



Institute for European Studies  
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# **Institutional Interplay and Global Environmental Change**

## **State of the Art and Perspectives for Future Research**

SENSE PhD Summer School 2008, Amsterdam, 25 August 2008

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1. Introduction: What Is Institutional Interplay?
2. Established Distinctions
3. Causal Mechanisms and Ideal Types
4. Interplay Management
5. Some Findings and Lessons
6. Policy Implications
7. Future Research

# 1. What Is Institutional Interplay?

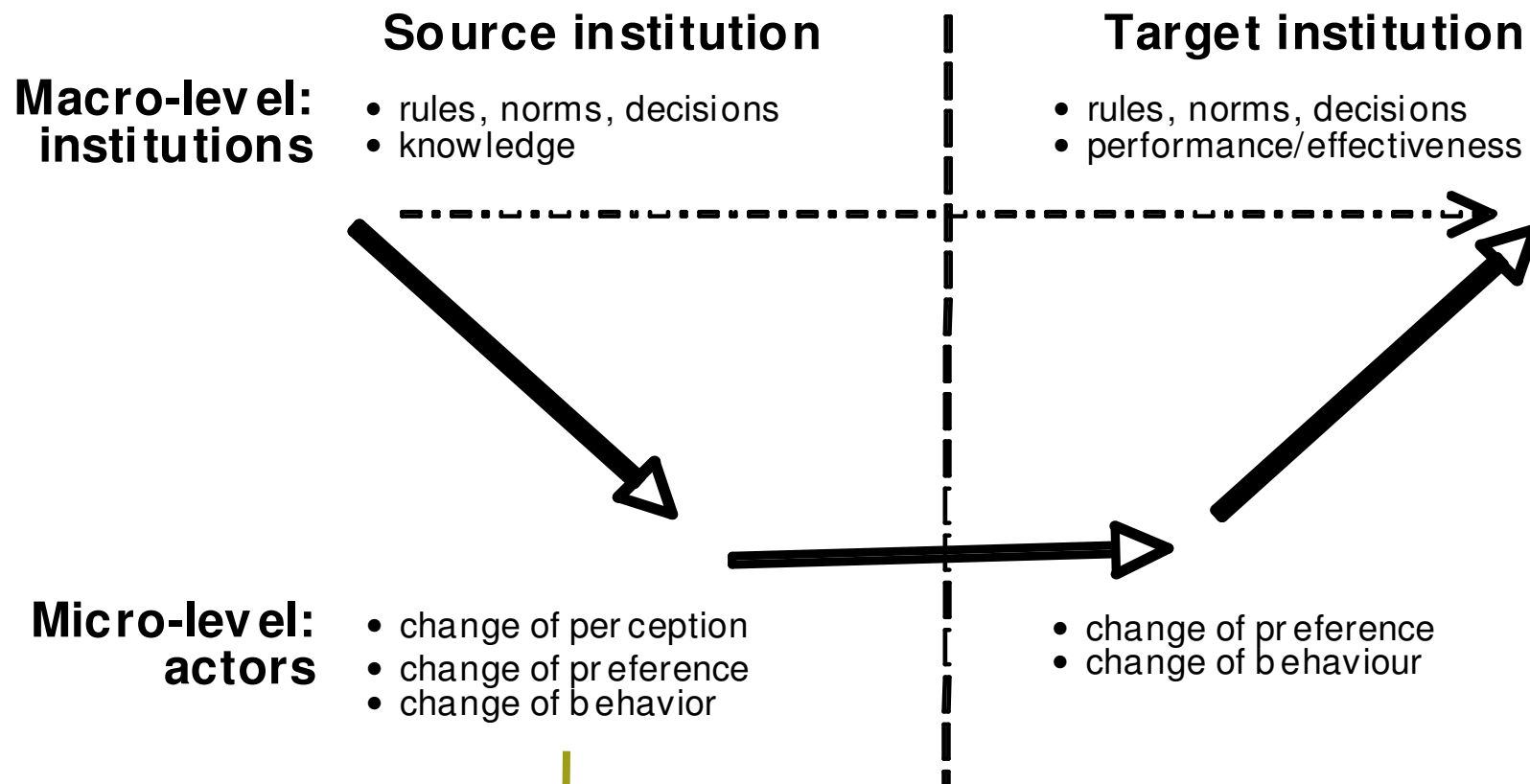
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- Institutional interplay/interaction: international institutions exert influence on each other.
    - Not merely co-existence of institutions!
  - Examples: WTO and MEAs - climate change regime and CBD - CITES/Montreal Protocol and the WCO
- ⇒ Institutional interplay is an ubiquitous and significant phenomenon (in environmental governance).

