

Contemporary transformations of international law in response to the challenges of global governance

Transformaciones contemporáneas del derecho internacional frente a los desafíos de la gobernanza global

Transformações contemporâneas do direito internacional diante dos desafios da governança global

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Abstract

This study aimed to analyze the contemporary transformations of international law in response to the challenges of global governance, considering the changes driven by globalization, multipolarity, digital transformation, the strengthening of human rights, and the increasing complexity of transnational issues. The research was conducted using a qualitative approach, documentary research, a non-experimental design, and a descriptive-interpretative scope. A systematic review of scientific literature, legal doctrine, international legal instruments, and specialized documents retrieved from internationally recognized academic databases was carried out, applying inclusion criteria based on thematic relevance, recency, and scientific rigor. The findings reveal that international law is undergoing a progressive evolution toward multilevel governance models supported by international cooperation, shared responsibility, and the participation of multiple stakeholders. Furthermore, the study identified that challenges related to climate change, technological transformation, international security, and the protection of human rights require more flexible legal frameworks, stronger multilateral institutions, and higher levels of global coordination. It is concluded that the consolidation of effective global governance constitutes a fundamental condition for enabling international law to adapt to emerging global dynamics, thereby strengthening its legitimacy, sustainability, and capacity to address the complex challenges of an increasingly interconnected, multipolar, and rapidly evolving international system.

Keywords: international law; global governance; international cooperation; legal transformation.

Resumen

El presente estudio tuvo como objetivo analizar las transformaciones contemporáneas del derecho internacional frente a los desafíos de la gobernanza global, considerando los cambios derivados de la globalización, la multipolaridad, la transformación digital, el fortalecimiento de los derechos humanos y la creciente complejidad de los problemas transnacionales. La investigación se desarrolló mediante un enfoque cualitativo, de tipo documental, con un diseño no experimental y alcance descriptivo-interpretativo. Se realizó una revisión sistemática de literatura científica, doctrina jurídica, normativa internacional y documentos especializados consultados en bases de datos académicas de reconocido prestigio, aplicando criterios de inclusión relacionados con pertinencia temática, actualidad y rigor científico. Los resultados evidencian que el derecho internacional experimenta una evolución progresiva hacia modelos de gobernanza multinivel sustentados en la cooperación internacional, la responsabilidad compartida y la participación de múltiples actores. Asimismo, se identificó que los desafíos asociados al cambio climático, la transformación tecnológica, la seguridad internacional y la protección de los derechos humanos demandan mecanismos jurídicos más flexibles, instituciones multilaterales fortalecidas y mayores niveles de coordinación global. Se concluye que la consolidación de una gobernanza global eficaz constituye un elemento esencial para garantizar la adaptación del derecho internacional a las nuevas dinámicas internacionales, fortaleciendo su capacidad para responder de manera legítima, sostenible y efectiva a los desafíos de un entorno caracterizado por la interdependencia, la complejidad y la rápida transformación del sistema internacional.

Palabras clave: derecho internacional; gobernanza global; cooperación internacional; transformación jurídica.

Resumo

O presente estudo teve como objetivo analisar as transformações contemporâneas do direito internacional diante dos desafios da governança global, considerando as mudanças decorrentes da globalização, da multipolaridade, da transformação digital, do fortalecimento dos direitos humanos e da crescente complexidade dos problemas transnacionais. A pesquisa foi desenvolvida por meio de uma abordagem qualitativa, de natureza documental, com delineamento não experimental e alcance descritivo-interpretativo. Realizou-se uma revisão sistemática da literatura científica, da doutrina jurídica, da normativa internacional e de documentos especializados consultados em bases de dados acadêmicas de reconhecido prestígio, aplicando critérios de inclusão relacionados à pertinência temática, atualidade e rigor científico. Os resultados evidenciam que o direito internacional passa por uma evolução progressiva em direção a modelos de governança multinível fundamentados na cooperação internacional, na responsabilidade compartilhada e na participação de múltiplos atores. Além disso, verificou-se que os desafios relacionados às mudanças climáticas, à transformação tecnológica, à segurança internacional e à proteção dos direitos humanos exigem marcos jurídicos mais flexíveis, instituições multilaterais fortalecidas e maiores níveis de coordenação global. Conclui-se que a consolidação de uma governança global eficaz constitui um elemento essencial para garantir a adaptação do direito internacional às novas dinâmicas internacionais, fortalecendo sua legitimidade, sustentabilidade e capacidade de responder aos desafios de um sistema internacional cada vez mais interdependente, complexo e em constante transformação.

