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International Regimes

edited by

Stephen D. Krasner

A special issue of *International Organization* 36, 2, Spring 1982

Support for this enterprise, both material and intellectual, came from a number of sources. Earlier versions of the papers were presented at meetings held in Los Angeles in October 1980 and Palm Springs in February 1981. These were made possible by grants from the Ford Foundation, the Center for International and Strategic Affairs at the University of California, Los Angeles, and International Organization. The Center for International and Strategic Affairs also provided indispensable logistical support for the conferences, with Donna Beltz serving as an extraordinarily capable conference coordinator while at the same time pursuing her graduate studies.

The meeting in Palm Springs was attended by lawyers and economists as well as political scientists. Participants included John Barceló, John Barton, Donna Beltz, Richard Bilder, Benjamin Cohen, John Ferejohn, Ronald Findlay, Jock Finlayson, Albert Fishlow, Judith Goldstein, Peter Gourevitch, Ernst Haas, Roger Hansen, Cynthia Hody, Raymond Hopkins, Michael Intriligator, Robert Jervis, Peter Katzenstein, Peter Kenen, Robert Keohane, Roman Kolkowicz, Andrzej Korbonski, James Kurth, Charles Lipson, Michael Mandelbaum, Rachel McCulloch, Lynn Mytelka, John Odell, Donald Puchala, William Potter, Peter Ruof, Arthur Stein, Laura Tyson, Thomas Willett, Oran Young, and Mark Zacher. A revised version of the paper that Jock Finlayson and Mark Zacher prepared for the conference appeared as the lead article in the fall 1981 issue of International Organization.

Albert Fishlow, Roger Hansen, Lynn Mytelka, and Peter Katzenstein acting in his capacity as editor-in-chief of International Organization served as the review committee for this special issue. They read numerous drafts and their suggestions improved all of the essays. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to the Editorial Board of International Organization and especially to Robert Keohane, the journal's editor-in-chief at the time this project was first conceived. Their suggestions and guidance dramatically expanded my vision of this enterprise in ways that I know contributed to my own intellectual growth and, I hope, to the utility of the volume for both its contributors and its readers.

This special issue is also part of the series Studies in International and Strategic Affairs written under the auspices of the Center for International and Strategic Affairs, University of California, Los Angeles.

*Stephen D. Krasner
Stanford, California
December 1981*

International regimes

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Abstracts

Structural causes and regime consequences: regimes as intervening variables

by *Stephen D. Krasner*

International regimes are defined as principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue-area. As a starting point, regimes have been conceptualized as intervening variables, standing between basic causal factors and related outcomes and behavior. There are three views about the importance of regimes: conventional structural orientations dismiss regimes as being at best ineffectual; Grotian orientations view regimes as an intimate component of the international system; and modified structural perspectives see regimes as significant only under certain constrained conditions. For Grotian and modified structuralist arguments, which endorse the view that regimes can influence outcomes and behavior, regime development is seen as a function of five basic causal variables: egoistic self-interest, political power, diffuse norms and principles, custom and usage, and knowledge.

Words can hurt you; or, who said what to whom about regimes

by *Ernst B. Haas*

Much of the confusion in the current literature on regimes is due to the fact that two very different metaphors about nature, science, and culture inform the discussion. The two metaphors—the organic and the mechanical—imply six different approaches to world order studies, and hence to the analysis and advocacy of regimes. Each of the six—eco-environmentalism, eco-reformism, egalitarianism, liberalism, mercantilism, and mainstream views—advances different arguments about the origin of regimes, the structural principles that explain their growth and decay, their functioning, and the values they serve. Yet each approach uses the same basic vocabulary: system, structure, process, costs-and-benefits, public goods, management, learning, organization, hegemony, and collaboration. Clarity about each argument, and a possible synthesis of views, can be achieved only if we understand the semantic and philosophical contexts in which the terminology is embedded. This article attempts the task of terminological and contextual explication in the setting of evolutionary epistemology and of contending theories of international relations. It opts for a synthesis of the analyses of regimes offered by mainstream views and by a normative view of world order represented by the eco-reformist approach. The discussion is illustrated with references to the Law of the Sea negotiations.

