

Norms for the Earth: Changing the Climate on “Climate Change”

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Abstract

Climate change poses a grave security threat to national borders, habitats, and vulnerable people. Plagued by asymmetries in both states' vulnerability to climate impacts and their capacity to mitigate them, climate change presents states with a “wicked” problem that poses significant obstacles to interest-based solutions. Yet, most global climate change policy involves rationales and mechanisms grounded in an interest-based logic of consequences: information-sharing, reciprocity, and exchange. We argue that strategies that promote ethics-based discourse and policies offer considerable promise for hastening stronger global climate governance. We argue that successes in human security norm-building, including bans on land mines, cluster munitions, and nuclear weapons, provide climate scholars and practitioners with alternative governance models that rely on activating a logic of appropriateness and spearhead faster, more effective climate action. We identify five strategies that previous scholars have shown fostered efforts to promote a logic of appropriateness in human rights, humanitarian law, and disarmament. We examine the empirical experience of those strategies and particularly highlight the recent success of efforts to negotiate a treaty banning nuclear weapons. Given the success of these strategies in other issue areas, we argue scholars of climate change could fruitfully focus greater attention on political efforts that promote strong global ethical norms for climate action.

Keywords: climate change, nuclear weapons, humanitarian disarmament, norms, ethics

On July 7, 2017, 122 nations finalized negotiations for a United Nations (UN) treaty comprehensively outlawing nuclear weapons. By attaching a sense of ethical opprobrium to states that have nuclear weapons, states departed from earlier treaties that limited the proliferation and testing of nuclear weapons even as they legitimized their existence and potential use (Tannenwald 2007). Negotiation of the Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty involved an effort to transform nuclear arms control from a discussion of deterrence and nonproliferation to one of moral obligation, disarmament, and the impacts of nuclear weapons “on human beings—our health, our societies, and the environment on which we all depend”

(International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons 2017a, 2017b).

The success of these and similar efforts to ground international weapons bans in logics of moral obligation rather than logics of self-interested reciprocity offer useful parallels to climate change. Despite important differences between these issue areas, their similarities provide valuable insights for efforts to address climate change. Both issue areas involve existential security threats to many nations, people, and the planet. Both are of global scope, bedeviled by asymmetric capacities and vulnerabilities. Moreover, both involve interactions between a majority group of weak states,

middle-power states, and nonstate actors seeking strong action and a few powerful veto-player states seeking to block progress. In short, both reflect “super-wicked” problem structures that pose significant obstacles to international cooperation (Brown, Harris, and Russell 2010; Levin et al. 2012).

Policy entrepreneurs have responded to similar obstacles in many human security and disarmament issues, by rejecting interest-based approaches in favor of strong ethical norms built on a logic of appropriateness. In climate politics, however, both the policy and scholarly realms remain dominated by a consequentialist framework based on strategies of reciprocity, sanctions, rewards, and the like that are intended to convince states that fulfilling their climate commitments is in their self-interest rather than that doing so is the moral thing to do (Milkoreit 2015).¹ Appropriateness-based ethical discourses, suggesting that powerful states and citizenries are morally obligated to sacrifice their material interests on behalf of vulnerable others, are more muted.

We join scholars who seek to ground climate governance in an ethics-based approach (Gardiner 2010; Hayward 2012; Wapner 2014; UNESCO 2016). However, rather than delineating a normative argument for climate action, our aim is to consider empirical evidence from other issue areas regarding how advocates of such action convert ethical concern into political will by transforming interest-based discourses to ethics-based ones. Drawing on the extensive literature on human security norms (Finnemore 1996; Keck and Sikkink 1998; March and Olsen 1998; Risse 2000; Crawford 2002), we argue that ethics-based strategies based in a “logic of appropriateness” (March and Olsen 1998) offer considerable promise in addressing problem structures, characterized by the types of asymmetric capacities, vulnerabilities, and veto-player intransigence present in the climate arena.

We begin by outlining the inadequate progress on climate change to date, linking this to the predominance of interest-based discourse and mechanisms in climate governance. We then consolidate knowledge about norm-building successes in human rights and humanitarian disarmament into five key ethics-based strategies that climate practitioners could use to hasten and deepen

emission reductions under the climate regime. We illustrate each strategy with evidence from the nuclear security experience. We argue scholars of climate change could fruitfully focus more of their scholarship on evaluating the operation and effectiveness of such strategies, given their success in other issue areas. We conclude by exploring how practitioners might apply these insights in the climate arena.

Interests versus Ethics and the Paradox of Climate Governance to Date

In climate change, as in other areas of global governance, states negotiate treaties to alter behaviors that certain states see as leading to suboptimal outcomes. Proponents of action must determine whether to ground a treaty in interest-based rationales, ethics-based rationales, or both. By interest-based rationales, we refer to calls for action designed to activate what March and Olsen (1998) refer to as a logic of consequences, encouraging actors to negotiate and fulfill agreements based on calculations involving their material interests. By ethics-based rationales, we refer to calls for actions designed to activate a logic of appropriateness, encouraging states to assess their social interest in gaining and maintaining a certain civic identity by behaving in certain ways. This often requires states to subsume their brute material interests on behalf of vulnerable others—because it is the “right” or “civilized” thing to do, independent of how other states behave.

States can design treaties and treaty processes to activate either of these logics. Most trade agreements, for example, rely on interest-based strategies of information-sharing, reciprocity, and exchange to convince states to reduce their trade barriers because doing so, when reciprocated, fosters their own economic growth. Most human rights and labor rights agreements, by contrast, rely on ethics-based discourses designed to convince states to adopt new (or end existing) policies because doing so, despite attendant political or economic costs, is the moral, socially appropriate, and “right” thing to do. Trade agreements target the cost-calculating logic assumed to drive trade policy while human rights treaties target the norm-following logic assumed to drive human rights policies.²

1 To be sure, climate justice, equality, and other normative considerations are playing an increasing role in both climate change discourse and policy (Pettenger 2007). Yet, following Thomas (2000), we distinguish these normative concerns about how states reduce emissions from ethical claims about why and how much emissions should be reduced to avoid creating existential threats to vulnerable people.

