



## Study about International Regimes, their dimensions of variance and change

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**Abstract :** Regimes are institutions which provide a venue of cooperation for states to address issue-specific concerns. Intergovernmental organizations (IGOS) are more tangible entities designed to facilitate the implementation of a regime's objectives. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) for example, is an IGO tasked to coordinate states in finding solutions related to the specific issue of climate change mitigation. As a global environmental issue, climate change is strongly associated with greenhouse gases (GHG) emanating from fossil fuel extraction/refining, transportation sector, electricity and other energy-intensive industries. The UNFCCC is mandated to find ways to mitigate the impact of this impending global threat through the cooperation of member-states in curbing their own respective GHG emissions. However, energy security is imperative in a country's economic growth and fossil fuels have historically played a role in any state's industrialization. The Philippines for example, acknowledges their importance as it undergoes its own economic development. It thereby faces a dilemma on how to maintain its economic trajectory while committing to reduce its GHG emissions when it ratified the 2015 Paris Agreement, a treaty conceived during the UNFCCC's 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21). Using the country's energy security policy as a case study, this thesis will explore to what extent has climate change mitigation regimes such as the UNFCCC, have either constrained or encouraged Philippine policymakers in the design and diffusion of the country's energy security policy. Alongside the country's direct compliance to ratify the Paris Agreement, this thesis will also look into the possible role of informal governance (IG) (i.e. unwritten rules, shared expectations and norms) within the UNFCCC's Paris Talks as a practical option to heed to the dictates of climate change mitigation regimes. This framework structure present in the Paris Talks (i.e. non-binding, lack of penalties for failing to comply), enables the Philippines to utilize IG elements which ensures it of:

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- 1) Flexibility in its energy security policy;
- 2) Lower Transaction Costs to commit to the treaty; and
- 3) Lower Sovereignty Costs attributed to the nonbinding nature of the treaty.

**Introduction :** The revolutionary power of technology to change reality forces us to re-examine our understanding of the international political system. On a fundamental level, we must begin with the classic international relations debate between realism and liberalism, well summarized by Stephen Walt.<sup>1</sup> The third paradigm of constructivism provides the key for combining aspects of both liberalism and realism into a cohesive prediction for the political future. The erosion of sovereignty goes hand in hand with the burgeoning Information Age's seemingly unstoppable mechanism for breaking down physical boundaries



and the conceptual systems grounded upon them. Classical realism fails because of its fundamental assumption of the traditional sovereignty of the actors in its system. Liberalism cannot adequately quantify the nebulous connection between prosperity and freedom, which it assumes as an inherent truth, in a world with lucrative autocracies like Singapore and China. Instead, we have to accept the transformative power of ideas or, more directly, the technological, social, economic and political changes they bring about. From an American perspective, it is crucial to examine these changes, not only to understand their relevance as they transform the US, but also their effects in our evolving global relationships. Every development in international relations can be linked to some event that happened in the past, but never before has so much changed so quickly at such an expansive global level. In the first section of this article, I will examine the nature of recent technological changes in diplomacy and the larger derivative effects in society, which relate to the future of international politics. Despite all these changes, international entities have the same diplomatic need for communication and negotiation that they always have, though the means be radically new. In the second section, I will attempt to link the present global metamorphosis to a vision of the future coherent with theory today.

### **Regimes: Dimensions of variance and change**

Many studies fail to specify what they mean by regime transformation or treat it in a uni dimensional way. Regimes may change over time or vary across cases in at least four ways: strength, organizational form, scope, and allocation mode. As we shall argue, different theoretical approaches address one or more of these variables, but are less useful in explaining others.

#### ***a. Strength***

The majority of "regime change" studies try to explain why regimes eventually weaken or decay." Strength is measured by the degree of compliance with regime injunctions, particularly in instances where short-term or "myopic" self-interests collide with regimes.

#### ***b. Organizational form***

In its quest to move beyond the study of concrete international organizations, recent regimes literature has largely ignored problems of organizational design and operation. Some issues are conducive to decentralized regulation: regime injunctions may only call on states to share information, or to refrain from certain actions, such as polluting, over-fishing, nuclear testing, or raising tariffs. Other regimes, such as a fixed-exchange-rate regimes, demand positive interventions by states, but remain largely decentralized. Most regimes, however, are likely to have at least some minimal administrative apparatus for the purpose of dispute settlement, the collection and sharing of information, or surveillance. Complex cooperative tasks require more elaborate, and potentially autonomous, organizational structures. If cooperation is already highly institutionalized, theories resting on assumptions of anarchy are highly misleading; black boxing organizational structure and processes will lead to simplistic predictions.



The principles governing representation are another dimension of organizational variance. Most universalist regimes are structured either on the "one nation, one vote" principle or, as in the international Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, on weighted voting. Alternative principles of membership, however, are based on discrimination along functional or sectoral lines (the Tokyo Round codes) or regional ones (the Caribbean Basin Initiative). Principles of membership have important distributional consequences, since they affect international agendas and organizational resource allocation.

### *c. Scope*

Scope refers to the range of issues the regime covers. Though changes in regime scope have attracted little theoretical attention, its neglect can cause misleading characterizations. The failure to comply with certain GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) provisions signaled a weakening of the trade regime in the 1970s. Yet at the same time, the regime's scope expanded through the negotiation of the Tokyo Round codes.<sup>4</sup> The most contentious questions on the current trade agenda concern the regime's scope—namely, how the GATT will address new issues such as trade in services, industrial policy, and national rules governing foreign direct investment. The jurisdictional scope of a regime is not incidental to its success. Overly broad jurisdiction raises administrative costs and complexity, but overly narrow agreements may allow little room for bargaining and issue-linkage. One important cause of regime change is the "externalities" associated with inadequate scope. GATT negotiations in the 1950s and 1960s virtually eliminated tariff barriers as an important impediment to trade. The result, however, was to expose, and even encourage, non-tariff barriers. These externalities drove the reform efforts which culminated in the Tokyo Round.

### *d. Allocation mode*

Regimes can endorse different social mechanisms for resource allocation. A market-oriented regime supports the private allocation of resources, discourages national controls, guarantees property rights, and facilitates private contracting. As Oran Young states, "free enterprise systems. . . are not institutional arrangements operating outside or in the absence of any regime. Such systems clearly require explicit structures of property or use rights." At the other extreme, authoritative allocation involves the direct control of resources by regime authorities, and will demand more extensive, and potentially autonomous, organizational structures. The IMF's role in the balance-of-payments financing regime provides an example. The nature of the issue-area and the extent of cooperation sought will partly determine the preference for market-oriented versus authoritative modes of allocation. Many issue-areas could be organized either way, however, with sharply different distributional consequences. The Group of 77's proposal for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) provides the clearest example. Virtually all of the NIEO debates centered on allocation mechanisms, with the South generally favoring authoritative



### **Conclusion:**

Current theories of international regimes have ignored domestic political processes, in part because of the lure of parsimonious systemic theory. This neglect has extended to the issue of how regimes actually influence national policy choices, a question closely related to the issue of compliance and regime strength. More broadly, there have been few studies of the domestic political determinants of international cooperation. There are both methodological and theoretical reasons to open the black-box of domestic politics. Even if one adopts an explanation of compliance and defection, validating such claims demands careful reconstruction of decision-making at the national level. But the neglect of the domestic political and economic realm has had deeper costs, including a neglect of the substantive issues over which states are likely to seek cooperation and the basic forces leading to regime change. To address these difficulties, we suggest a research program that views international cooperation not only as the outcome of relations among states, but of the interaction between domestic and interactional games and coalitions that span national boundaries.

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