International regimes: lessons from inductive analysis

by *Donald J. Puchala and Raymond F. Hopkins*

International regimes are attitudinal phenomena. They are thus subjective and exist primarily as participants' understandings, expectations or convictions about

legitimate, appropriate or moral behavior. Regimes are identified and their tenets described by studying records of participants' perceptions gleaned either from interview transcripts or from appropriate documents. Theorizing concerning international regimes currently focuses upon identifying analytic characteristics that might become bases for comparative empirical studies and foundations for generalization. Particularly promising are comparisons of international regimes with regard to specificity, formality, modes of change, and distributive bias. The regime that buttressed late 19th century European colonialism is compared to the international food regime of the present day with respect to these analytic features. Observations on the two cases suggest reasons why some international regimes are durable and others fragile, why some invite wide compliance and others provoke deviation, and why some change while the international structure of power remains constant but others change only after the weak become strong.

Regime dynamics: the rise and fall of international regimes

by *Oran R. Young*

The dynamics of international regimes are treated as social institutions. How and why do regimes arise from the interactions of individual actors over time? Three developmental sequences are identified, and the resultant regimes are described as spontaneous orders, negotiated orders, and imposed orders. How do regimes change once they have become established in specific social settings? Three major types of pressure for regime change arise from internal contradictions, shifts in underlying power structures, and exogenous forces. The next task in studying the dynamics of international regimes is to seek a more sophisticated understanding of the factors determining the incidence of these developmental sequences and pressures for change.

Coordination and collaboration: regimes in an anarchic world

by *Arthur A. Stein*

The study of regimes can contribute to our understanding of international politics only if regimes represent more than international organizations and less than all international relations. The conceptualization of regimes developed here accepts the realist image of international politics, in which autonomous self-interested states interact in an anarchic environment. Yet there are situations in which rational actors have an incentive to eschew unconstrained independent decision making, situations in which individualistic self-interested calculation leads them to prefer joint decision making (regimes) because independent self-interested behavior can result in undesirable or suboptimal outcomes. These situations are labeled dilemmas of common interests and dilemmas of common aversions. To deal with these, states must collaborate with one another or coordinate their behavior, respectively. Thus there are different bases for regimes, which give rise to regimes with different characteristics. Coordination is self-enforcing and can be reached through the use of conventions. Collaboration is more formalized and requires mechanisms both to monitor potential cheating and to insure compliance with the regime. The article elucidates the assumptions of such an interest-based approach to regimes, assimilates alternative ex-

planations into this framework, and develops the implications for regime maintenance and change.

The demand for international regimes

by Robert O. Keohane

International regimes can be understood as results of rational behavior by the actors—principally states—that create them. Regimes are demanded in part because they facilitate the making of agreements, by providing information and reducing transactions costs in world politics. Increased interdependence among issues—greater “issue density”—will lead to increased demand for regimes. Insofar as regimes succeed in providing high quality information, through such processes as the construction of generally accepted norms or the development of transgovernmental relations, they create demand for their own continuance, even if the structural conditions (such as hegemony) under which they were first supplied, change. Analysis of the demand for international regimes thus helps us to understand lags between structural change and regime change, as well as to assess the significance of transgovernmental policy networks. Several assertions of structural theory seem problematic in light of this analysis. Hegemony may not be a necessary condition for stable international regimes; past patterns of institutionalized cooperation may be able to compensate, to some extent, for increasing fragmentation of power.

Security regimes

by Robert Jervis

Regimes are harder to establish in the security area than they are in the economic realm because of the inherently competitive cast of many security concerns, the unforgiving nature of the problems, and the difficulty in determining how much security the state has or needs. Nevertheless, there is at least one example of a functioning security regime—the Concert of Europe. Under the Concert the great powers sharply moderated their individualistic and competitive policies and exercised restraint in the expectation that others would reciprocate. The self-interest that they followed was broader and longer-run than usual. The Balance of Power, however, is a regime only if the restraints are internal, as Kaplan implies, as contrasted with Waltz’s formulation in which states restrain each other. Current superpower relations should not be considered a regime because the principles, rules, and norms have little autonomy but instead can be best understood as quite direct reflections of the states’ power and interests.