2 The dichotomous description here is not intended to deny that each type of logic in truth engages both norms—defined as intersubjectively agreed standards of behavior—and interests. For example, trade agreements often incorporate a practice-based “norm” of trade reciprocity, and human rights agreements often incorporate threats of sanctions for their violation,

Arms control and environmental treaties sit between these extremes, with states having used both interest-based and ethics-based strategies to address collective action problems in these realms. For example, bilateral US-Soviet arms control treaties rely on reciprocal obligations buttressed by verification procedures designed to allow timely withdrawal so states can protect their interests. However, chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons-testing treaties combine strong ethics-based prohibition norms with instrumental efforts to deter through verification and enforcement (Nadelmann 1990; Price 1995, 1998; Tannenwald 2007). Most fisheries treaties encourage restraint by threatening reversion to the overfishing status quo if other states do not reciprocate such restraint. The international whaling regime initially adopted such an interest-based model but, over time, developed an ethics-based discourse that reframed whaling in moral terms (D'Amato and Chopra 1991; Mitchell 1998; Epstein 2008). Endangered species treaties, such as the *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species* (1973) and the *Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals* (1979), combine interest-based appeals based in the “aesthetic, scientific, cultural, recreational, and economic” value of various species with ethics-based appeals that frame each species as an “irreplaceable part of the natural systems of the earth” (CITES Secretariat 1973; UNEP/CMS Secretariat 1979).

To date, interest-based strategies have dominated both intergovernmental policy and scholarship related to reducing climate change emissions (Milkoreit 2015, 399). States, international organizations (IOs), and global civil society groups have been “working the climate change problem” scientifically and diplomatically since at least the 1970s (Torrance 2006). Global emissions have continued to grow in response to continuing growth in population and affluence among both developed and developing countries and despite positive progress in reducing carbon intensity and energy intensity, especially in developed countries (Kaya and Yokobori 1997; Waggoner and Ausubel 2002; Brown, Harris, and Russell 2010; Levin et al. 2012). In political terms, however, the failure of global society to slow emissions growth reflects incentives and incapacities. Powerful veto-player states with the greatest capacities to take climate action have weak incentives to do so, while the weak and middle-power states that have stronger incentives for such action have

aimed at progressively socializing states (Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 2013). Nonetheless, our focus is on the *rationales* for these rules rather than the mechanisms by which they are implemented.

limited capacities to do so.³ These incentives and incapacities reflect deeply entrenched economic, political, sociological, psychological, and normative structures that give actors few incentives to change the status quo and create considerable resistance to efforts for change that do arise (Swim et al. 2009; Nagel, Dietz, and Broadbent 2010).

These characteristics have shaped international climate institutions, with negotiations resulting in only modest emissions reduction goals (or action) and little discussion of restraining consumption patterns or population to mitigate the problem. Between 1990 and 2014, carbon emissions of developing states grew dramatically (+ 200 percent) while those of developed states declined only modestly (–8 percent), generating net global growth of more than 50 percent (International Energy Agency 2016, 10–11). Without assessing whether emission levels reflect the Kyoto Protocol’s influence or other factors, it is clear that both developed and developing state emissions continue to exceed the levels needed to avert major climate impacts (Grubb 2016; Shishlov, Morel, and Bellassen 2016; Harris and Lee 2017). Put simply, whatever the success of efforts to date, more significant action is needed.

Efforts to generate climate action have largely focused on reconstituting veto players’ understandings of their material interests. Epistemic communities (including the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) have sought to foster cooperation by disseminating scientific knowledge intended to clarify the risks and costs of climate inaction while identifying opportunities for low-cost climate action (Haas 2016). International agreements have relied primarily on reciprocal commitments and monitoring and review procedures to reassure states and promote reciprocity. Agreements have also fostered emissions trading, financial and technology transfers, and capacity-building. Scholars have proposed carbon taxes, climate clubs, emissions sequestration, and various other strategies (see, for example, Aldy and Stavins 2010).

The common theme among these efforts is their grounding in a logic of consequences that assumes actors adopt new behaviors only when convinced that those behaviors will promote their material interests, that the costs and benefits of climate action are larger than those of climate inaction (March and Olsen 1998). Political rhetoric for climate action tends to focus on how to make emissions reduction palatable to the interests of the “most responsible” states rather than highlighting

3 As Christiana Figueres, former executive secretary of the UNFCCC, recently noted, “the most affected billions reside in the countries least able to act” (Figueres 2016).

the moral obligations of those states to avoid harming vulnerable others. Discussions of climate science often seek to convince responsible states that reducing emissions will promote their interests by reducing the chances of negative impacts, generating economic benefits, or fostering other values they already care about (Keohane and Victor 2016, 4). As Dimitrov notes, the Paris Agreement was achieved in response to “persuasive arguments about the economic benefits of climate action [that] altered preferences” (2016, 1). Rather than a discourse of ethical obligations to the planet and vulnerable humans, the major rationales for climate action reflect a discourse of scientific assessments, economics, and material and instrumental reasoning (Adger et al. 2011, 2).

Ethical arguments have not been absent from climate politics but they rarely have served as the dominant frame for climate action. Consider the texts of major climate treaties. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) frames its “ultimate objective” of stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations and protecting the climate system as a way “to allow ecosystems to adapt naturally to climate change, to ensure that food production is not threatened, and to enable economic development to proceed in a sustainable manner” (UNFCCC Secretariat 1992). It presents protection of ecosystems, the planet, and those at risk for inadequate food production or economic development as checks on climate action, not as rationales for it.⁴ The 2015 Paris Climate Agreement replicates this approach, framing ethical concerns as constraints on, rather than rationales for, climate action. It seeks “to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change, in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty.” The Paris Agreement requires states to “respect, promote, and consider their respective obligations” toward various vulnerable groups “when taking action to address climate change,” but it does not require that they set emission targets at levels that avert such impacts on such groups.