- Vertical and horizontal interaction
- Source and target institution
- Political and functional linkages/drivers
- Interplay and interplay management
- Synergy and conflict/disruption (positive and negative effects)

### 3. Causal Mechanisms and Ideal Types

- Research question: *How can international institutions influence each other?*



### 3. Causal Mechanisms and Ideal Types

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- Causal mechanisms and ideal types reveal:
    - How influence travels from one institution to the other
    - Provide a micro-foundation to institutional interaction
    - Draw attention to the actors involved
    - Point to consequences for governance
- ⇒ Search for underlying rationales of institutional interaction and their effects for governance
- ⇒ Help us structure the realm of institutional interplay

### 3. CMs and Ideal Types: Output level

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- Cognitive Interaction (synergistic): Learning
  - Learning from a Policy Model (unintentional)
  - Request for Assistance (intentional)
- Interaction through Commitment: Commitment-driven change of preferences
  - Jurisdictional Delimitation (different objectives: disruptive)
  - Nested Institutions (different memberships: synergistic)
  - Additional Means (different instruments: synergistic)

### 3. CMs ...: Outcome and Impact Levels

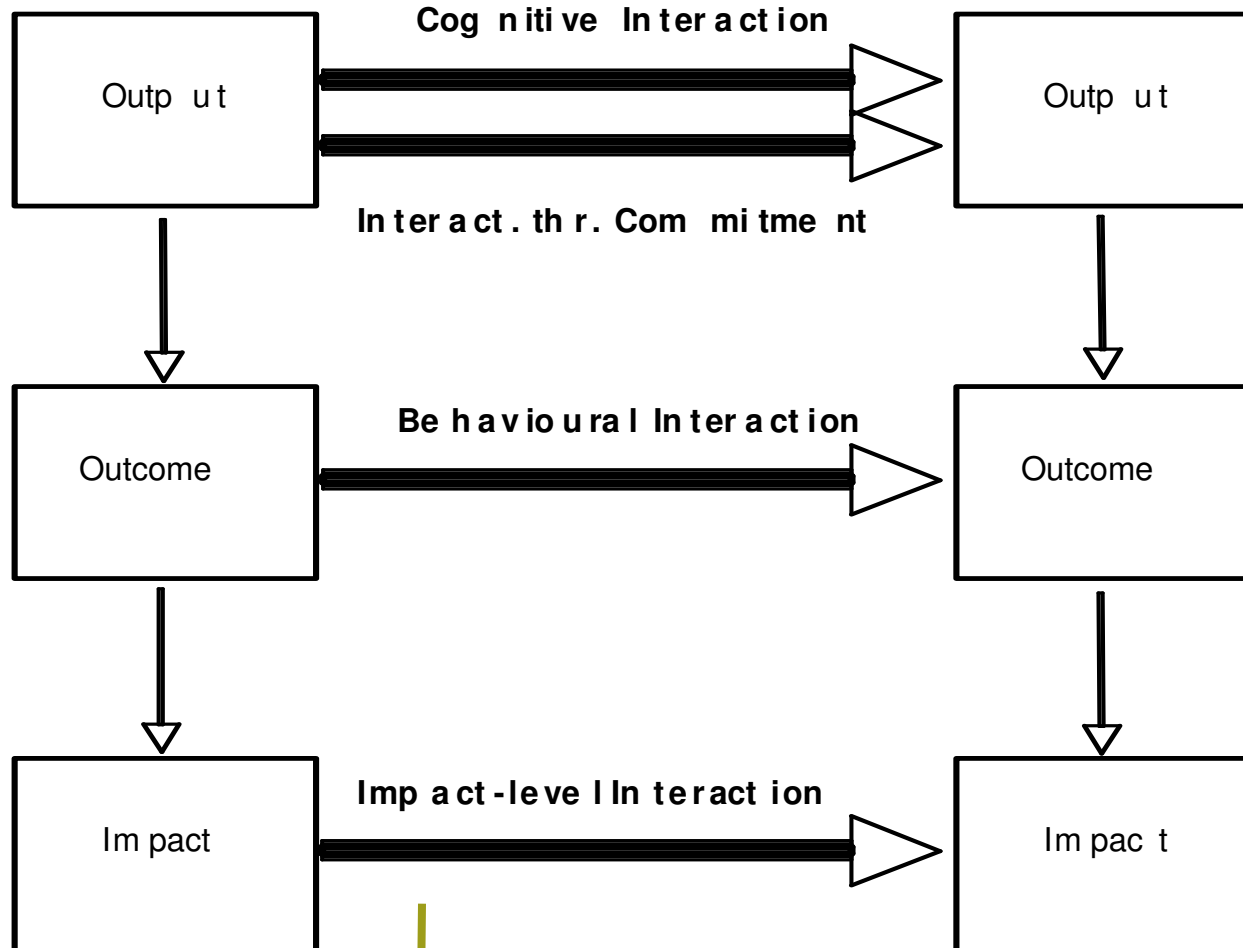
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- Behavioral Interaction: Behavioral adaptation at outcome level in response to source institution policies
  - Different objectives: disruptive
  - Different memberships: synergistic
  - Different instruments: synergistic
- Impact-level Interaction: Functional linkages/ interdependence of the ultimate targets of governance (varying effects)

