion . Merry discusses how non-state actors and social movements vernacularize international human rights norms by serving as norm translators.[84] Zwingel[85] and Zimmermann[86] identify various steps and constellations through which international norms are translated into discourse, law, and implementation. Bettiza and Dionigi analyse 'institutional translation', whereby normative claims are rephrased into a more universal form to achieve convergence around them.[87] Taking issue with the unidirectionality and linearity of early norms literature, recent translation scholars emphasize the interactive aspects of norm processes and the role of non-Western actors not only as recipients but also as makers of international norms.[88] Translation highlights 'how norm-takers are not always pristinely socialized or, better, "converted", into the norm-maker's value structure'.[89] Rather, it attends to the creative agency of actors, especially of those in the Global South and the non-West, to mould and reshape international norms. It is therefore a process of norm transmission and socialization, but one in which the meaning and application of norms get contested and negotiated by actors with diverse cultural and historical backgrounds.

Therefore, the performative force of translation needs to be better accounted for. Draude criticizes IR treatments of the concept of translation for losing its 'productive power' in the process of adopting the concept from other disciplines such as anthropology and cultural studies.[90] Likewise, Zimmermann, Deitelhoff, and Lesch argue that translation research in IR has a narrow view of agency and fall short of accounting for how local discourses and practices produce normativity, that is, the 'intersubjectively shared sense of obligation'.[91] A performative reading of norm socialization, however, attends to the ways in which practices of translation participate in the constitution of normativity. For instance, Merry's conception of vernacularization and translation relies on a 'fairly narrow notion of "faithful" translation [in which] transferred norms are only cautiously

[78] Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, p. 348.

[79] Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, p. 46.

[80] The Latin word *translatio* – the etymological root of translation – as well as its equivalents in Greek (*metaphorein*) and German (*Übersetzung*) communicate a sense of 'movement, disruption, displacement'. See Niranjana, *Siting Translation*, p. 8.

[81] Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, p. xii.

[82] Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*.

[83] Zwingel, 'How do norms travel?'

[84] Merry, *Human Rights and Gender Violence*.

[85] Zwingel, 'How do norms travel?'.

[86] Zimmermann, 'Same same or different?'

[87] Bettiza and Dionigi, 'How do religious norms diffuse?'

[88] Bettiza and Dionigi, 'How do religious norms diffuse?'; Draude, 'Translation in motion'; Zimmermann, 'Same same or different?'; Lisbeth Zimmermann, 'More for Less: The ınteractive translation of global norms in postconflict Guatemala', *International Studies Quarterly*, 61:4 (2017), pp. 774–85.

[89] Bettiza and Dionigi, 'How do religious norms diffuse?', p. 9.

[90] Draude, 'Translation in motion', p. 589.

[91] Zimmermann et al., 'Unlocking the agency of the governed', p. 691.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210525101642 Published online by Cambridge University Press

modified'.[92] Yet translations always transform the original. Cultural translation entails a form of strategic agency that is constrained by the pressure to remain faithful to the original text, discourse, or norm[93] since power relations condition and permeate every instance of cultural translation.[94] Still, translations 'contaminate' the supposed purity of the 'original'. The performative force of translation – its 'productive'[95] and 'socio-generative'[96] power – is located in the potential of the 'copy' to destabilize expectations of fidelity to the 'original'. This calls for an empirical investigation into how power relations permeate the process of cultural translation in particular contexts, and what kinds of interventions actors make and to what effect.[97]

Strategies of norm appropriation: Performative contradiction and inscription of difference

Together with cultural translation, another performative dynamic of socialization involves the strategies through which actors appropriate norms. Appropriation names the process of 'making norms one's own'.[98] It is a mode of norm contestation in which 'words and concepts are wrested from their proper meaning'.[99] Appropriation is a practice of contestation in which actors lay claim to the normative power of a norm while challenging its normalizing power – its predominant meanings and behavioural expectations. It refers to the ways in which actors 'use the tools of the dominant discourse to resist its political or cultural control'.[100] Actors appropriate liberal norms and categories 'in order to participate in a broader normative order, while at the same time rejecting Western semantic control over this order'.[101] Understood this way, appropriation is not only a 'creative strategy of resistance against international rule',[102] but is also a practice that produces normativity, as it affirms the normative substance of the norm while seeking to differ in its implementation. For example, Marcos Tourinho demonstrates how Latin American states' contestatory practices of appropriation, rather than Western states' promotion, have been key to the institutionalization of international legal norms such as self-determination, non-intervention, and sovereign equality.[103] While appropriation is 'a strategy for resisting rule and asymmetric power relations',[104] I argue that it is a kind of expression of agency that is deeply conditioned, and a form of resistance that unfolds itself not in rejection of a norm but in inhabiting it differently.

Here I identify two forms of norm appropriation: (i) performative contradiction and (ii) inscription of difference. The first happens when actors claim to participate in a norm

[92] Draude, 'Translation in motion', p. 596.

[93] Talal Asad, 'A comment on translation, critique, and subversion', in Anuradha Dingwaney and Carol Maier (eds), *Between Languages and Cultures: Translation and Cross-Cultural Texts* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 1996), p. 331.

[94] Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 199.

[95] Draude, 'Translation in motion'.

[96] Zimmermann et al., 'Unlocking the agency of the governed'.