4 Article 3 of the UNFCCC notes the following: “The specific needs and special circumstances of developing country Parties, especially those that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change, and of those Parties, especially developing country Parties, that would have to bear a disproportionate or abnormal burden *under the Convention*, should be given full consideration . . . Measures taken to combat climate change, including unilateral ones, should not constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on international trade.” It discusses protecting vulnerable people in terms of the inequity of action, not the inequity of *inaction*.

That said, ethics-based climate discourses do exist. Compare the language above to the alternative discourse of Pope Francis’ 2015 Encyclical “On Care of our Common Home.” Rather than emphasize a common material interest in averting climate change, Pope Francis urges a shift “in underlying perspectives and attitudes” (Young 2016, 130). He analogizes the Earth to a sister who “cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her” and frames climate change and environmental degradation as a failure of rich and powerful humans to fulfill their responsibilities to, and respect the rights of, poor and disenfranchised humans, other species, and the Earth. The pope argues in terms of responsibilities and relationships, not self-interest. “We are part of nature” on an Earth that has been “entrusted to us”; we have no right to push others species, which “have value in themselves,” to extinction or to exploit them as mere resources; we are required to respect and show special care to the basic and inalienable rights of all humans, including indigenous peoples and future generations (Pope Francis 2015, 104, 177, 25, 116, 109, 118). Many others, including scholars, have produced similar normative arguments for climate action (see, Gardiner 2010; Mittler 2014; Wapner 2014).

Scholarly assessments suggest that ethics-based arguments have had limited influence on climate governance to date but may be creating conditions for their greater influence in the future (Globus Veldman, Szasz, and Haluza-DeLay 2012; Glaab 2017). Haas (2016) argues that the environmental domain has been characterized by epistemic communities focusing on disseminating scientific knowledge rather than norm entrepreneurs promoting principled discourse.⁵ To be sure, ethics-based arguments have emerged in the climate realm, but the potential of different strategies to construct ethical norms against continued carbon emissions have received relatively little scholarly attention and even less policy uptake (see, Nicholson and Chong 2011; Harris and Symons 2013; Hjerpe and Buhr 2014; Hadden and Seybert 2016; Vanhala and Hestbaek 2016).⁶ Most that have been

5 Note, however, that epistemic communities have also been important in human rights, health, justice, humanitarian and disarmament networks (Carpenter 2014; Peterson 2010; Rowen 2017; Schneiker 2016).

6 For example, of 156 articles published in *Global Environmental Politics* (a top subfield journal) since January 2011, seventy-three pertained to climate change, but, of those, only eighteen (25 percent) had the keywords “norms,” “framing,” “equity,” “discourse,” or “justice” in the title.

successful have adopted a “resource-sharing” rather than an “avoidance-of-harm” perspective (Milkoreit 2015, 399). When such normative arguments have arisen, they have tended to have difficulties outcompeting interest-based arguments with international climate negotiators and even with climate activists (Bäckstrand and Lövbrand 2007; Wahlström, Wennerhag, and Rootes 2013; Okereke and Coventry 2016).⁷

This is unfortunate, since the power of interest-based arguments to motivate progressively ambitious climate commitments appears limited. Yet, scholarly studies and policy processes continue to focus on how to persuade veto players that climate action is in their material interest or to promote unilateral, interest-based action. For example, the literature on climate clubs focuses specifically on engaging veto players, even while recognizing that their emergence depends on “enthusiastic” states having “intrinsic motivations” to take unilateral climate action and to encourage climate action by others (Hovi et al. 2017, 2; Victor 2011; Eckersley 2012; Urpelainen 2013; Shum 2014; Nordhaus 2015). Carbon taxes and cap-and-trade policies also depend on states having self-interested motives to reduce carbon, a condition that appears relatively rare.⁸ The extensive experimentation underway with respect to climate governance reflects public and private efforts at national and subnational levels but appears to be largely interest-based rather than ethics-based (Hoffmann 2011; Green 2013, 2014). Yet, paralleling the long resistance of nuclear states to the idea that disarmament was in their interests, China, the United States, OPEC, and other major carbon emitters appear unlikely to come to see deep emission reductions as in their self-interests. As Falkner notes, “the main interest of a significant number of great powers lies in resisting costly policy measures to reduce emissions” (2016a, 91).

As with nuclear weapons, the climate problem involves some states with strong interests in action, others with weak interests in it, and others that are indifferent to it or strongly benefit from activities that increase emissions. The constellation of climate impacts and incentives has long meant that strategies that are politically viable are insufficiently effective and that those that are effective are not politically viable. Indeed, various authors have

identified climate change as a super-wicked problem that resists effective resolution because of this constellation of interests (Rittel and Webber 1973; Brown, Harris, and Russell 2010; FitzGibbon and Mensah 2012; Levin et al. 2012). If major emitters consider climate impacts as beneficial, consider those impacts as harmful but discount them, or consider the costs of climate action as excessive, they will become veto players that make international cooperation based in interest-based logics elusive.

The Power of Ethics-Based Approaches: Lessons from Human Security Politics

Efforts at ethical-norm-building succeed not by teaching states to recalculate their material interests, but by stressing social and normative interests over material interests (Klotz 1995).⁹ Advocates promoted the concept of “human security” in the early 1990s, for example, to challenge the notion that the reference point of security is the protection of states and territorial borders, and to encourage a discursive shift from protecting borders and national interests to protecting the welfare of human beings, including foreigners (Paris 2001). Numerous ethical norms have been institutionalized by making human security the ethical reference point, by eschewing purely instrumental mechanisms for change, and by shifting the conversation from “costs versus benefits” to “is versus ought” (Price 1997; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998).¹⁰ These approaches appear to work particularly well when the problem structure and constellation of interests inhibit the use and effectiveness of interest-based strategies.¹¹

- 7 As Hadden shows, for example, the inclusion of justice in the discourse of climate action NGOs is both a recent and contested development (2015).
- 8 Only twenty-three countries (constituting about 20 percent of global emissions) have used taxes to price carbon and have done so at varying levels of stringency (World Bank and Ecofys 2018).

