

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88816-5 - Moral Limit and Possibility in World Politics

Edited by Richard M. Price

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Moral Limit and Possibility in World Politics

At what point can we concede that the realities of world politics require that moral principles be compromised, and how do we know when a real ethical limit has been reached? This volume gathers leading constructivist scholars to explore the issue of moral limit and possibility in global political dilemmas. The contributors examine pressing ethical challenges such as sanctions, humanitarian intervention, torture, the self-determination of indigenous peoples, immigration, and the debate about international criminal tribunals and amnesties in cases of atrocity. Their analyses entail theoretical and empirical claims about the conditions of possibility and limits of moral change in world politics, therefore providing insightful leverage on the ethical question of 'what ought we to do?' This is a valuable contribution to the growing field of normative theory in International Relations and will appeal to scholars and advanced students of international ethics and political theory.

RICHARD M. PRICE is Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of British Columbia. He is the author of *The Chemical Weapons Taboo* (1997) and the co-editor (with Mark W. Zacher) of *The United Nations and Global Security* (2004).

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88816-5 - Moral Limit and Possibility in World Politics

Edited by Richard M. Price

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge Studies in International Relations: 107

Moral Limit and Possibility in World Politics

EDITORS

Christian Reus-Smit

Nicholas Wheeler

EDITORIAL BOARD

Thomas Biersteker, Phil Cerny, Michael Cox, A.J.R. Groom, Richard Higgott, Kimberley Hutchings, Caroline Kennedy-Pipe, Steve Lamy, Michael Mastanduno, Colin McInnes, Louis Pauly, Ngaire Woods

Cambridge Studies in International Relations is a joint initiative of Cambridge University Press and the British International Studies Association (BISA). The series will include a wide range of material, from undergraduate textbooks and surveys to research-based monographs and collaborative volumes. The aim of the series is to publish the best new scholarship in International Studies from Europe, North America and the rest of the world.

CAMBRIDGE STUDIES IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- 106 Emma Haddad
The refugee in international society
Between sovereigns
- 105 Ken Booth
Theory of world security
- 104 Benjamin Miller
States, nations and the great powers
The sources of regional war and peace
- 103 Beate Jahn (ed.)
Classical theory in international relations
- 102 Andrew Linklater and Hidemi Suganami
The English School of international relations
A contemporary reassessment

Series list continues after index

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88816-5 - Moral Limit and Possibility in World Politics

Edited by Richard M. Price

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Moral Limit and Possibility in World Politics

Edited by

RICHARD M. PRICE



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88816-5 - Moral Limit and Possibility in World Politics

Edited by Richard M. Price

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521716208

© Cambridge University Press 2008

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2008

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-521-88816-5 hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-71620-8 paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this book, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-88816-5 - Moral Limit and Possibility in World Politics
Edited by Richard M. Price
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Contents

<i>List of contributors</i>	page vii
<i>Preface</i>	ix
1 Moral limit and possibility in world politics RICHARD PRICE	1
2 Constructivism and the structure of ethical reasoning CHRISTIAN REUS-SMIT	53
3 The role of consequences, comparison and counterfactuals in constructivist ethical thought KATHRYN SIKKINK	83
4 Sovereignty, recognition and indigenous peoples JONATHAN HAVERCROFT	112
5 Policy hypocrisy or political compromise? Assessing the morality of US policy toward undocumented migrants AMY GUROWITZ	138
6 Lie to me: sanctions on Iraq, moral argument and the international politics of hypocrisy MARC LYNCH	165
7 Paradoxes in humanitarian intervention MARTHA FINNEMORE	197
8 Inevitable inequalities? Approaching gender equality and multiculturalism ANN TOWNS	225

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-88816-5 - Moral Limit and Possibility in World Politics
Edited by Richard M. Price
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

vi		<i>Contents</i>
9	Interstate community-building and the identity/difference predicament BAHAR RUMELILI	253
10	Progress with a price RICHARD PRICE	281
	<i>Index</i>	305

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88816-5 - Moral Limit and Possibility in World Politics

Edited by Richard M. Price

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Contributors

Martha Finnemore, Professor, Department of Political Science, George Washington University.

Amy Gurowitz, Lecturer, Political Science Department and Peace and Conflict Studies Program, University of California, Berkeley.

Jonathan Havercroft, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Oklahoma.

Marc Lynch, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science and Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University.

Richard Price, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, University of British Columbia.

Christian Reus-Smit, Professor and Head, Department of International Relations, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australia National University.

Bahar Rumelili, Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations, Koç University, Istanbul, Turkey.