[97] Zimmermann (*Global Norms*) presents translation as an alternative to the socialization framework, since for her the latter suffers from problems of linearity, Eurocentrism, and asymmetry. While concurring with her critique, I argue that translation as a performative contestatory practice may take place within the process of socialization since socialization is 'not a passive process of norm adoption, but entails active transformation and change, including change of meanings' (Anke Draude, 'The agency of the governed in transfer and diffusion studies', *Third World Thematics: A TWQ Journal*, 2:5 (2017), p. 579.) In other words, contestation happens not only outside socialization (in the form of rejection) but also within socialization (in the form of cultural translation and various strategies of appropriation).

[98] Zimmermann, p. 16. While Zimmermann takes appropriation as an inherent dimension of cultural translation (Zimmermann, Global Norms with a Local Face, p. 220.), I put analytical daylight between the two and distinguish various strategies of norm appropriation.

[99] Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, p. 263.

[100] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* (Routledge, 1998), p. 20.

[101] Mathias Großklaus, 'Appropriation and the dualism of human rights: Understanding the contradictory impact of gender norms in Nigeria', *Third World Quarterly*, 36:6 (2015), p. 1255.

[102] Zimmermann et al., 'Unlocking the agency of the governed', p. 695.

[103] Tourinho, 'The co-constitution of order'.

[104] Zimmermann et al., 'Unlocking the agency of the governed'.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210525101642 Published online by Cambridge University Press

from which they are excluded. The second occurs when actors claim to diverge from the normalizing logic of a norm while also claiming to remain within the bounds of that norm. Put differently, appropriation takes the form of either a claim for inclusion within the norm or a claim for difference within the norm. While the former challenges the protocols of exclusion, the latter resists homogenization and normalization. In both instances the pedagogy of the norm gets contested, but in different ways and with different effects.

In performative contradiction, those who are excluded from the reach of a norm appropriate that norm. It happens when one is not properly authorized by existing conventions and relevant audiences to claim the norm but nevertheless claims it with an assertion of authority. The force of the performative contradiction is negotiated in this very gap between being unauthorized and asserting authority. For example, Rosa Parks' act of sitting at the front of a bus authoritatively lays claim to a right that she was not authorized to exercise within the existing normative structure. As such, hers was a performative contradiction.[105] Parks' unauthorized act endowed her with a certain authority and challenged the codes of legitimacy of the existing social order. Therefore, her socialization into the norm of equality in a segregationist society was performative – adopting the normative power of the norm while contesting its normalizing logic.

Similarly, when colonized peoples invoked the Enlightenment belief in equality in opposition to the colonial practices of inequality, they performed a contradiction by laying claim to a norm from which they were excluded. When the colonized claimed self-rule against the colonizer's claim that the colony was 'not yet' ready for self-determination, their appropriation of democratic norms enacted a performative contradiction. Theirs was not a straightforward socialization into the norms of equality and self-determination since they inhabited these norms against their normalizing logics that rested on the exclusion of the colonized. Likewise, when equality meant the equality of Christian white males only, the suffragettes invoked the norm to expand it – to establish it for women.[106] They claimed the norm to include themselves in it, while the prevalent interpretation of the norm excluded them. Thus, performative contradiction denotes a form of appropriation beyond the conventions of authority and propriety that govern the enactment of the norms. This is why a norm adopted through a performative contradiction does not amount to 'a simple assimilation' to that norm ('smooth socialization'), for it is 'predicated on the exclusion of the one who speaks [in the name of the norm]'.[107] Instead, it exposes the limits of the norm and challenges it so as to open it up to future possibilities.

Appropriation appears as a failed or incompetent act from the perspective of pedagogical models of 'smooth socialization'. While norm socialization seeks to discipline actors toward 'proper' and 'competent' enactments, appropriation points to 'improper' performances or to 'incompetent practices' – situations where 'actors either reflexively or self-consciously act incompetently in order to establish their identity – or more precisely, their identity itself is constituted by departing from what would constitute "competent performance"'.[108] These deliberately incompetent performances may take the form of transgressions that effect change in norms. For example, the anti-dam activists are often not recognized as legitimate interlocutors by policymakers when developing dam projects and are thus unauthorized as actors. But they nonetheless managed to effect a change in general perceptions about the utility of dam projects precisely through their 'incompetent performances', which failed to abide by the rules of economic rationality.[109] Thus, appropriation hinges on the idea that it is 'possible to speak with authority *without* being authorized to speak'.[110] In this vein,

[105] Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (Routledge, 1997).
[106] Finnemore, *National Interests in National Society*, p. 136.
[107] Butler, *Excitable Speech*, p. 90.
[108] Raymond Duvall and Arjun Chowdhury, 'Practices of theory', in Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot (eds), *International Practices* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 341.
[109] Duvall and Chowdhury, 'Practices of theory', p. 343.
[110] Butler, *Excitable Speech*, p. 157.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210525101642 Published online by Cambridge University Press

the recent securitization literature suggests that speaking about security in international politics itself becomes a way of establishing authority, even when actors do not necessarily have the prior established authority to speak about security.[111] This illustrates the fact that 'all performativity rests on the credible production of authority'.[112]