- 9 Following Thomas (2000), we distinguish ethical norms (designed to elevate moral values above brute material interests) from other sorts of social, procedural, or technical norms.
- 10 These include *prohibitionary* norms against landmines, war rape, the extraction of diamonds from conflict zones, the use of child soldiers, cluster munitions, and nuclear weapons and *prescriptive* norms requiring states to intervene to protect civilians from genocide, to forgive debt to impoverished countries, to assist the internally displaced, and to provide aid to eradicate HIV-AIDS (Finnemore 2003; Busby 2010; Orchard 2010).
- 11 Notably, while many regulative bodies in international affairs take technical advice on political solutions from neoliberal institutionalist scholars, global civil society campaigners engaged in norm-building efforts self-consciously take their “lessons learned” from constructivist international relations (IR) theories, often citing constructivist IR scholarship in their briefing papers and

To move beyond proposals to “bring ethics in,” we investigate what existing social science tells us about how activists might promote ethics-based discourse in global climate governance. We focus on five strategies that previous researchers identify as “particularly crucial” (Price 1998, 616): (1) promoting discursive shifts (Price 1998), (2) defining and promoting norm-related identities (Crawford 2002), (3) mobilizing pride and shame (Petrova 2016b), (4) using ethical frames to mobilize transnational networks (Carpenter 2014), and (5) shifting forums to marginalize veto players while rewarding norm leaders willing to commit to an ethics-based discourse (Cottrell 2009). We draw on evidence from more than thirty years of human security campaigns, with particular attention to the nuclear weapons ban campaign, to show how these strategies have altered the normative structure in which states operate, shifted how they calculate their interests, and, in some cases, significantly altered their behavior.

Promoting Discursive Shifts

Enhancing the role of ethical considerations in policy requires changing what states view as discursively legitimate. Instead of outcomes and interests, states must be persuaded to focus on norms, identities, roles, behaviors, and social contexts. Advocates introduce considerations of what “norms of appropriate behavior can be justified” into existing discussions about facts and causal relationships in the world (Risse 2000, 6–7). The transition from a discourse dominated by a logic of consequences requires a period in which a logic of argument prevails, as proponents of new norms seek to persuade others to base decisions in a logic of appropriateness, to focus on norms and identities rather than interests, and to value some norms and identities over others (Crawford 2002). A logic of argument engages states in a process of redefining their values and interests through interaction with others.

Central to such strategies is framing, i.e., making “some aspects of a perceived reality [more salient] in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (Entman 1993, 52). Normative frames reduce the salience and legitimacy of interest-based discourse and promote those of ethics-based discourse

documents or hiring them to consult on their campaigns. For an analysis of how the nuclear ban campaign drew on the causal and constitutive claims of constructivist IR to develop their campaign strategy, see Bolton and Minor (2016).

(Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 914; Risse 2000, 3). They prompt rhetorical shifts from “costs and benefits” to “right and wrong,” from “what furthers my interests” to “how am I expected to behave,” from “how do I achieve a desired material goal” to “how do I achieve a desired social identity,” and from “self-interest” to “the public good.”

Norms gain influence through linkage both to accepted metanorms and to specific norms codified in international law (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). With respect to war rape, for example, centuries of government objections framed in instrumental terms—that war rape disrupted discipline, created health problems among troops, and invited retribution—produced only weak regimes that required militaries to “protect” women from rape but did not prohibit it (Inal 2013). War rape was banned in 1998 only when human rights activists supplanted a security discourse with a rights discourse that framed protection from rape as inherent in well-accepted metanorms regarding the rights of individuals to bodily integrity and the obligations of states to protect vulnerable groups from bodily harm (Inal 2013).¹² Advocates also linked the war rape ban to accepted legal norms against torture of noncombatants and genocide (Joachim 2007; Bower 2017; Crawford 2017). Advocates of arms control for chemical weapons, nuclear weapons, and cluster bombs succeeded by drawing the moral analogy to weapons already banned under international law (Price 1995). Such norm “grafting” works particularly well when such linkages reflect an overarching moral principle: grafting new weapons norms onto older ones succeeded by clarifying how these new weapons fit the moral logic against indiscriminate or disproportionate use of force that states had used as the basis for the earlier bans (Carpenter 2011).

Activists often “reverse the burden of proof” through discourses that differentiate a previously undifferentiated behavioral landscape by establishing a new behavioral norm and a corresponding expectation of states to justify their deviation from that norm. This begins the process of rhetorically entrapping states into a logic of appropriateness (Petrova 2016a). Espousing a strong prohibitory or prescriptive norm, rather than a vague moral principle, strengthens the expectation that states demonstrate their efforts to adopt certain behaviors or achieve certain outcomes and explain their failures to do so. The success of efforts to link specific policy expectations to broader norms depends on the attention those efforts generate, the strength of the analogies, and the stage of the

12 See, however, Crawford’s study on the perverse side effects of such frames (Crawford 2017).

issue's life cycle (Shiffman 2009; Carpenter 2014; Duygulu 2014; Bower 2017). Advocates can hasten this process by not merely replacing, but directly rejecting, instrumental discourses, as advocates of a land mines ban did by refusing to comment on proposals that differentiated regulation by land mine type, to avoid legitimizing the continued use of any land mines (Price 1998, 630).

The nuclear weapons ban case illustrates these dynamics. Proponents of a nuclear weapons ban took the stark position that nuclear weapons were not only a security problem but a humanitarian scourge, highlighting their impacts on health and the environment, stressing their inherently indiscriminate nature, and critiquing the threat of mutually assured destruction as a grossly unethical act (Borrie 2014). This discursive stance criticized nuclear weapons and the global regulatory architecture that sought to limit but not eradicate them. As early as 2010, advocates critiqued intergovernmental nonproliferation efforts with demands to ground nuclear weapons obligations in humanitarian, rather than national security, concerns; although it took years to negotiate, governments acknowledged those ethical arguments in the final text of the 2010 conference, noting "deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons (NPT Review Conference 2010).

