

**Steven Krasner, “Structural causes and regime consequences: regimes as intervening variables”, IO. 36,2, Spring 1982, pp. 185-205 (introduction of volume)**

purpose: introduce a typology of how different theoretical orientations explain the origins, purposes, and effects of regimes

summary: regimes are best seen as an intervening variable between basic causal variables (political power, egoistic self-interest, norms and principles, usage and custom, and knowledge) and observable behavior of states

A. what is a regime?

- regimes: principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actors’ expectations converge; different from ad hoc agreements, in that they embody long-term practices
  - principles: beliefs of facts, causation, and rectitude
  - norms: standards of behavior defined as rights and obligations
  - rules: specific prescriptions and proscriptions for action
  - decision-making procedures: prevailing practices for making / implementing collective choices
- principles and norms are the defining characteristics of a regime; alterations indicate change *of* the regime
- rules and decision-making procedures are the functional behavior within a regime; alterations indicate change *within* a regime
- regimes weaken when incoherence or inconsistency between actual practice and regime principles arise

B. regimes as intervening variables: causal variables (IV) -> regimes -> related behavior and outcomes

- different theories highlight different causal variables, which imply differential roles for regimes

3 major theoretical orientations:

1. structuralism (neo-mercantilism): regimes are epiphenomenal to underlying power interests; when IV changes, so does the regime
  - main causal variable: political power; power can be used for... (pp. 199)
    - common good, i.e. collective goods provision (re: Kindleberger)
    - particular interests, i.e. distributional gains through asymmetric power distribution
      - a. hegemons create institutions that maximize relative gains (re: Krasner 1976); regimes weaken when hegemons decline
      - b. stronger states alter payoffs of weaker actors through coercion / imposition that manipulates the latter’s opportunity sets
2. modified structuralism (neo-liberalism): regimes result from voluntary agreements to solve PD-style conflicts of mixed-motive games
  - main causal variable: egoistic self-interest, i.e. pursuit of absolute gains (pp. 195)
    - regimes solve 1) games of collaboration: (PD) collective action problems in multiple equilibria; 2) games of coordination: (chicken) common aversion problems, e.g. which side of the road to drive on
    - Keohane: regimes reduce transaction costs (better information, facilitate side-payments, establish monitoring, etc) and prevent market failure
3. constructivism (Grotian): regimes affect all political systems, such that all patterns of behavior have normative significance
  - causal variables that reinforce above IVs:
    - a. norms and principles: social epistemes and conventions, e.g. sovereignty (pp.200) (re: Bull, 1977)
    - b. usage and custom: regular patterns of behavior that leads to shared expectations (pp.202)
    - c. knowledge: beliefs in causal linkages (pp.203) (re: Haas, 1980)

**Steven Krasner, “Regimes and the limits of realism: regimes as autonomous variables”, IO, 36,2 (Spring 1982), pp. 355-368 (conclusion of volume)**

purpose: compare realist (billiard-ball) and liberal (tectonic plates) theories on regime survivability

summary: while a realist power story can account for the origins of regimes, regimes survive changes in the distribution of power

A. comparison of theories:

- realism: billiard ball analogy (if you don't know this by now...)- states want to maximize relative power in a zero-sum world, i.e. regimes will reflect hegemonic interests
  - problem: institutions persist in a world without hegemons
- liberalism: tectonic plates analogy-
  - states value absolute gains, e.g. economic wealth
  - power distributions are more dynamic than regime characteristics, but the latter can survive changes in the former, although at some point an earthquake will shake up this system, i.e. a regime can withstand only so much distortion between actual practices and regime principles
  - hegemonic distributions of power are necessary to create institutions, but not necessarily to maintain them (re: Keohane, Stein)

B. regime autonomy: 2 facets

1. lags: sticky institutions, or why regimes persist beyond power changes
  - a. custom and usage (defined in other article) may make change psychologically untenable
  - b. uncertainty: institutions may become necessary again, but new regimes may be hard to create and may not be as effective in establishing issue-linkages, monitoring, etc..
  - c. cognitive framework (re: Haas): it is not always possible to conceive of a new regime framework, i.e. political actors can't think of a better system
2. feedback effect of regimes:
  - a. alter calculation of interests (Stein, Keohane): information advantages gained from an institution, e.g. better monitoring, makes it more costly to cheat / defect
  - b. alter interests themselves: increasing transaction flows through a particular institution increases the opportunity costs of change
  - c. sources of power: regimes can increase the political clout of weaker states by giving them a forum in which they can voice their opinions and make deals with stronger states
  - d. actor capabilities: facilitate particular patterns of behavior, e.g. int'l economic system mirrors the interests of the strong actors (re: dependency theory)