Besides performative contradiction, the second strategy of appropriation is inscription of difference into the norms actors adopt. Actors introduce difference into a norm in various forms, some of which are rhetorical devices that function as political strategies in normative engagements.[113] One widely used strategy is grafting, which refers to situations whereby actors insert one discourse into another.[114] Grafting is a strategy of norm-taking in which actors associate a new norm with a pre-existing norm to institute it. For example, the activists who advocated to ban chemical weapons grafted their emergent norm onto the previously established norm that prohibited poison.[115] Similarly, in the aftermath of the Second World War, the newly emerging postcolonial states defended their right to self-determination by grafting it onto human rights norms.[116] The strategy of grafting is employed not only by transnational actors to change local norms in line with international norms but also by local actors to reshape an international norm in their own context.[117]

The second strategy of inscribing difference into a norm is paleonymy, which is 'the retention of old names while grafting new meaning upon them'.[118] Paleonymy is a tactic that seeks to maintain 'an old name in order to launch a new concept'.[119] Here, the name of the norm is kept as a 'leverage for intervention' to 'keep a handle' on the operations of that norm.[120] For example, the meaning of sovereignty has changed from a state's right to non-intervention to a state's responsibility to protect the rights of its citizens. Similarly, the very meaning of the norm of equality has changed in line with changes in the responses to the questions of 'who is human' and 'equal with regard to what'.[121] These are paleonymic interventions since the signifier (the norm of sovereignty or equality) remains the same over time while its meaning gets reworked.

The third strategy is 'catachresis', which refers to 'improper use of words; application of a term to a thing which it does not properly denote; abuse or perversion of a trope or metaphor'.[122] A catachrestic engagement with a norm is one in which the norm is 'wrongly used, misapplied, and wrested from its proper meaning'.[123] As the etymological root of the word suggests ('perverted use'), catachresis is a form of appropriation that involves 'reversing, displacing and seizing the apparatus of value-coding'.[124] Spivak takes catachrestic claims-making as 'the deconstructive predicament of the postcolonial'.[125] She discusses the example of postcolonial appropriations of parliamentary democracy as an example of the subaltern's ability to 'catachretize democracy', that is, the subaltern's 'insertion and the reinscription of something which does not refer literally to the correct narrative of the emergence of parliamentary democracy'.[126] Such catachrestic appropriations both

[111] Philipsen, 'Performative securitization'.
[112] Butler, *Excitable Speech*, p. 151.
[113] Anne Norton, *95 Theses on Politics, Culture, and Method* (Yale University Press, 2004), p. 23.
[114] Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (Cornell University Press, 1982), p. 135.
[115] Richard Price, 'A genealogy of the chemical weapons taboo', *International Organization*, 49:1 (1995), pp. 73–103.
[116] Christian Reus-Smit, 'Struggles for individual rights and the expansion of the international system', *International Organization*, 65:2 (2011), pp. 207–42.
[117] Acharya, 'How ideas spread'.
[118] Culler, *On Deconstruction*, p. 142.
[119] Vincent B. Leitch, *Postmodernism – Local Effects, Global Flows* (SUNY Press, 1996), p. 28.
[120] Culler, *On Deconstruction*, p. 142.
[121] Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society*, p. 133.
[122] 'Catachresis, n.', *OED Online, available at {https://www.oed.com/dictionary/catachresis_n?tl=true}*.
[123] 'Catachrestic, adj.', *OED Online, available at {https://www.oed.com/dictionary/catachrestic_adj?tab=factsheet#10066450}*.
[124] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (Routledge, 1993), p. 63.
[125] Spivak, *Outside in the Teaching Machine,* pp. 183–4.
[126] Ashcroft et al., *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*, p. 30.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210525101642 Published online by Cambridge University Press

adopt and contest the norm by breaking with the norm's ordinary meanings and normalizing logic.

Fourth, inscription of difference into a norm can take the form of mimicry. Mimicry is a strategy of norm adoption through which actors repeat a norm in a way that is 'almost the same but not quite' as the prevalent articulation of that norm.[127] Mimicking creates ambivalent hybrid forms through which actors resist 'the project of conversion' entailed in the normalizing logic of norms.[128] The form of contestation that mimicry sets forth is not one of outright rejection but of differential repetition.[129] For example, in the radically asymmetrical encounter between the natives and Christian missionaries in colonial India, some converted natives demanded an Indianized Gospel, some rejected baptism, and some who agreed to be baptized said they would never take the sacrament. Such examples communicate the nature of colonial mimicry as 'at once a mode of appropriation and of resistance'.[130] Mimicking a norm may entail a 'mockery' of its normalizing logic and disturb the authority of the dominant discourse. Hence, the socialization that mimicking a norm entails is performative.