Defining and Promoting Norm-Related Identities

How do norm proponents translate shifts in discourse into shifts in practice? Identities and roles are central to how norms influence state behavior and reconstitute their interests. Norms are "collective expectations for the proper behavior of actors with a given identity" (Katzenstein 1996, 5). Norm entrepreneurs shape the breadth and depth of norms by strategic choices to link behaviors to certain identities, roles, and circumstances under which they are expected (Crawford 2002, 52; Finnemore 1993, 584).

States follow norms that link behaviors to specific identities that "they take pride in or from which they gain self-esteem" (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 904). Efforts to promote norms become persuasive and gain influence (1) when the actors being targeted value acquiring or maintaining a particular identity, (2) when certain behaviors are essential to doing so, and (3) when those behaviors fit the targeted actors' social roles. When targeted actors already aspire to the identity a norm seeks to activate, norm proponents can increase the salience of that identity or persuade actors to make this identity, rather than others, primary in particular realms of decision-making (Crawford 2002, 25). Alternatively, proponents

must persuade targeted states to aspire to new, additional identities. Petrova argues that norm entrepreneurs promote norms and norm-following behavior through rhetorical strategies. They develop strategies that make it harder to reject than to accept a moral principle and praise those that conform their behavior to the norm and shame those that do not. For example, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) promoted a cluster munitions ban by praising Norway as a leader in a new moral crusade within a forum that the United States and Russia had rejected, a move that led the United Kingdom to drop its initial, interest-based opposition to the ban to avoid being labeled a "norm laggard" (Petrova 2016a).

By acknowledging the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons at the 2010 Review Conference, states (including parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, or NPT) made it harder for themselves to ignore such concerns in discussions leading to the 2015 Review Conference, to turn down invitations to a conference on the Humanitarian Impacts of Nuclear Weapons, or to refuse to sign a Humanitarian Pledge on nuclear weapons. Norm entrepreneurs promoted frames that helped them control the agenda and define "good citizenship" as acceptance of humanitarian concerns as the basis for nuclear governance and allowed them, as discussed next, to praise states that spoke and acted in support of humanitarian discourse in the NPT context and to shame states that did not.

Mobilizing Pride and Shame

Political actors also promote norms and make identities they consider "desirable" more salient by praising certain behaviors and criticizing their opposites (Hafner-Burton 2008; Ausderan 2014).¹³ Although states rarely sanction others for violations of international law, IOs, NGOs, and civic groups regularly use both shame and praise effectively (DeMeritt 2012; Ivanova 2016; Bower 2017). Naming and shaming works by (1) framing behaviors as violations of morality, (2) labeling them as inappropriate, and (3) creating a social expectation that governments explain their actions within a particular normative frame (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Scholars have found that both shaming and praising can operate when states highlight the behavior of other states or when civil society groups

- 13 Of course, norms considered desirable by some will be seen as undesirable by others, including those who are harmed by actions that comply with those norms. Those opposed to climate action can promote a norm against climate action by highlighting the costs of such action to the economy and workers in certain industries.

in third-party states criticize norm violators in light of their own incentives (Krain 2005; Murdie and Peksen 2014; Bower 2017). Indeed, shaming can foster domestic dynamics that lead citizens to view “human rights conditions in their country more negatively when their country is shamed by the international community” (Ausderan 2014, 81).

Notably, shaming and praising may influence even states that have not accepted specific legal norms. Strong expectations can foster conformance with widely accepted treaty norms, even among states that have not ratified them. Such expectations help explain Syria’s destruction of chemical weapons after the Ghouta massacre, Russia’s denial (rather than justification) of its use of cluster munitions, and reductions in land mine production and use by several states that were not members of the land mine treaty (Price 2008; Gibbons-Neff 2016). Domestic groups may call on their governments to conform to a particular treaty’s norms without being aware of or concerned about their government’s status as a member of that treaty (Simmons 2009). And norms of government behavior can influence corporate behavior by rendering it “praiseworthy,” as evident in DeBeers becoming a norm leader on conflict diamonds (Duygulu 2014).

Mobilizing pride can prove especially important early in norm development. Some states, particularly small and middle-power states, seek out identities as norm champions in multilateral settings, with advocacy groups rewarding leadership and compliance with positive publicity (Rutherford, Brem, and Matthew 2003; Brysk 2009). With respect to cluster munitions, praise motivated early norm champions and led reluctant states to maintain and exceed their initial pledges (Petrova 2016a). Though it is too early to assess the impacts of the new nuclear weapons ban treaty, the history of similar bans suggests that the stigmatizing effect of the treaty will reduce the likelihood of nuclear use and increase pressure toward nuclear disarmament, even by states that reject membership (Bower 2017). An analysis of more than six thousand statements in NPT settings between 2000 and 2013 suggests that some nuclear-weapons states have begun following nonnuclear weapons states in supporting a prohibitory norm in their rhetoric, if not yet in their actions (Kütt and Steffek 2015).

Using Ethical Frames to Mobilize Transnational Networks

The success of activists to articulate new norms depends on how they use ethical frames to mobilize transnational networks (Wapner 1996; Price 1997; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Hadden 2015). First, the success of norm-building

campaigns depends significantly on strong support from important “gatekeepers” or “network hubs” and less on the density of transnational networks (Bob 2009). Gatekeepers are those with network visibility, prestige, large budgets, connections and access to numerous allies and influence over targeted actors. Human rights and humanitarian cases consistently demonstrate that certain NGOs play key roles in whether efforts to build new norms succeed or fail (Carpenter 2014).