Kathryn Sikkink, Regents Professor and McKnight Distinguished University Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Minnesota.

Ann Towns, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Delaware.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88816-5 - Moral Limit and Possibility in World Politics

Edited by Richard M. Price

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface

The intellectual trajectory from which this book grew owes much to my interactions and collaborations with fellow students, instructors and colleagues, and my own students over the years. The question of ethics in world politics has been my abiding intellectual interest since my master's degree at Carleton University, where I wrote a thesis on the ethics of strategic defences. Fen Hampson, an International Relations scholar, and Tom Darby, a political theorist, generously humoured my immature probings into a subject that didn't really fit in either discipline as commonly practised, particularly when I ventured astray from traditional moral philosophy and into interpretive approaches to ethics, the philosophy of technology and other terrain that was quite exotic for a subject traditionally under the ambit of strategic studies. As I look back upon that project, I see this volume in many ways as the logical and (hopefully) more mature outcome of that earlier, less self-conscious and more inchoate attempt to bridge philosophy, ethics and politics. Peter Katzenstein, Henry Shue and Judith Reppy subsequently lent their essential support to an interpretive and structural approach to understanding moral norms in world politics for my Ph.D. dissertation, later a book, which examined the chemical weapons taboo from a genealogical perspective. The move from interpretivism to constructivism, and later from structure to agency, occupied the next stage of my intellectual agenda, one that was particularly and powerfully influenced by my interactions with my fellow students at Cornell, colleagues encountered through Peter Katzenstein's Culture of National Security project and elsewhere, and colleagues and students at the University of Minnesota. Representatives from all of those intellectual communities are in this volume, though many of course could not be included within an already substantial book, which John Haslam of Cambridge University Press has been so generous in accommodating. But the absence of those colleagues and others from this volume is not because I have learned any less from them: Dan Thomas, Nina Tannenwald, Beth Kier,

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88816-5 - Moral Limit and Possibility in World Politics

Edited by Richard M. Price

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Michael Barnett, Alex Wendt, Thomas Risse, Emanuel Adler, Ward Thomas, Neta Crawford, Helen Kinsella, Rado Dimitrov, Kristin Willey, Nick Wheeler and Jeff Checkel to name a few, with sincere apologies to any I have neglected to mention. Often it was the flash inspired by a single comment from one such colleague that sparked core ideas for my own pursuit. My years at the University of Minnesota were the perfect sounding board for engaging the strengths and shortcomings of constructivism and critical theory in thinking about ethics, given the intellects of Kathryn Sikkink and Bud Duvall and the graduate students who sometimes felt pushed or pulled between mainstream International Relations, constructivism and critical theory, but who always came out the better because of it. This project grew directly out of those interactions, since I became convinced that the current incarnations of neither constructivism nor critical theory to date had satisfactorily responded to the pressing prescriptive questions of ethics. Namely, just what should we do? What is ethically justifiable if we are obviously not in a position to attain our highest ideals, which may spring from our most clever critiques of what others have actually been able to accomplish in the world? Both traditions of course have enormous potential to contribute in a more satisfactory and direct way to how we think about and answer ethical challenges in world politics, and this volume is a first attempt to lay out an architecture of what such a synthesis might entail. It is a genuinely collaborative book, to the extent that so many of the formulations or even precise sentences and paragraphs appearing in any given chapter may have come from another participant in the project that we decided to dispense with the courtesy of acknowledged sources with a footnoted ‘thanks to so and so for this formulation’ and instead issue this blanket acknowledgement that the individual chapters themselves typically bear no small imprint of the other collaborators.

This volume was supported by a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Aid to Research Workshops and Conferences in Canada grant, financial and administrative support from the Center of International Relations at the Liu Institute at the University of British Columbia, and matching financial support from the Department of Political Science, Faculty of Arts, and Vice President Research, all of the University of British Columbia. I am most grateful for the efficient research assistance of Alana Tiemessen and Scott Watson.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88816-5 - Moral Limit and Possibility in World Politics

Edited by Richard M. Price

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface

xi

Sincere thanks to the reviewers of this volume, as engaging with their generous and challenging comments considerably improved this book. Thanks for the same reason to the participants at meetings where this project was presented – the University of Minnesota, University of Chicago, the Australian National University, the University of British Columbia, the University of Queensland, and the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting in Philadelphia.

Thanks to Jesse and Annelise for allowing pops/daddy to kick you off the computer so many times with such good cheer, to Lisa for putting up with the late nights spent at the keyboard, and to Nova for being such a good companion by my side as I typed.

Vancouver
May 18, 2007