

# Statehood for Whom? A Great Powers Model for Changes in Statehood Criteria

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By Evan Rolfe

What is the mechanism by which the criteria for statehood change over time, allowing new categories of territorial entities to be recognized as states?





# Significance

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- States are granted a number of rights:
    - Access to diplomatic conferences
    - Ability to engage legally with other states
    - Privileges and immunities for leaders
    - Rights for nationals
  - Determines the structure of the international system
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# Existing Literature

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- International Law
    - Constitutive Theory
    - Declaratory Theory
    - Lauterpachtian Theory
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# Existing Literature

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- Social Science
    - State-As-Actor Approach (IR)
      - Krasner—International Legal Sovereignty
    - International Society (English School of IR)
    - World Polity Theory (Sociology)
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# The Gap

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If we know empirically that the criteria for statehood changes over time, how do these changes occur?

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# Research Design

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- Illustrative Case
    - Associated Microstates
  - Critique of Existing Case Studies of Historical Statehood Norm Formations
    - Effectiveness Norm (Latin America, 1830s)
    - Historical Nationalities Norm (Europe, 1919)
    - Salt-Water Norm (Decolonization, 1950s-1960s)
    - Negative Case (“Civilized” Asian States, 1850s-1899)
  - Contemporary Cases
    - Kosovo
    - Palestine
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# Great Powers Model for Changes in Statehood Criteria

- Common Mechanism:
  - An institutionalized “recognition council” of powerful states changes statehood norms in accordance with its own interests
- Pathways:
  - Functional Interactions
  - Power Shift
  - Bottom-Up Norm Formation

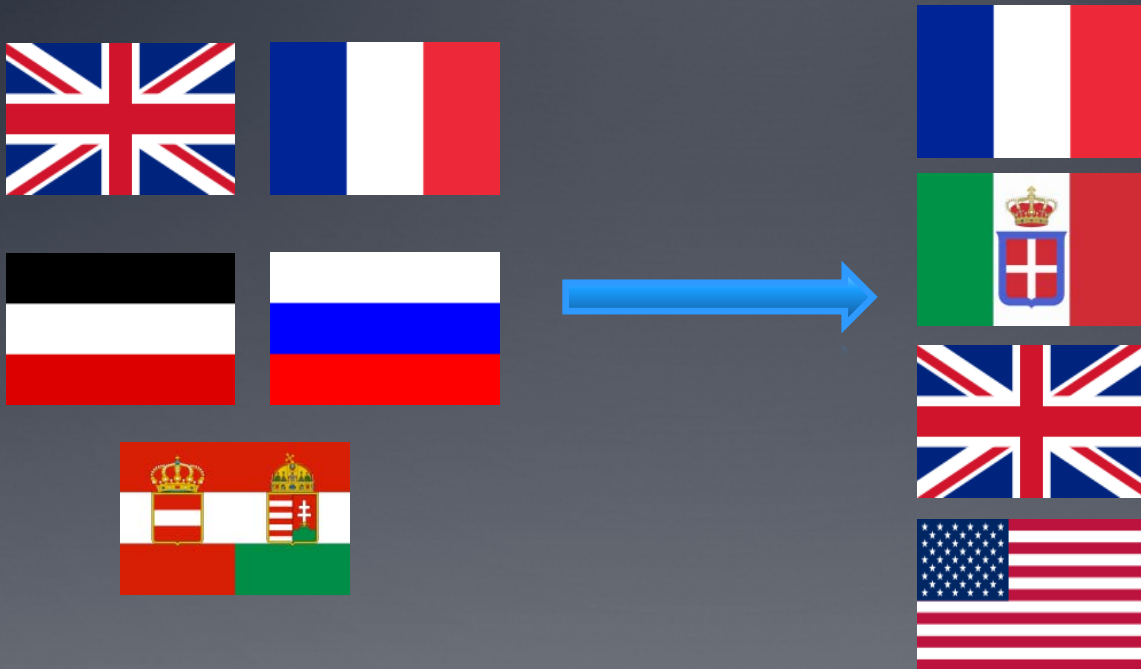


# Pathways: Functional Interactions



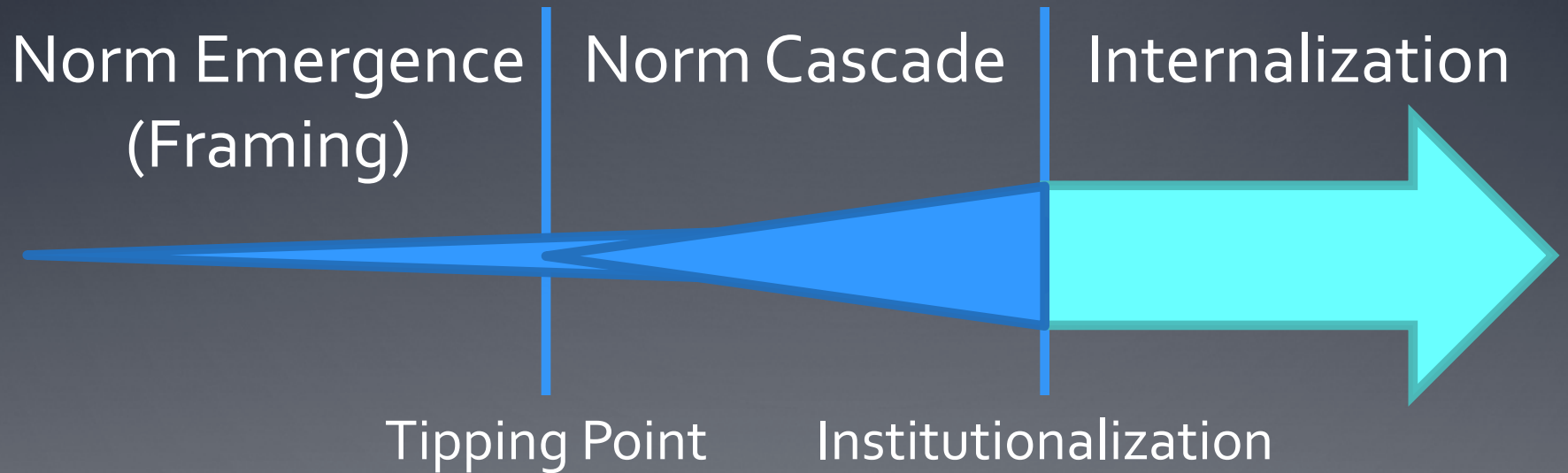
# Pathways: Power Shift

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# Pathways: Bottom-Up Norm Formation

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# Conclusions: Pathways

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- Most cases rely upon multiple pathways
  - Functional interactions are most common
  - Power shifts and some functional interactions are exogenously driven
  - Aspiring states can deliberately create functional interactions and bottom-up norm formations
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# Conclusions: Implications

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- Practice
    - Provides a “roadmap” for aspiring states
  - Theory
    - Dynamic understanding of statehood
    - Eclectic theorizing
    - Norm formation institutionalized by great powers
    - Recognition is not anarchic
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