Second, norm-building campaigns succeed when gatekeepers work with a few strategically chosen others to develop and communicate a strong unifying message. Success requires selecting organizations whose interests, perspectives, resources, and reputations are consistent with and bolster the sought-after framing and normative discourse. Initial efforts must create a frame that resonates with as many important voices in the network as possible. In the land mines case, success involved building collective support but having a strong central campaign organization in charge of final decisions (Carpenter 2011). When coalitions are more diffuse, factions can engage in conflicts that weaken mobilization efforts (Shawki 2011). Collective efforts also need to create strong support for clear and coherent action, the lack of which explains the failure of the interwar campaign for disarmament (Davies 2007). Yet, challenges that arise need not be insurmountable: the women’s movement overcame early conflict over whether to focus on political or resource inequality by coming together around the shared goal of reducing violence against women (Joachim 2007).

Third, a network’s structure influences the ability of advocates to mobilize it using an ethical frame. Changes in the structure of the antinuclear advocacy network illustrate this: under the early Abolition 2000 network, the antinuclear movement was both decentralized and isolated from more mainstream humanitarian disarmament networks that had benefited from involvement in the UN Convention on Chemical Weapons process (CCW) (Wittner 2009, 217). Physicians against Nuclear War founded the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) in 2006 to replicate the success of the land mines treaty (Gibbons 2018). In the early 2010s, however, the campaign got two boosts: the International Committee of the Red Cross (a key “gatekeeper”) called for the elimination of nuclear weapons, and Article36.org (a new network “broker”) began “yoking” the issue of nuclear weapons to other humanitarian disarmament concerns and delinking antinuclear advocacy from the peace movement (Carpenter 2014). This changed the frame, the network, and the professionalism of the nuclear advocacy brand, allowing it to coalesce around

a humanitarian frame for nuclear abolition. ICAN centralized its campaign around a small steering committee, positioning itself as the coordinator of civil society initiatives, and consolidating a diverse network of more than four hundred organizations that worked on health, environment, and disarmament as well as experts and celebrities who had led the successful land mines treaty negotiations. This fostered a rapid transition of the nuclear weapons ban from a fringe issue to a mainstream disarmament concern, leading to a General Assembly Resolution to begin negotiations toward nuclear abolition in 2016 and a new treaty by 2017.

Shifting Forums to Marginalize Veto Players and Reward Norm Leaders

A final important but counterintuitive lesson from human security is that ethical arguments can gain strength by treating veto players with indifference. The demand for consensus in most international institutions can hobble goals like humanitarian disarmament. By moving conversations to alternative institutional forums, networks of ethically motivated middle-power states and NGOs can reduce the control veto players have over the normative agenda, helping those that favor a stronger ethical standard and greater social pressure for ethical conformity by rewarding norm leaders and sanctioning norm laggards. Venue-shifting helps delegitimize practices that advocates see as unethical as well as the social structures that brought those practices into being and that hobble efforts to change them (Bolton and Nash 2010; Garcia 2015).

The development and incorporation of strong norms in the land mines treaty depended critically on the decision to move talks to a setting that precluded vetoes by land mine-exporting states (Percy 2007; Sandholtz 2008; Cottrell 2009). The norms that emerged from early land mine negotiations were strengthened considerably when they moved from the consensus-based Convention on Chemical Weapons forum to conferences that limited participation to states supporting a ban, that included procedures that facilitated development of strong norms, and that established a group identity that distinguished norm leaders from norm laggards. The institutional shift reduced laggards' control over the process and allowed ethical principles to become the primary rather than secondary basis for a regime (Cottrell 2009). Using institutions that constrain veto-player power can foster development of strong norms by exposing states that refuse to participate as recalcitrant or obstructionist, helping states that otherwise might be "in the middle" to claim identities as norm leaders (Petrova 2016b).

Moving to institutional settings that foster development of stronger treaty norms may not always reduce treaty effectiveness. Under some circumstances, treaty norms influence states that reject the principals of, and membership in, such treaties. The land mines treaty created a sense of social obligation that influenced supportive treaty members, reluctant treaty members, and states that rejected membership in ways that led to faster declines in land mine use than would have occurred even with perfect compliance with the weaker CCW treaty (Bower 2017). This logic appears to generalize to other disarmament areas. The Cluster Munitions Convention, for example, has been rejected by both cluster-munitions-using states such as Saudi Arabia and cluster-munition-exporting states such as the United States. Yet, pressure from human rights organizations and signatory states led Saudi Arabia to announce an end to its use of cluster munitions in its war in Yemen in 2016, confirming that international ethical norms can socialize even nonmember states over time.¹⁴

In the nuclear weapons ban case, activists invited all states to a series of Humanitarian Impact conferences. Norm entrepreneurs structured the processes of those and subsequent talks about a nuclear weapons ban in ways that privileged ethics-based discourse focused on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons. All states were welcome to discuss the parameters of a nuclear weapons ban, but no state could veto the outcome, as the process did not require consensus. In the land mines, cluster-munitions, and nuclear-weapons ban cases, veto players knew that negotiations would proceed with or without their blessing. When the nuclear weapons ban was adopted, the United Kingdom, the United States, and France jointly stated, "[w]e do not intend to sign, ratify, or ever become party to it." Yet, this does not preclude it from influencing their behavior. The nuclear weapons ban treaty, like others, "promotes changes of attitude, ideas, principles and discourse" (Tannenwald 2017). By switching venues, activists fostered development of a stronger norm and a shift in the rhetorical balance of power, reversing the burden of proof so that those who violate a norm must explain their actions (Price 1998).

14 Moreover the "stigma" now attached to cluster munitions affects the private sector as well as states—Textron Systems, the sole producer of US-made cluster bombs, announced in August 2016 it would be phasing out production of cluster munitions due to public pressure, effectively ending their production in the United States (Schatz 2016).

Discussion and Conclusion: Changing the Normative Climate on Climate Change

The interest-based approaches that have dominated international climate governance to date have had limited success and seem likely to fall farther short as effective climate action requires more demanding reductions. Given the structure of the climate change problem, ethics-based strategies seem to offer a valuable complement to interest-based strategies. Such strategies would call for states to reduce their carbon emissions because it is the right thing to do rather than because it is in a state's material interests.

