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)