In constructivist IR scholarship, Alastair I. Johnston takes mimicking as a micro-process of socialization whereby 'a novice initially copies the behavioral norms – including discursive practices – of the group to navigate through an uncertain environment'.[131] However, in Johnston's account, the purpose of mimicking a pro-social behaviour is to conform to the normalizing logic of the norm to survive in the international arena. This rendition of mimicking undercuts the performative force that mimicry may command, as it does not leave much room for the inscription of difference into the norm. Bettiza and Lewis argue that 'authoritarian powers' in liberal international order engage in 'liberal mimicry' to reduce normative contestations to mere realpolitik struggle and to 'confuse and distract' through 'sowing uncertainty' and resorting to 'value relativism'.[132] Similarly, Burai takes Russian normative justifications of its interventions in Georgia and Ukraine as a parody of the norm of humanitarian intervention that makes a mockery of that norm by providing a polemical mimicry of it.[133]

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of strategies of appropriation; other strategies can unfold depending on the 'situational creativity' of actors.[134] Cultural translation and appropriation are also not mutually exclusive. Rather, actors often deploy them in various combinations in world politics. Moreover, socialization is more likely to take performative forms under certain conditions. First, constitutive or generic norms that define identities, core community values, and meta-rules are inherently more conducive to cultural translation and appropriation than regulative norms that issue specific rules or injunctions.[135] For example, the European Union's political criteria for membership (the 'Copenhagen criteria') include the constitutive norms of democracy, human rights, the rule of law, protection of minorities, and a market economy; these are more open to differential interpretations[136] than the economic criteria for membership (the 'Maastricht criteria'), which outline very specific regulative norms in the economic field. Second, if the gap between local and international norms is wide, then socialization is more likely to generate contestation. Similarly, if the norm in question destabilizes actors' previously upheld norms, then one can expect more friction. The inflection created by translation and appropriation will be greater the further the norm travels across cultural difference. In addition, the higher those vernacular norms

[127] Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, p. 122.
[128] Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, p. 169.
[129] Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, p. 295.
[130] Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, p. 172.
[131] Johnston, *Social States*, p. 23.
[132] Bettiza and Lewis, 'Authoritarian powers and norm contestation in the liberal ınternational order', p. 9.
[133] Erna Burai, 'Parody as norm contestation: Russian normative justifications in Georgia and Ukraine and their ımplications for global norms', *Global Society*, 30:1 (2016), pp. 67–77.
[134] Stritzel, 'Security as translation', p. 2496.
[135] Krook and True, 'Rethinking the life cycles of international norms', p. 104.
[136] Wiener, *The Invisible Constitution of Politics*.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210525101642 Published online by Cambridge University Press

perceived to be under risk rank in the local hierarchy of norms, the more transformative their translations and appropriations may get. For example, the norms about scientific management of state bureaucracies were not seen by non-Western actors as being 'costly' or culturally threatening,[137] unlike the emerging norms about humanitarian intervention and the Responsibility to Protect.[138]

Besides, performative modes of socialization cannot hold if a norm is rejected outright or adopted without any reservations. This is particularly evident when examining state actors – such as Saudi Arabia and the Taliban – and non-state actors – like al-Qaeda – who explicitly refuse the normativity of democracy. In their view, democracy is untranslatable into an Islamic context; therefore, they forgo any attempt to appropriate it. Given that these actors do not invoke the authority of the norm of democracy, no room exists to negotiate it. Reworking of a norm in the form of translation or appropriation requires some form of prior socialization into that norm.

Finally, the analytics of performativity is agnostic about the normative desirability of the outcome of norm contestations. Contestation over a norm may 'expand and deepen' the norm as it may 'reverse or empty' its content.[139] Cultural translation and appropriation may bring about 'mutual enrichment' as much as 'subordination'.[140] The difference introduced into a norm through cultural translation or appropriation may be morally desirable or troubling, which can only be evaluated based on spelt-out normative standards in particular instances.[141] Moreover, it is worth noting that the practices of translation and appropriation are not limited solely to the weak and the marginalized, as the powerful also employ these strategies on occasion. A compelling illustration of this phenomenon is evident in the US government's efforts to redefine the anti-torture norm following the September 11 attacks, which resulted in the radical expansion of the scope of permissible punishments of prisoners short of torture.[142] In this case, the USA did not reject the norm outright; instead, it appropriated it by undermining its normalizing logic that categorically prohibited physical and psychological torture.

To illustrate the interpretive leverage of this theoretical account, the next section examines the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's performative socialization into the norm of democracy.

The Muslim Brotherhood's translation and appropriation of democracy in Egypt: 'Islamic democracy' and the 'Islamic civil state'

After widespread uprisings compelled the Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak to resign in early 2011, the Muslim Brotherhood, which was at that time the predominant Islamist movement in Egypt with a network of influence throughout the Muslim world, established the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP). Subsequently, the party triumphed in the presidential elections of 2012, resulting in the ascension of Mohammad Morsi to power; however, his tenure was abruptly ended a year later as the result of a military coup led by Abdalfattah Al-Sisi. This tumultuous process heightened the ongoing debates among researchers and observers about the Brotherhood's relationship to democracy. Critics argue that the movement 'can't be democratic' for it does not endorse secularism and seeks to enshrine *shari'a* (Islamic normativity and law) in the constitution.[143] By blending religion and politics, they argue, the Brotherhood is bound to produce a theocratic dictatorship. Hasan Al-Bannā, who founded the movement in the late 1920s, rejected party politics (*hizbiyya*), claiming that it undermined the unity of the Muslim community in the face of Western imperialism.

[137] Finnemore, *National Interests in International Society*.

[138] Acharya, 'How ideas spread'.

[139] Krook and True, 'Rethinking the life cycles of international norms', p. 109.

[140] Zwingel, 'How do norms travel?', p. 124.