We believe that the human security experience provides lessons for both practitioners and scholars of climate change, particularly with respect to the operation and influence of discursive shifts, ethics-based identities, shaming and praising, the structure of global advocacy networks, and the treatment of veto players in climate negotiations and implementation. Here, we make initial efforts to identify such lessons for climate change, but we invite other scholars to assess more carefully which strategies can best promote the success of climate governance.

In terms of fostering a discursive shift, we highlight the importance of delegitimizing the dominant interest-based discourse. When states reject calls for climate action as too costly, climate advocates reinforce an interest-based discourse by identifying lower cost estimates or offsetting benefits. A more promising strategy would seem to involve pushing states to take climate action despite its costs, because inaction will harm the rights of vulnerable states, people, species, and habitats. Activists can devise arguments, metaphors, and images that convince states that failing to avert climate change is inconsistent with existing legal norms regarding state sovereignty, human rights, indigenous rights, and the bodily integrity of vulnerable humans. Such strategies build on existing international protections that reflect an ethical framework of rights and obligations. They, thereby, legitimate an alternative, ethics-based frame, even if that frame does not come to dominate climate discourse.

Efforts at norm-grafting could push states to see emitting carbon like other behaviors that appear beneficial but which they forego because they consider them illegitimate, inappropriate, or reprehensible (Price 1995). Nicholson and Chong, for example, argue that protecting the right to life enshrined in the UN Declaration of Human Rights and other international instruments provides a normative basis for holding powerful countries accountable for climate-change-related deaths

(2011). Sea-level rise threatens the populations of many countries but also their territories, in violation of the robust, taken-for-granted norm of territorial integrity (Zacher 2003).

Whether efforts to reframe climate in ethical terms succeed depends on the specifics of the frames used and the responses to them (Hertel 2006; Bob 2012; Carpenter 2014). Civil society actors can increase support for climate action through interest-based frames that highlight water shortages, drought, wildfires, and heating and cooling costs (Hayhoe 2017). But the Pope's Encyclical and other ethics-based framings may reshape perceptions in ways that provide a broader and deeper basis for climate action. Research on the nexus of religion and ecology shows that environmental stewardship, including averting climate change, aligns with the deep principles of many religions (Tucker and Grim 2009). Recent research also suggests that displacing frames are more successful than counterframes, as the former require only that audiences reinterpret, not reject and replace, existing master frames (Kauffman 2017). Practitioners would benefit from deeper understanding of which climate frames work best and how and when they work.

In terms of promoting ethics-based identities, climate practitioners and scholars have evidence from past successes and failures in climate negotiations. Consider the contrast between the influence of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol and the 2015 Paris Agreement commitments on how states perceive themselves and how other states perceive them. By accepting obligations under Kyoto, developed states were agreeing to assessments of their emissions against those obligations, with implications for their self-identity as law-abiding or rule-of-law states. Similarly, the Paris Agreement's requirement (Article 4.3) called on states to ensure future emissions commitments are "ambitious and progressive." The Agreement's identification of 1.5°C and 2°C as temperature targets created a rhetorical context that led all states to frame their commitments as "reductions," even if doing so required delaying target dates long enough to ensure they could achieve reductions or framing emissions increases in terms of reductions in emissions intensity (UNFCCC 2016). These commitments contrast particularly sharply with the unapologetic rejection by developing countries of climate responsibilities under the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol. And Paris' call for "ambitious and progressive" reductions, even with no explicit definition, engages states in a process of rhetorical entrapment that delegitimizes future commitments that fall short of prior commitments (Schimmelfennig 2001; Petrova 2016a).

Indeed, the voluntary, bottom-up nature of the Paris Agreement commitments, paradoxically, may make it harder for states to renege. States are likely to find it harder to claim that a commitment is illegitimate if they made it wholly voluntarily than if they accepted it under duress or simply to foster agreement. And the simple act of making those commitments strengthens the normative expectation that states should adopt strong climate policies and bolsters demands from citizens and other states that they fulfill their climate commitments (Mitchell 2005). Similarly, developing states have participated in the climate regime's Clean Development Mechanism to reap financial, technological, and other instrumental benefits but, in so doing, have reinforced the norm that reducing emissions, sequestering carbon, and slowing deforestation are appropriate roles for developing state governments. That, in turn, strengthens the legitimacy of future normative demands for their further climate action.

In terms of mobilizing pride and shame, both the UNFCCC secretariat and climate activists already assess, rank, critique, and praise national emission commitments against the 2°C target and against the commitments of other states (Chen 2015; Climate Action Tracker Partners 2017). The Conferences of the Parties under the UNFCCC and Paris Agreement provide for implementation reviews in which naming and shaming encourages states to meet their commitments *ex ante* and to explain their failures *ex post* (Bodansky 2015; Keohane and Oppenheimer 2016). Such “pledge and review” processes appear to foster “a positive spiral of strengthening trust and enhanced cooperation” (Grubb and Steen 1991; Victor, Raustiala, and Skolnikoff 1998; Aldy 2014; Ivanova 2016; Falkner 2016b).

Praising compliance creates discursive expectations and corresponding incentives for states to take climate actions that go beyond behavioral minimums. Even secretariat reporting of commitments can provide information, political cover, and motivation to third parties (e.g., international financial institutions, corporations, transnational activists, and domestic civil society actors) to press governments and corporations to adopt behaviors that others deem important (Murdie and Davis 2012). Corporations face economic pressures and incentives that may make them more responsive to calls for climate action than governments, dynamics evident in the European Union Emissions Trading System efforts to publicize companies that do not meet their obligations (Peeters 2006; Lebovic and Voeten 2009; Patchell and Hayter 2013). Assessing behaviors against commitments can encourage audiences to label states and corporations

as leaders or laggards, to see emissions as “bad” and reductions as “good,” and to promote “green” identities that internalize commitments to emission reductions. Institutionalized review and assessment procedures also can promote the third stage of norm development, with emissions reduction acquiring a “taken-for-granted” quality, leading states to monitor their own behavior to identify faster and more effective emission reduction strategies (Keck and Sikkink 1998). Over time, climate agreements could channel national energy policies away from fossil fuels in the same way that arms control treaties have led national militaries to pursue their objectives without considering land mines or chemical weapons.

