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Mark Raymond. *Social Practices of Rule-Making in World Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. ISBN: 9780190913113 (hardcover, \$78.00).

Reviewed by **Miles M. Evers**, University of Connecticut

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A few years ago, I asked a colleague, “what is the relationship between rules, norms, practices, and habits?” The colleague laughed and responded, “nobody knows.” We both agreed that constructivist scholarship had grown increasingly cluttered and vague over the past thirty years. The literature defines a range of concepts—for example, norms, rules, values, identities, habits, practices, and background knowledge—and mechanisms—such as norm creation, change, cascades, socialization, argumentation, contestation, localization, rejection, transgression, adaptation, and evasion. However, the relationship between these concepts and mechanisms has never been clearly specified. Basic questions, like how actors know to engage in one mechanism over another, why some attempts at social change succeed while others fail, and again, the nature of the relationship between rules, norms, practices, and habits remain unaddressed. Admittedly, I have contributed to these gaps, so I was relieved to find answers in Mark Raymond’s new book, *Social Practices of Rule-Making in World Politics*.

Raymond provides a simple but powerful argument. Drawing on the work of H.L.A. Hart, he distinguishes between primary rules that forbid or require certain actions, similar to the 2017 Nuclear Weapon Ban treaty, and secondary rules that dictate how primary rules are modified, introduced, and enforced, similar to the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law on Treaties.¹ Raymond argues that secondary rules constitute a set of practices for modifying, enforcing, and applying primary rules. He refers to them as practices of rulemaking, which I take to mean socially meaningful patterns of action for changing and making primary-rules. Actors judge how other actors perform rule-making practices based on whether the performance adheres to collectively agreed upon secondary rules. Performances that adhere to secondary rules will be judged more positively and are thus more likely to change primary rules, compared to performances that do not adhere to secondary rules.

Drawing on primary and secondary sources, Raymond demonstrates the importance of practices of rulemaking in four case studies of international security: the Concert of Europe; the interwar movement to outlaw war; al-Qaeda’s challenge to international law following the 9/11 attacks; and the emergence of laws regulating cyberwarfare within the United Nations (UN). Raymond chose these cases because of their historical significance to the leading states and institutions of the international system. These cases are also “hard” for his theory since the conventional wisdom in international security prioritizes material national interests over adherence to procedural rules and practices.

The cases produce several interesting findings. First, diplomats who skillfully mastered rulemaking practices advanced their interests over the security interests of others, even when these diplomats were in a weaker material position. This is

¹ Herbert Lionel Adolphus Hart, *The Concept of Law*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

best illustrated when France's chief negotiator Prince Talleyrand exploited procedural rules that called for a congress between all parties to the Napoleonic wars. The other powers were forced to give France—a defeated power—equal status at the 1814 Congress of Vienna as well as in future deliberations. Furthermore, in constraining state-behavior, rule-making practices can have unintended side-effects. Raymond convincingly demonstrates that the 1928 Kellogg-Briand treaty, a rather audacious proposal to outlaw war, was actually unintended by French and American diplomats. Secondary rules mandating multilateralism in international law transformed what began as a bilateral treaty between the United States and France into a near-universal multilateral agreement renouncing war except in cases of self-defense or collective security. Finally, the last two cases establish the importance of consensus for secondary rules, comparing a case of disagreement on secondary-rules—between al-Qaeda and the George W. Bush Administration, for instance—to a case of agreement—between UN member-states. Raymond finds that consensus surrounding secondary rules is necessary for rule-making practices to have an effect but not for rule-making practices to occur.

Raymond's treatment of the practices of rulemaking is enlightening, particularly for scholars in the 'practice turn.' The book describes how secondary rules provide the necessary "background knowledge" for the existence of practices, providing clarity to a concept that I have personally found vague and poorly defined.² The benefit of treating secondary rules as background knowledge is that it provides a better guide for empirical research than the broader definition that was originally provided by Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot.³ It also helps clarify the relationship between rules, norms, and practices, suggesting that these concepts are complementary rather than alternatives.⁴

I also found the book enlightening because of its conception of power in international security. The book challenges the focus in international security on material power by demonstrating that skill with procedural rules and practices is an important source of institutional power. Raymond Duvall and Michael Barnett define institutional power as control "through the formal and informal institutions that mediate between A and B, as A, working through the rules and procedures that define those institutions, guides, steers, and constrains the actions (or nonactions) and conditions of existence of other."⁵ Institutional power remains undertheorized in IR, with most scholarship focusing on positions of influence within international organizations to set and shape international agendas.⁶ But, Raymond demonstrates that who sits in positions of power and who sets the agenda cannot be taken for granted and is often a product of strategic interactions and the distribution of social skill among parties. Taking social skill seriously as a source of institutional

² I wondered if rule-making practices are really anchoring practices, which Ann Swidler defines as practices that structure and make possible other practices. See Ann Swidler, "What Anchors Cultural Practices" (London: Routledge, 2006): 74.

³ Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot, eds., *International Practices* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁴ Christian Bueger and Frank Gadinger, "The Play of International Practice," *International Studies Quarterly* 59:3 (September 2015): 449–460, <https://doi.org/10.1111/isqu.12202>; David M. McCourt, "Practice Theory and Relationalism as the New Constructivism," *International Studies Quarterly* 60:3 (September 2016): 475–485, <https://doi.org/10.1093/isq/sqw036>; Simon Frankel Pratt, "From Norms to Normative Configurations: A Pragmatist and Relational Approach to Theorizing Normativity in IR," *International Theory* 12:1 (March 2019): 59–82; Miles M. Evers, "Just the Facts: Why Norms Remain Relevant in an Age of Practice," *International Theory* 12:2 (July 2020): 220–230, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1752971919000241>.

⁵ Michael Barnett and Raymond Duvall, "Power in International Politics," *International Organization* 59:1 (2005): 39–75.

⁶ See, for example, Emilie M. Hafner-Burton and Alexander H. Montgomery, "International Organizations, Social Networks, and Conflict," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 50:1 (February 2006): 3–27, <https://doi.org/10.1177/002202705281669>; Charli Carpenter, *"Lost" Causes: Agenda Vetting in Global Issue Networks and the Shaping of Human Security* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014).

power helps explain puzzling outcomes in international politics, like when materially weak actors like Talleyrand navigated their way into positions of authority.⁷

Of course, the book could be improved in a few ways. One direction for future research would be to develop a theory of how secondary rules change in international politics. Raymond is primarily interested in how secondary rules shape contestation over primary rules. However, recent scholarship demonstrates that secondary rules, like sovereignty, international law, and multilateralism are also focal points for contestation.⁸ Examining how these contests over secondary rules emerge, how actors know how to contest secondary rules, and why some instances succeed and others fail would be an important amendment to his theory. A related direction for future research would be to apply the theory to previous eras. Raymond briefly mentions in the introduction and conclusion that secondary rules have changed considerably from the premodern era of city-states to the modern era of sovereign states.⁹ Yet this is never examined empirically because his cases are all drawn from the modern era. A more compelling case for the influence of rule-making practices in international politics could be made by showing how variation in secondary rules across different eras in international politics produced different practices of rule-making. Doing so is also necessary to develop a generalizable theory of when and how secondary rules have changed overtime. Finally, future work needs to connect the theory to the literature on broader norms. The book sets out with a bold claim that secondary rules can help us establish scope conditions for specific processes, like norm contestation, localization, or rejection. On this point, it promises but under delivers; Raymond does not explain how different secondary rules relate to different normative processes.

Despite these limitations, the book is a fantastic achievement. Scholars of international security, global governance, and practice will find the book to be of value. Moreover, policymakers must consider its message: the stakes of modern great-power competition are the rules of the international system, and in this world, skill in rulemaking is as important to a state's national security interests as a bullet on the battlefield. This insight should caution U.S. policymakers who seek a retreat from global governance, as well as encourage the Biden administration as it seeks to restore U.S. leadership in the world.

Miles M. Evers is an assistant professor of political science at the University of Connecticut. He researches issues that crosscut political economy and international security, with an emphasis on U.S. diplomatic history. His research has been featured in *International Studies Quarterly*, *Perspectives on Politics*, and *International Theory*. His policy-relevant writing have been featured in *The Washington Post* and *The Washington Quarterly*.

⁷ Relatedly, see Vincent Pouliot, *International Pecking Orders: The Politics and Practice of Multilateral Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Eric Grynawski, *America's Middlemen: Power at the Edge of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

⁸ Antje Wiener, *A Theory of Contestation*, (New York: Springer, 2014); Ian Hurd, *How to Do Things with International Law* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019); Rebecca Adler-Nissen and Vincent Pouliot, "Power in Practice: Negotiating the International Intervention in Libya," *European Journal of International Relations* 20:4 (January 2014): 889–911.

⁹ Christian Reus-Smit, *The Moral Purpose of the State: Culture, Social Identity, and Institutional Rationality in International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009); Bentley B. Allan, *Scientific Cosmology and International Orders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).