[141] Judith Butler gives the example of appropriation of 'civil rights' discourse to oppose affirmative action policies, but such 'perilous expropriations', for her, can only be countered and interrupted by 'an aggressive reappropriation' of the civil rights discourse. Butler, *Excitable Speech*, p. 93.

[142] Schmidt and Sikkink, 'Breaking the ban?'

[143] Bassam Tibi, 'Why they can't be democratic', *Journal of Democracy*, 19:3 (2008), pp. 43–8; *The Sharia State: Arab Spring and Democratization* (Routledge, 2013).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210525101642 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Yet, he later ran for parliament as an independent candidate in two elections, albeit without success.[144] In the mid-twentieth century, under the influence of Sayyid Qutb, the Brotherhood viewed democracy as a usurpation of God's sovereignty and hence a form of apostasy. By the early 1980s, however, after long interactions and internal debates, the movement came to adopt democracy as a legitimate form of governance, which resulted in its first participation in the parliamentary elections in 1984 with independent candidates. From that point on, the movement would be a constant independent electoral force in the Egyptian political landscape until the military coup in 2013. The Muslim Brotherhood's transformation accelerated after the end of the Cold War as it further appealed to democracy as a global norm. The movement was increasingly being socialized into the norm of democracy and differentiating itself from Salafi and jihadi Islamist movements that rejected the Islamic legitimacy of democracy and resorted to violence. However, despite this socialization, the secular underpinnings of liberal democracy still troubled the movement. For the Brotherhood, democracy was compatible with an Islamic frame of reference, but secularism was not.

On 9 January 2011, at the height of the protests against the incumbent president Hosni Mubarak, Essam El-Errian, then the spokesperson of the Brotherhood, wrote an op-ed for the *New York Times* communicating his movement's vision for the future of Egypt to domestic and especially international audiences:

> As our nation heads toward liberty, however, we disagree with the claims that the only options in Egypt are a purely secular, liberal democracy or an authoritarian theocracy. Secular liberal democracy of the American and European variety, with its firm rejection of religion in public life, is not the exclusive model for a legitimate democracy. In Egypt, religion continues to be an important part of our culture and heritage. Moving forward, we envision the establishment of a democratic, civil state that draws on universal measures of freedom and justice, which are central Islamic values. We embrace democracy not as a foreign concept that must be reconciled with tradition, but as a set of principles and objectives that are inherently compatible with and reinforce Islamic tenets.[145]

This short excerpt succinctly articulates the performative mode through which the Brotherhood socializes into the norm of democracy. Here El-Errian lays claim to democracy and hence affirms its normative authority, but disowns 'secular liberalism' as its sole modus operandi and normalizing logic. Instead, he invokes alternative models of 'legitimate democracy'. For El-Errian, 'a purely secular, liberal democracy … of the American and European variety' indexes a pedagogic mode of socializing into democracy, whereas 'authoritarian theocracy' signifies a total rejection of it – both undesirable options for him. Suggesting that these two choices do not exhaust the meaningful possibilities for his country, El-Errian instead engages in the cultural translation and appropriation of democracy, affirming the universality of the norm of democracy while wresting it from its prevalent 'secular liberal' instantiation. El-Errian derives democracy's universality from its 'inherent compatibility' with Islamic norms. He cites democracy as a norm, yet his citation comes with a claim to difference. The difference his movement seeks to insert into democracy stems from its interpretation of Islam, which, he claims, 'continues to be an important part' of the country's 'culture and heritage' – its History 2s, in Chakrabarty's language.

The Muslim Brotherhood's politics of cultural translation rests on the ambivalent equivalence it establishes between the modern norm of democracy and the Islamic principle of *shura* (consultation). It translates democracy into the Egyptian context as the modern institutional embodiment of *shura*. By taking them to be both equivalent ('shura/democracy')[146] and non-equivalent ('shura

[144]Mona El-Ghobashy, 'The metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 37:3 (2005), pp. 373–95.

[145]Essam El-Errian, 'What the Muslim Brothers want', *The New York Times* (9 February 2011).

[146]'Election program: The Freedom and Justice Party' (2011), p. 36, available at https://kurzman.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1410/2011/06/FJP_2011_English.pdf.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210525101642 Published online by Cambridge University Press

and democracy'),[147] the Brotherhood claims the norm while seeking to inject difference into it. It participates in the normative authority of democracy but seeks to wrest it from its normalizing logic – secular liberalism – by grafting democracy onto the Islamic norm of *shura*. For the Brotherhood, 'shura is what makes authority legitimate, and the continuation of legitimacy hinges on the application of the Shari'a'.[148] Hence its idea of 'democratic/Islamic consultation'.[149]

The FJP's 2011 parliamentary election programme states that it aspires to a 'national constitutional Islamic modern democracy, based on shari'a as a frame of reference'.[150] It posits that the state shall be 'democratic, based on the *Shura* (consultation) principles'.[151] This idea made its way into the 2012 Egyptian Constitution – passed under the influence of Islamists –which defined the 'principles of democracy and Shura' as the basis of the political system. Quite strikingly, the 2013 Constitution, drafted after the military coup, dropped this coupling of democracy and *shura* and referred only to democracy instead. The FJP's programme unpacks the meaning of the Islamic norm of *shura* and underlines its centrality:

