

Anarchy and Liberal Institutional Order in Tensei Shirata Slime Datta Ken

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the portrayal of anarchy and liberal institutional order in Tensei Shitara Slime Datta Ken using international relations theory and narrative analysis. The isekai universe is seen as an anarchic world where various factions engage in rivalry, negotiation, and coalition building. Through Rimuru Tempest efforts to institute political stability through organization, diplomacy, and economics, the story demonstrates the essence of liberal institutional theory, even if its hierarchical structure remains intact. The paper makes an innovative contribution by bringing together international relations and popular culture disciplines, enabling the interpretation of political ideas using fictional narratives. Thus, the anime highlights the transformation from anarchy to institutionally based order in the face of cooperation and continued power dominance.

Keywords: *Anarchy, Liberal Institutionalism, International Relations, Anime.*

INTRODUCTION

Literary works, including anime, are part of Japanese popular culture and function not only as a medium of entertainment but also as a space for representing various social, political, and power relations. Literary works represent different values of life conveyed by the author through narrative forms and the life values embedded within the work (Farhan & Febrianty, 2021). One anime that illustrates this phenomenon is *Tensei Shitara Slime Datta Ken*, an isekai series that portrays a world without a clear central authority. In this world, various races, kingdoms, and power groups interact through conflict, the formation of alliances, and processes of negotiation.

This situation can be understood as a representation of an anarchic structure. Anarchic structures can be interpreted as systems of relations that do not possess a central authority. Because there is no single leader or central power, each group maintains autonomy to act independently while still being able to connect and support other groups (Uri, 2025). Within this structure, the main character Rimuru Tempest establishes the Jura Tempest Federation as a political organization that emphasizes inter-racial cooperation, diplomatic practices, trade activities, and the formation of governing institutions. This effort reflects the concept of a liberal institutional order. One of the key figures in the

theory of liberal institutionalism is Robert O. Keohane. According to Keohane, as cited in Ardianti et al., (2023), while the anarchic structure of the international system makes cooperation difficult as emphasized by neorealist perspectives stability can still be achieved through institutions, norms, and cooperation that help reduce the potential for conflict among actors within an anarchic system.

Several previous studies have examined this anime from different perspectives. Research conducted by Hambali et al., (2023) analyzed the value of inter-racial moderation within the Jura Tempest Federation using a semiotic approach and found representations of tolerance and cooperation within a plural society. Another study by Aji (2024) examined the representation of Rimuru Tempest's leadership style through a semiotic approach and showed that the character demonstrates an adaptive leadership style depending on the situation faced. In addition, research by Cserkits (2022) highlights the process of nation-building and the role of leadership in the formation of a state carried out by the main character in the story.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the representation of anarchy and liberal institutional order in the anime *Tensei Shitara Slime Datta Ken*, with a particular focus on how political order is constructed within an anarchic system. The use of a qualitative descriptive approach with a narrative analysis method helps realize this research goal. The main innovation of this study is associated with the combination of the theories of international relations, especially the ideas about anarchy and liberal institutionalism, to analyze anime as a kind of popular culture. Although many studies consider semiotic, leadership, and cultural aspects of analyzing anime films, the present study presents another innovative approach that allows investigating the potential of fictional narratives in illustrating the emergence of political institutions and cooperation in an anarchic system.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Researches on anime have been growing more and more in academic discussion, especially regarding how anime can be viewed as a medium that embodies social, cultural, and political dimensions. From literary and popular culture research perspectives, anime has been studied as a narrative that embodies power dynamics, identity construction, and social interaction. The anime as a narrative perspective implies the view of anime not only as entertainment media but as representational media that can be subjected to different theories, including international relations theories. As such, anime can serve as a medium of social dynamics within society, including power dynamics, group conflicts, and social identity formation (Asari & Febrianty, 2025).

In international relations, anarchy is defined as the state where there is no central authority to regulate the behavior of actors when they interact. Liberal institutionalism focuses on the use of institutions, cooperation, and norms to minimize conflict and achieve stability. Both theories have been applied to examine actual political processes like cooperation between institutions and order creation. An example of an institution whose framework uses cooperation and norms to reduce conflict within the state of anarchy is ASEAN (Pradana & Darmawan, 2023). This shows that institutionalism is useful both in the practical world of politics and as a tool for understanding institutionalized interaction even in fictional settings.

An anime that is often discussed in scholarly articles is *Tensei Shitara Slime Datta Ken*. *Tensei Shitara Slime Datta Ken* is part of the isekai genre, which involves the story revolving around a main character who is sent into a world that differs from his original world. Often, in the context of the isekai genre, these worlds can be used as tools to discuss aspects of community, politics, and how a society is created. (Murakami Brandon, 2025) suggests that the main issues brought by *Tensei Shitara Slime Datta Ken* involve the formation of a community and creating a society without discrimination. Specifically, the main protagonist, Rimuru Tempest, creates a kingdom made up of many different races and communities that were once fighting each other.