International regimes, transactions, and change: embedded liberalism in the postwar economic order

by John Gerard Ruggie

The prevailing model of international economic regimes is strictly positivistic in its epistemological orientation and stresses the distribution of material power capabilities in its explanatory logic. It is inadequate to account for the current set of international economic regimes and for the differences between past and present regimes. The model elaborated here departs from the prevailing view in two respects, while adhering to it in a third. First, it argues that regimes comprise not simply what

actors say and do, but also what they understand and find acceptable within an inter-subjective framework of meaning. Second, it argues that in the economic realm such a framework of meaning cannot be deduced from the distribution of material power capabilities, but must be sought in the configuration of state-society relations that is characteristic of the regime-making states. Third, in incorporating these notions into our understanding of the formation and transformation of international economic regimes, the formulation self-consciously strives to remain at the systemic level and to avoid becoming reductionist in attributing cause and effect relations. The article can therefore argue that the prevailing view is deficient on its own terms and must be expanded and modified. Addressing the world of actual international economic regimes, the article argues that the *pax Britannica* and the *pax Americana* cannot be equated in any meaningful sense, and that the postwar regimes for money and trade live on notwithstanding premature announcements of their demise.

The transformation of trade: the sources and effects of regime change by *Charles Lipson*

Regimes can be analyzed both as "outcomes to be explained" and as mediating social institutions that affect international transactions. In the case of postwar trade, the changing outcomes can be predicted simply and with rough accuracy by a hegemonic model. Yet that model cannot explain the continuing reduction of tariffs, the development of new nontariff codes, and the persistence of crucial norms, rules, and institutions. These durable features of modern trade suggest that the logic of regime maintenance is distinct from that of regime initiation. Nor can the hegemonic model account for the regime's highly uneven weakening. The most prominent trade barriers are in mature, basic industries; the least prominent are in industries with differentiated products and extensive research and development expenditures. One explanation (which usefully complements a hegemonic model) is that sectors differ systematically in their capacity to adapt competitively to imports, and hence in their need to preserve their position by trade barriers. Despite the regime's uneven weakening, trade volumes have continued their secular growth. In sectors where the regime remains strong, it has stimulated two-way trade in similar products (intra-industry trade). Where the regime is weaker, new nontariff barriers diminish hypothetical trade growth but rarely aim at a permanent rollback in market shares or trade volume.

Balance-of-payments financing: evolution of a regime by *Benjamin J. Cohen*

The regime for payments financing embedded in the postwar Bretton Woods system was based on the principle, formally articulated in the Charter of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), that nations should be assured of an adequate but not unlimited supply of supplementary financing for balance-of-payments purposes. Norms included the obligation to avoid policies inconsistent with the IMF Charter (i.e., to play by the agreed rules of the game). In the 1970s the regime seemingly underwent profound change, as the private credit markets emerged as an increasingly important rival to the IMF as a source of payments financing. Nonetheless, this change fell short of a transformation of kind, insofar as the Fund continues to play a role as informal certifier of creditworthiness in the markets. Rather, it represents an

example of “norm-governed change.” Despite greater ambiguity in rules and decision-making procedures, a strong element of continuity in basic principles and norms remains.

Cave! hic dragones: a critique of regime analysis
by Susan Strange

This article questions the usefulness of the concept of regimes on the grounds that it is a fad; ambiguous and imprecise; value-biased towards order rather than change or equity; essentially static in its interpretation of the kaleidoscopic reality of international cooperation and conflict; and, finally, rooted in a limiting, state-centric paradigm. Each of these objections represents a dragon that unwary young scholars should be warned to avoid—or at least to treat with caution. On the grounds that those who look for a tidy general theory encompassing all the variety of forces shaping world politics are chasing a will o’ the wisp, the article suggests as an alternative that we should pay attention to the overlapping bargaining processes, economic and political, domestic as well as international, by which the outcomes of the interaction of states, of authorities with markets and their operators, and of political institutions and economic enterprises, determine between them the “who-gets-what” of the international political economy.

Regimes and the limits of realism: regimes as autonomous variables
by Stephen D. Krasner

Two distinct traditions have developed from structural realist perspectives. The first, the billiard ball version, focuses purely on interaction among states. The second, the tectonic plates version, focuses on the relationship between the distribution of power and various international environments. It is the latter tradition that suggests why regimes may be important for a realist orientation. However, it also opens the possibility for viewing regimes as autonomous, not just as intervening, variables. There may be lags between changes in basic causal variables and regime change. There may be feedback from regimes to basic causal variables. Both lags and feedback suggest an importance for regimes that would be rejected by conventional structural arguments.