> Shura is not merely a political principle governing only the forms of political relations. Indeed, it is a pattern of behaviour and a general approach to managing various aspects of life in the State, in addition to being a frame of work for faith and a moral guide for the behavior of individuals and their social relations, instilled in the hearts and minds of individuals, families, societies and the rulers […].[152]

However, despite its centrality in discourse, no specific or unique institution came out of the Brotherhood's invocation of *shura*, except for the controversial Article 4 of the 2012 Constitution. The article stipulated that the Islamic scholars of Egypt's Al-Azhar University would be consulted on matters pertaining to *sharia*, but did not specify whether the outcome of the consultation would be legally binding.[153] Instead, by trying to establish an equivalence between democracy and *shura*, the Brotherhood sought to wrest democracy from its dominant liberal secular valence and to secure a space for cultural difference. The Brotherhood paleonymically keeps the term democracy but seeks to charge it with a different meaning and substance – a supposedly Islamic one. This attempt to resignify democracy entails reducing it to a mere procedural mechanism for the peaceful transfer of power through free and fair elections. In order to isolate democracy from its prevalent historical and cultural significations – mainly, liberalism and secularism – the movement adopts the minimalist procedural vision of democracy (ironically, also a liberal one), but insists that the substance of politics should be informed by *shari'a*. This amounts to a vision of democracy that is expressly non-liberal and non-secular.

The Brotherhood repudiates secularism as unacceptable, but, interestingly, endorses the idea of the 'civility of the state' (*madaniyyat al-dawla*). Its electoral programme for the 2007 Shura Council elections stipulated that the 'Islamic state is necessarily a civil state'.[154] The movement and its political party call for an 'Islamic state that is not religious' and for 'a civil state that is Islamic'. This sounds somewhat paradoxical. After all, how can an Islamic state not be a religious

[147] 'Election program: The Freedom and Justice Party', p. 2.

[148] Ahmad S. Moussalli, 'Hasan Al-Bannā's Islamist discourse on constitutional rule and Islamic State', *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 4:2 (1993), p. 174.

[149] 'Election program: The Freedom and Justice Party', p. 36.

[150] 'Election program: The Freedom and Justice Party', p. 10.

[151] 'Election program: The Freedom and Justice Party', p. 11.

[152] 'Election program: The Freedom and Justice Party', p. 11.

[153] Rachel M. Scott, *Recasting Islamic Law: Religion and the Nation State in Egyptian Constitution Making* (Cornell University Press, 2021).

[154] 'The Electoral Programme of the Muslim Brotherhood for Shura Council in 2007', available at: {https://www.ikhwanweb.com/article.php?id=822}, accessed 12 July 2022.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210525101642 Published online by Cambridge University Press

state? And if the state is not to be religious, how is it then not secular? The 'civil state' is the concept through which Muslim Brotherhood and its political party navigate, rather than resolve, this paradox.

The term 'civil state' is a highly contested concept within the Egyptian political landscape. The Brotherhood's FJP defines civility as the principle of non-theocratic, non-secular, and non-militaristic political governance. Here the Brotherhood negotiates Islam's relationship with the state and politics through a double rejection of both theocracy and secularism. The two Arabic translations of the term secularism, '*almaniyya* and '*ilmaniyya*, denote a sense of profanization and positivist scientism, respectively. The Brotherhood repudiates both understandings of secularism to open up a space for the public role of religion within a democratic settlement. According to the FJP's 2011 electoral programme, an Islamic state – a state which implements *shari'a* – is not a religious state, since a religious state is by nature theocratic (*dawla theoqratiyya*) and as such antithetical to Islam. A religious state is 'governed by the clergy or by Divine Right', but there can be 'no infallible people who can monopolize the interpretation of the Holy Koran and have exclusive right to legislation for the nation'.[155] There is no clerical class in Islam, hence 'the rulers in the Islamic state are citizens elected according to the will of the people; and the nation is the source of authority'.[156] The ruler has no religious authority, but as the leader of the community, he is charged with the task of implementing *shari'a*.

In formulating an Islamic civil state, the Brotherhood indeed ends up endorsing a particular form of secularism (understood as the rule of lay people) as compatible with Islamic tradition, in repudiation of a thick form of secularism (understood as the radical separation of religion and politics and the relegation of religion to private sphere), which it considers to be repugnant to Islamic teachings. The Brotherhood's civil state is lay and non-theocratic, but not secular.[157] In the Brotherhood's discourse, both religious and secular states are perils to be avoided, and the civil state stands as the non-religious and non-secular third way.

Critics discard these distinctions as oxymoronic[158] and find the idea of democracy within the bounds of *shari'a* as equally contradictory.[159] Others point to the limitations of binary treatments of the religious versus the secular in understanding Egyptian politics.[160] Ascribing too much stability to these concepts and taking them as mutually exclusive makes it difficult to understand complex and at times confusing articulations such as the Brotherhood's call for an Islamic state which is not religious and a civil state which is not secular. It also highlights the deeply contested nature of core political norms such as democracy, civility, and secularism. The facts that an Islamist movement rejects a religious state and many self-identified secularist Egyptians want to see *shari'a* enshrined in the constitution[161] highlight the significance of attending to the nuances of meaning-making processes with respect to international norms in particular contexts.