Nevertheless, apart from these benefits, current research efforts mostly focus on the cultural, semiotic, or leadership approach, yet the political structure of anime has not been analyzed through the lens of international relations theories in a comprehensive manner. Within the field of IR, it is also important to note that there are attempts made in order to diversify IR theoretical framework by taking into consideration other approaches than the western ones in order to develop the theory of global IR (Dhani, 2025).

An additional research on the political aspect of this anime is the work done by (Cserkits, 2022). According to him, *Tensei Shitara Slime Datta Ken* can be regarded as an allegory of nation-building in a fictional world. In particular, it is stated that Rimuru creates a state using different approaches, such as creating governance, uniting various tribes, and developing diplomatic ties with other nations. Thus, it becomes clear that the creation of peace in a society lacking an effective political system depends on the skills and efforts of leaders, military, and diplomats.

In addition, several other studies indicate that Japanese popular culture, such as anime, can function as a medium for the dissemination of cultural values and cultural diplomacy. For instance, research on the anime *Yasuke* shows that anime can operate as a form of soft power by introducing Japanese culture to global audiences through the representation of characters and cultural narratives. Through engaging stories and characters, anime can construct a positive image of Japan at the international level and strengthen the influence of Japanese culture within global society (Makhluf et al., 2025).

Therefore, the research gap in this study lies in the limited application of international relations theory particularly the concepts of anarchy and liberal institutionalism in analyzing anime as a form of political narrative. While previous studies have explored social and leadership aspects, they have not specifically examined how institutional order is constructed within an anarchic system in fictional settings. This study addresses that gap by applying international relations theory to analyze how *Tensei Shitara Slime Datta Ken* represents the transformation of an anarchic system into an institutionalized political order. In doing so, this research is relevant for expanding interdisciplinary approaches between international relations and popular culture, as well as providing a new perspective for understanding political concepts through narrative media.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach with a narrative analysis method to examine the representation of anarchy and liberal institutional order in the anime *Tensei Shitara Slime Datta Ken*. According to Sugiyono, as cited in Hasan et al., (2025) a qualitative approach focuses on understanding phenomena by paying attention to context and the experiences of participants. This approach is used because the study emphasizes the interpretation of meanings found in the narrative, dialogues, and interactions among characters within the story. Through narrative analysis, this research seeks to understand how a fictional work can represent concepts from international relations through its plot development, conflicts, and the dynamics of relationships among groups within the anime's world.

The main data of this study are excerpts from the anime, *Tensei Shitara Slime Datta Ken*, which portray social encounters among races, struggles among kingdoms, diplomacy, and alliance making in the anime world. The excerpts have been selected for analysis to understand how the world of the anime is depicted as a system lacking any sort of authority. Besides, this paper will also analyze certain portions of the anime, where the establishment of the Jura Tempest Federation is carried out by the protagonist, Rimuru Tempest, in order to regulate relations among various factions.

The theory of anarchy in international relations and liberal institutionalism form the basis of the analysis in this study. Anarchy refers to the situation in the international system where there is no central authority regulating the interactions of the players. Liberal institutionalism, on the other hand, stresses the role of institutions, cooperation, and norms in bringing about stability and minimizing conflict in the absence of a central authority. This study analyzes the presentation of cooperation, diplomacy, and political institution-building in the anime through these two theories.

The analysis focuses on several aspects how various races and kingdoms interact under anarchic conditions, how Rimuru Tempest constructs political and economic structures within the Jura Tempest Federation, and how cooperation and diplomacy among groups contribute to the formation of a more stable social order. Through this approach, the study seeks to explain how *Tensei Shitara Slime Datta Ken* represents the formation of political order and cooperation in a system that initially lacks a central authority. The methodological structure of this research is designed based on a qualitative research approach with narrative analysis, which is commonly used in studies of anime and popular culture.

DISCUSSION

Based on the narrative analysis approach explained in the methodology section, the discussion in this study focuses on how the anime *Tensei Shitara Slime Datta Ken* represents the dynamics of power relations, intergroup conflicts, and the process of political institution-building in a world that lacks a central authority. By applying the concepts of anarchy and liberal institutionalism in international relations, the following discussion examines how the political structure within the story develops from conditions of conflict toward a more organized form of social and political order.

1. Anarchic Conditions in the Anime *Tensei Shitara Slime Datta Ken*



Figure 1. Goblin attacked by a group of direwolves



Figure 2. Goblins asking for help

In the beginning, the anime sets up a social atmosphere that is characterized by the definition of anarchy in the field of international relations, referring to a lack of a regulatory agency that controls interaction among actors (Uri, 2025). Such a state is evident from the image in Figure 1, depicting the attack on the village of goblins by direwolves. From the image, it can be inferred that the goblins find themselves vulnerable since there is no institution to protect them.