### 3. Causal Mechanisms and Levels of Effectiveness

**Source institution**

**Target institution**



- Interplay management: efforts to shape and govern institutional interaction
- Four levels: individual actors, individual institutions, institutions jointly, at level of international system
- Different types: political-legal, different instruments/modes (regulation, communication, capacity building)

- Empirical focus on trade, climate, oceans
- Interplay ubiquitous phenomenon - governance in institutional complexes is the norm: chains and clusters
  - ⇒ Traditional focus on individual institutions is insufficient for fully understanding the evolution of governance institutions and their effectiveness (implementation).
- Interplay analysis allows us to identify important constraints on and opportunities for GEG.
- Synergy appears to be at least as common as disruption

- Disruption leads to collective interplay management more frequently than synergy
- Interplay management: focus on lower levels of coordination (individual actors and institutions) - little overarching governance of inter-institutional relationships
- But: Underlying mechanisms providing for some order exist: e.g. jurisdictional delimitation and “nicheing” (Stokke)

- Try to enhance synergy (in addition to mitigating disruption)!
- Mitigating disruption requires addressing diverging objectives!
- What may seem like a “duplication of work” or “redundancy” may indeed have hidden value!
- Supposedly weak institutions may prove surprisingly strong - identifying the balance requires careful analysis (e.g. WTO-MEAs)!

- Lots of opportunities!
- Empirical lacunae (including transnational institutions, environmental consequences of non-environmental governance systems)
- Understanding institutional complexes/larger architectures, including effects for
  - individual institutions,
  - governance of issue areas,
  - international environmental governance at large.

- Interplay management, including
  - How and with what result have actors so far managed institutional interaction/institutional complexes?
  - Does the rising awareness of institutional interplay cause actors to change interplay management?
  - How can actors improve and optimize such interplay management - how can we best manage (different kinds of) institutional complexes (what action at which levels: building an effective governance architecture)?
- Non-interaction - towards a theory of interaction?

# Causal Mechanisms and Ideal Types: Overview

	Causal Mechanism	Key Trigger	Ideal Type	Basic Rationale	Key Characteristics/Conditions	Probable Effect
Output	COGNITIVE INTERACTION	Provision of information or ideas	Policy Model	Target institution adapts to a policy model	(1) Unintentionally triggered (2) Similarity of problems addressed	Synergistic
			Request for Assistance	Target institution adapts upon request for assistance	(3) Intentionally triggered (4) Overlap of governance areas	Neutral or synergistic
	INTERACTION THROUGH COMMITMENT	Commitment of member states	Jurisdictional Delimitation	Competition for regulatory authority	(5) Difference of objectives (6) Overlap of governance areas and memberships	Disruptive
			Nested Institutions	Vertical policy diffusion from smaller to larger institution	(7) Difference of memberships (8) Overlap of governance areas and memberships	Synergistic
			Additional Means	Horizontal policy diffusion activating additional governance instrument	(9) Difference of governance instruments (10) Overlap of governance areas and memberships	Synergistic
	Outcome	BEHAVIOURAL INTERACTION	Adjustment of behaviour by states and non-state actors	Corollary to Jurisdictional Delimitation	Conflicting or competing obligations	(11) Difference of objectives (12) Overlap of governance areas
Corollary to Nested Institutions				Vertical implementation assistance from larger to smaller institution	(13) Difference of memberships (14) Overlap of governance areas	Synergistic
Corollary to Additional Means				Reinforcement of implementation through additional governance instrument	(15) Difference of governance instruments (16) Overlap of governance areas	Synergistic
Impact	IMPACT-LEVEL INTERACTION	Influence on ultimate governance target	--	Ultimate governance target of one institution influences ultimate governance target of another institution	(17) Functional interdependence of ultimate governance targets	Synergistic or neutral or disruptive