These complicated and at times paradoxical statements indicate that the Muslim Brotherhood's engagement with modern democratic norms cannot be shoehorned into a story of rejection of these norms (anti-socialization), just as it cannot be seen as an unconditional endorsement of them ('smooth socialization'). Rather, what is at stake here is an attempt to negotiate these democratic norms and institutions, together with other attendant modern norms such as secularism.

[155]'Election Program: The Freedom and Justice Party', p. 11.

[156]'Election Program: The Freedom and Justice Party', p. 11.

[157]Gudrun Kramer, 'Islamist Notions of Democracy', *Middle East Report*, 183 (1993), p. 6.

[158]Mariz Tadros, *The Muslim Brotherhood in Contemporary Egypt: Democracy Redefined Or Confined?* (Routledge, 2012), p. 66.

[159]Asef Bayat, *Making Islam Democratic: Social Movements and the Post-Islamist Turn* (Stanford University Press, 2007).

[160]Hussein Ali Agrama, *Questioning Secularism: Islam, Sovereignty, and the Rule of Law in Modern Egypt* (University of Chicago Press, 2012); Jocelyne Cesari, *The Awakening of Muslim Democracy* (Cambridge University Press, 2014); Rachel M. Scott, 'Managing religion and renegotiating the secular: The Muslim Brotherhood and defining the religious sphere', *Politics and Religion*, 7:1 (2014), pp. 51–78.

[161]Nathan J. Brown, 'Debating the Islamic shari'a in 21st-century Egypt', *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, 10:4 (2012), pp. 9–17.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210525101642 Published online by Cambridge University Press

By translating modern categories and classical Islamic categories into each other and by trying to bring *shari*'a and democracy together, the Brotherhood at once adopts and contests democracy as a norm (performative socialization). It grafts democracy onto the Islamic norm of *shura*. As such, the Brotherhood's brand of 'Islamic democracy' is a catachrestic form of appropriation which disentangles democracy from its secular liberal configurations and inscribes a purportedly 'Islamic' difference into it. It paleonymically holds the concept of democracy but seeks to dissociate it from thick forms of secularism. Its mimicry of democratic norms creates the hybrid form of 'Islamic democracy', which contests the authority of secular liberalism as its defining framework. It invokes the universality of the norm of democracy and claims to partake in it, but secular conventions of liberal international order do not authorize the Brotherhood to 'properly' participate in the norm. As Elisabeth S. Hurd points out, the liberal international order seeks to 'lure [Islamists] toward a European model of secularism and punish them economically and politically should they stray from this trajectory'.[162] But the Brotherhood nonetheless lays claim to the norm by invoking 'Islamic democracy', thus socializing into the norm by adopting the normative authority of democracy (something it rejected a few decades ago), while contesting its normalizing power – its secular liberal instantiation.

Conclusion

This paper argues that the analytics of performativity helps us better understand how contestation occurs within norm socialization. Socialization explains how actors participate in a broader normative order and transform their identities and interests in the process, yet its performative dynamics highlight the possibility that they may contest the pedagogic force of 'smooth socialization' through practices of cultural translation and strategies of appropriation. In other words, performativity accounts for how actors may endorse the normative power of a norm while contesting its normalizing power – its prevalent interpretation and implementation. In that sense, performativity highlights the ways in which socialization and contestation are mutually implicated. It also underlines the deeply conditioned nature of agency in norm processes, guarding against an excessively agentic voluntarism as well as structural determinism. A performative account rests on the recognition that actors do not freely modify or play with norms as they wish since they operate under the various pressures and constraints that are differentially placed on them. Performativity synthesizes insights from both socialization and contestation perspectives by seeking to avoid their shortcomings – the underplaying of the agency of non-Western actors in the socialization narratives and the overplaying of agency to the non-West in various contestation accounts. It thus accounts for both the disciplinary normalizing forces operative within norm processes and the creative strategic agency of actors to shape norms.

In this vein, this analytic optic makes three theoretical interventions. First, it construes socialization as a process of cultural translation of norms rather than actors' simple transition into their prescribed meanings. Second, it elucidates strategies of norm appropriation through which actors disjoint the normative power of a norm (its desirability and appropriateness) from its normalizing power (its prevalent meaning and implementation) and how they adopt the former while challenging the latter. Lastly, it points to how actors contest relationships of hierarchy and structures of authority in norm socialization processes through the performative practices of cultural translation and appropriation.

The article then briefly illustrates the analytical purchase of this theoretical framework in the case of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's cultural translation and appropriation of democracy as a global norm. It analyses the Brotherhood's discourses of 'Islamic democracy' and the 'Islamic civil state' as an indication of its performative socialization into the norm of democracy. This reading aligns with 'meaning-in-use' approaches to international norms, as it pays attention to the