Coordinating the climate justice network around a specific, ambitious goal grounded in ethical concerns also can foster ethical norm development. In human security cases, success was promoted by multisectoral coalitions among national and subnational governments, IOs, NGOs and civil societies, corporations, philanthropies, and epistemic communities (Haas 1992; Slaughter 2004; Carpenter et al. 2014; Rowen 2017). Many cities and provinces have adopted aggressive and costly climate policies (Betsill and Bulkeley 2008; Bulkeley and Schroeder 2012; Daalder 2017). The United States' threat to withdraw from the Paris Agreement in 2017 prompted a transnational coalition of corporations, cities, provinces, and universities to make corresponding emission commitments. Actions like these are prompted by but also reinforce a framing of climate action as the “right thing to do,” despite the economic and political costs rather than because of economic and political benefits.

Global environmental politics include a dense and diverse transnational activist network that offers both opportunities and challenges. Support for climate action by a diversity of religious groups and ethically respected individuals can enhance the legitimacy of discussing climate change in moral terms (Busby 2010; Wilkinson 2012). NGOs can use examples of large corporations (and especially fossil fuel companies) taking strong but costly climate action to foster a narrative that such actors are not fools committing “economic suicide” but praiseworthy norm leaders responding to a “moral imperative.” As the land mines and disarmament experiences illustrate (see above), efforts to promote proclimate norms may succeed most if gatekeeper NGOs that see climate change in scientific terms and other NGOs that see it in justice terms develop a joint unifying narrative that combines scientific understandings of the problem, justice-based narratives of climate impacts, and solutions that

link scientific evidence with humanitarian values (Smith 2007; Hadden 2015; Allan and Hadden 2017). Such an ethics-based campaign may be most effective if managed by a small steering group drawn from a diverse coalition, which promotes a centralized and coordinated approach to avoid factionalism and promote effectiveness (Shawki 2011).

Human security experience suggests the benefits of mobilizing around a single, ambitious, ethics-based platform. In the climate realm, consider the difference between a language of “carbon trading” and “reducing carbon emissions” versus “carbon rationing” and “carbon allocations”—the former imply technical solutions in the hands of unitary actors while the latter imply government-led-and-enforced sacrifice by nations for a collective security goal. A “carbon rationing” discourse illustrates an ethical frame that could serve as an umbrella for multiple, more targeted campaigns. Those campaigns, for instance, might promote renewable energy portfolios, peak electricity pricing, energy conservation, or low-carbon manufacturing and construction requirements. We are not recommending any particular framing but, rather, consideration of the potential benefits of basing calls for dramatic action in ethical framings that initially widen the gap between normative expectations and practice but, thereby, focus and mobilize a diverse network of actors around a normative goal that, over time, may prompt larger changes in practice. Such framings mount a broad critique of incremental climate action, rather than more limited efforts to influence mainstream negotiations, as climate activists have often done (Wahlström, Wennerhag, and Rootes 2013; Hjerpe and Buhr 2014; Hadden 2015).

Lastly, our analysis suggests the value of engaging supportive governments in climate forums that marginalize veto players and reward norm leaders. Moving climate discussions outside of the UNFCCC/Kyoto/Paris framework may remove obstacles that are hobbling development of a stronger, ethics-based discourse on climate action. Such a forum might be grounded in a set of ethical, humanitarian-based principles, including protection of the territorial integrity of low-lying states and of vulnerable populations. Even if nonuniversal, such a forum could reframe the issue by including UN agencies and other IOs that are already discussing the “humanitarian impacts of climate change” and have accepted “human rights and environment” or “rights-of-nature” framings (Nicholson and Chong 2011; Kauffman and Martin 2017). Procedures could preclude vetoes by those major emitters that do participate and bring into question the moral standing of those that do not participate (Cottrell 2009).

Marginalizing veto players runs counter to the conventional call for buy-in from major emitters. Indeed, “climate club” advocates argue that effective climate action depends on limiting participation to the worst emitters. A tension appears to exist between these approaches: a club limited to major emitters may lack incentives for strong action, but a club excluding such emitters may lack influence over its members (Falkner 2016a, 91). Evidence from humanitarian disarmament suggests, however, that strong norms built by coalitions of the willing can sometimes be more effective at solving global problems than convincing coalitions of the unwilling to act against their interests (Petrova 2016b; Bower 2017).¹⁵ These and other novel strategies deserve more serious analysis. Although the influence of new strategies is uncertain, extant commitments developed in forums in which major emitters hold veto power are far from adequate to protect people and the planet from climate change.

In conclusion, we urge scholars to study the range of ethical arguments in use or available in climate politics and the factors and conditions that influence their success. Evidence from human security suggests that climate advocates may have opportunities to promote more aggressive state action by promoting a new ethical discourse of climate action, to base climate choices in a logic of appropriateness, to promote proclimate identities, to shame or praise state behaviors relative to ethics-based criteria, to structure global policy networks strategically, and to develop strong ethical platforms within forums that limit the power of veto players. We may be overly optimistic. The countries most responsible for carbon emissions will not eagerly accept a new, climate-friendly ethical standard, just as the countries with nuclear weapons have not yet signed the nuclear weapons ban. Yet, evidence suggests that when faced with problems like climate change in which the states most responsible are the states least harmed by maintaining status quo policies, ethics-based strategies may be more likely to promote significant commitments and actions than incremental attempts at interest-based regulation. What is clear is that the current system for addressing climate change is inadequate and opportunities to identify creative improvements abound.

15 For example, the United States weakened the Paris Agreement by a position that led European Union officials to fear that, “if we insist on legally binding, the deal will not be global because we will lose the [United States]” (Dimitrov 2016, 3).

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