In addition to this anarchic situation, Figure 2 shows that the goblins try to gain security by associating with Rimuru Tempest. Theoretically, this is a consequence of the anarchic situation whereby players engage in alliances because of their insecurity (Ardianti et al., 2023). The association of the goblins with Rimuru is a clear indication of how weaker players try to achieve security through association but mainly out of necessity.

2. The Process of Establishing a New Kingdom



Figure 3. Rimuru gives names to the goblins and direwolves



Figure 4. The evolved forms of goblins and direwolves

The movement from the anarchic system into a more organized political structure starts when Rimuru bestows names on the goblins and direwolves as can be seen in Figure 3. This action sparks their evolution and the development of power and order among them. As can be seen in Figure 4, the goblins start to evolve to become more organized creatures and build themselves a settlement. This represents a stage in the nation-building process whereby leaders and organization emerge (Cserkits, 2022).

From the point of view of liberal institutionalism, this situation clearly shows that organizations come into being due to their ability to overcome uncertainties and foster cooperation (Ardianti et al., 2023). Through organization and assignment of roles, Rimuru creates a governance system that makes it possible for various parties to live together under one umbrella. The formation of this institution cannot be separated from the supremacy of Rimuru, implying that hierarchies are important for fostering cooperation..

3. The Political Development of Tempest



Figure 5. Meeting between Rimuru and King Gazel Dwargo of the Dwargon Kingdom

The formation of Tempest as a political organization can be observed even further in the diplomatic encounters, especially when Rimuru met with King Gazel Dwargo, as depicted in Figure 5 above. This encounter can be seen as an indication of the shift from isolationist groups to political entities that have relations built upon negotiations and common interests. The use of diplomacy in Tempest is employed as a way to decrease conflict and facilitate cooperation (Ardianti et al., 2023). Other than diplomacy, another aspect that contributes to the stability of the relations between groups in Tempest is the conduct of economic activities and resource exchanges. Following the establishment of relations with Dwargon, Tempest engages in trading and technology cooperations with the kingdom.

By engaging in business dealings and working together to develop new technologies, the alliance formed between Tempest and Dwargon turns out to be a win-win situation for both parties involved. By establishing such relationships, both parties receive mutual benefits from their collaboration. These circumstances can contribute to political stability since both parties are equally interested in sustaining their relationship.

In accordance with the liberal institutionalist viewpoint, economic interdependence serves as an essential element in preventing conflicts from occurring. Since the actors engage in economic interdependence, they will not initiate conflicts that would adversely affect their common interest. As a result, the economic link between Tempest and Dwargon can be described as a kind of economic cooperation that promotes stability in a stateless system. Ultimately, this situation culminates in the establishment of the Jura Tempest Federation, which comprises a kingdom consisting of different racial groups, including goblins, ogres, dwarves, and lizardmen under one governing body.

The formation of the Jura Tempest Federation signifies a higher level of development of institutions where diverse races exist within one political system. The above state of affairs can be explained by referring to Figure 6 below, where individuals from distinct racial backgrounds convene together for a joint discussion. It is obvious that the participation of many races denotes the creation of an inclusive political system through collaboration.



Figure 6. Interracial meeting held by rimuru

Previous research has shown that the anime represents values of tolerance and inter-racial moderation, emphasizing inclusivity within a plural society (Hambali et al., 2023). From the perspective of liberal institutionalism, institutions function not only to regulate behavior but also to foster trust and shared identity among actors. In this context, Tempest operates as a political institution that transforms fragmented groups into a cohesive community through norms, cooperation, and structured interaction.

Despite the development of institutional structures and cooperation, the political order established by Rimuru does not fully reflect the egalitarian principles of liberal institutionalism. In several instances, Rimuru relies on military strength and authority to maintain stability and deter external threats. This indicates that power remains a central element in sustaining political order, even within an institutional framework (Cserkits, 2022).

This case demonstrates an important problem of liberal institutionalism, whereby institutions do not negate power disparities but function within them. The stability of the Jura Tempest Federation is guaranteed by Rimuru's superiority, thus indicating the fact that cooperation is possible due to the existence of hierarchies underneath. This conclusion is consistent with theoretical discussions of international relations, which point out the coexistence of power and institutions (Ardianti et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study finds that Tensei Shitara Slime Datta Ken exhibits features of an anarchic system, which lack central authorities. The groups at first use self help tactics to ensure survival but eventually move to create an institutional political system with the guidance of Rimuru Tempest, which follows some fundamental concepts of liberal institutionalism. Nonetheless, the research findings further show that the institutional political system in Tensei Shitara Slime Datta Ken is heavily associated with hierarchies and power dominance, thus implying that cooperation does not entirely override the power imbalance in the anarchic system. Thus, the anime shows that political order is created by interactions between institutions and power.

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