[162]Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations* (Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 128.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210525101642 Published online by Cambridge University Press

contextuality and intersubjectivity of normative engagements, which highlights the contestation-generating process of the evolution of the meaning of norms through the interaction of actors and norms in specific cultural contexts.[163] Concurring with Claudia Aradau, this performative account draws attention to 'the worksites of democracy, where reappropriations and misappropriations are possible, be these about norms, ideas, identities, or infrastructures'.[164] In doing so, this study not only addresses 'the relative silence' of the constructivist research on Islamism[165] but also answers the call that 'Islamic democracy is an increasingly salient concept [whose] appeal needs to be studied'.[166] It argues that the Brotherhood affirms democracy's normative authority yet contests its normalizing force – its hegemonic articulation as 'secular liberal democracy of the American and European variety'.[167] As part of its broader project of creating an Islamic modernity by 'Islamizing' modern norms and institutions,[168] the Brotherhood appropriates democracy in the form of 'Islamic democracy' by contesting its secular liberal valence within the liberal international order. It seeks to Islamize democracy by envisioning 'a civil state with an Islamic reference'. It engages in cultural translation through establishing an equivalence between democracy and the Islamic concept of *shura*. It. In that sense, if secular liberal democracy represents a 'voyage out'– that is, the world-wide expansion of Western-originated norms and institutions – then the Brotherhood's claim to 'Islamic democracy' is a 'voyage in': 'a conscious effort to enter into the discourse of the West, to mix with it, transform it'.[169]

This reading has significant implications for global politics since most political struggles are increasingly forged through contesting the meaning and implementation of the constitutive norms of the liberal international order. As this order continues to unravel in our time, we observe a heightened resort to performative modes of engagement with international norms. While the consequences of such performativity might be troubling at times, it is crucial to recall that contestation is a *sine qua non* for a democratic politics, domestically and internationally. To imagine a politics without contestation is to envision a social life without difference. Klotz and Lynch contend that '[l]iberalism, or any other form of discursive dominance, shuts down alternative ways of thinking and acting'.[170] Critics see the liberal imaginary as being 'systematically closed to the possibility of relating democratically to difference',[171] such that it seeks either to 'liquidate' or to 'liberate' its other.[172] In contrast, attending to the performative dynamics of contestation prompts us to take norms as structurally open to differential and conflicting claims. Performativity helps us think together the universalizing patterns of liberal modernity *and* the cultural differences that punctuate liberal normalization. As a social and relational process, socialization is not simply a process of normalization and homogenization, but also a terrain of contestation wrought with friction. The performative politics of translation and appropriation supplement and potentially trouble the normalizing logic of socialization. This is the democratic promise, but also the precariousness – perhaps even the peril – of performativity's analytical and political intervention in world politics:

[163]Antje Wiener, 'Enacting meaning-in-use: Qualitative research on norms and international relations', *Review of International Studies*, 35:1 (2009), p. 179.

[164]Claudia Aradau, 'Performative politics and international relations', *New Perspectives*, 25:2 (2017), p. 72.

[165]Fiona B. Adamson, 'Global liberalism versus political Islam: Competing ideological frameworks in international politics', *International Studies Review*, 7:4 (2005), p. 565.

[166]Kathleen Collins and Erica Owen, 'Islamic religiosity and regime preferences explaining support for democracy and political Islam in Central Asia and the Caucasus', *Political Research Quarterly*, 65:3 (2012), p. 501.

[167]El-Errian, 'What the Muslim Brothers want'.

[168]Roxanne L. Euben, 'Premodern, antimodern or postmodern? Islamic and western critiques of modernity', *The Review of Politics*, 59:3 (1997), pp. 429–60; Quintan Wiktorowicz, *The Management of Islamic Activism: Salafis, the Muslim Brotherhood, and State Power in Jordan* (State University of New York Press, 2000).

[169]Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (Vintage Books, 1994), p. 260.

[170]Audie Klotz and Cecelia Lynch, *Strategies for Research in Constructivist International Relations* (M. E. Sharpe, 2007), p. 51.

[171]Himadeep Muppidi, *The Politics of the Global* (University of Minnesota Press, 2004), p. 65.

[172]Chatterjee, *The Black Hole of Empire*, p. 66.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210525101642 Published online by Cambridge University Press

it keeps its constitutive norms and discourses open to new meanings and possibilities. Such openness may sometimes yield rather unsettling outcomes, yet it is also thanks to this openness that norms diffuse in widely different social contexts. This leaves us at 'the restless and inescapable politics of historical difference',[173] whereby the homogenizing forces of liberal norms and the social imaginaries anchored in different traditions stand in tension and constantly seek to interrupt each other.

Acknowledgements. I would like to extend my gratitude to my dissertation advisor, Raymond D. Duvall, and to Kathleen Collins, Ron R. Krebs, Shaden Tageldin, and participants of the Minnesota International Relations Colloquium (MIRC) at the Department of Political Science at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities for their constructive feedback on earlier iterations of this project. I am also grateful to the editors and the three anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions.

Funding statements. This research was supported by the Department of Political Science and the Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Global Change at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities.

Competing interests. The author reports that there are no competing interests to declare.

İsmail Yaylacı is Assistant Professor at the Institute of Middle East and Islamic Countries at Marmara University in Istanbul, Türkiye. He is the co-editor of *Civilizations and World Order: Geopolitics and Cultural Difference* (Lexington Books, 2014) and of *A Transforming Diplomacy and Turkey: Actors, Fields, Instruments* (Küre Publications, 2020). His research interests include International Relations theory, international norms and institutions, international ethics, Turkish foreign policy, Middle East politics, Islam and International Relations, and modern Islamic political thought and movements.

[173] Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, p. 70.

Cite this article: İsmail Yaylacı, 'Performative socialization in world politics', *Review of International Studies* (2025), pp. 1–20. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210525101642

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210525101642 Published online by Cambridge University Press