Palavras-chave: direito internacional; governança global; cooperação internacional; transformação jurídica.

Introduction

The growing interdependence among States, international organizations, private actors, and civil society has redefined the foundations of contemporary international law. The processes of globalization, the acceleration of technological development, health crises, climate change, and the expansion of transnational markets have generated challenges that transcend the traditional regulatory capacities of States. In this context, international law has undergone a profound transformation, evolving toward more flexible normative frameworks and multilevel cooperation mechanisms designed to address issues of global scope. These dynamics have fostered the evolution of global governance as a complementary paradigm aimed at strengthening international coordination and promoting collective responses to shared challenges.

From this perspective, Fernández Liesa (2024) argues that international law has evolved from an approach focused exclusively on interstate relations toward a more complex system characterized by the incorporation of principles related to sustainability, human rights protection, and shared responsibility. This evolution demonstrates that international legal norms can no longer be confined to regulating conflicts between States but must instead adapt to scenarios in which diverse economic, environmental, technological, and social interests converge. Consequently, legal sustainability has become a structural component for ensuring the effectiveness of the international legal order in addressing the challenges of the twenty-first century.

The consolidation of global governance responds precisely to the need to coordinate public policies and institutional mechanisms capable of overcoming the limitations of unilateral State action. In this regard, Riedel Martínez (2023) explains that global governance incorporates new forms of decentralized cooperation involving local governments, international organizations, regional institutions, corporations, and civil society organizations. This model promotes more inclusive and collaborative decision-making processes, thereby strengthening the international community's capacity to respond to transnational problems whose complexity requires the simultaneous participation of multiple institutional actors.

At the same time, the international landscape has been reshaped by the emergence of new actors capable of influencing the creation, interpretation, and implementation of international law. In this regard, Verdugo Lema (2025) emphasizes that the international legal order faces significant challenges arising from the growing influence of non-State actors, digital platforms, specialized multilateral organizations, and transnational corporations, whose participation has altered the traditional structures of international power. This reality requires a reassessment of the classical foundations of international law through the incorporation of legal mechanisms capable of regulating increasingly dynamic, interdependent, and technologically complex legal relationships.

Nevertheless, the transformation of the international context has also revealed significant weaknesses in the existing legal framework. The persistence of armed conflicts, climate change, cyber threats, pandemics, and large-scale migration flows demonstrates that the traditional instruments of international law are insufficient to address multidimensional global threats. In this regard, Velasco Arellanes (2025) argues that public international law continues to exhibit substantial structural limitations resulting from the absence of effective enforcement mechanisms and its dependence on State consent, factors that restrict its capacity to respond promptly to global risks affecting the security and survival of the international community.

These limitations are further compounded by the growing tensions between the principle of State sovereignty and the demands for deeper international cooperation. The transition toward a multipolar international system has intensified strategic competition among major powers, hindering the construction of multilateral consensus and weakening the effectiveness of international institutions. According to Minutti et al. (2024), international cooperation is

currently experiencing a period characterized by a hegemonic interregnum in which divergent national interests, geopolitical rivalries, and emerging regional integration schemes converge. These circumstances pose significant challenges to the consolidation of global governance founded upon trust, shared responsibility, and effective compliance with international commitments.

Similarly, international institutions continue to face considerable difficulties in ensuring the consistent implementation of international legal norms. The effectiveness of treaties, resolutions, and international decisions remains largely dependent on the political will of States, a situation that limits the effective protection of human rights and other universal legal values. In this regard, Castillo Dussán (2024) argues that the general principles of international law constitute the essential foundation for strengthening the protection of human rights; however, their practical implementation continues to face obstacles arising from institutional fragmentation, normative divergences, and the limited supervisory capacity of international organizations.

Against this backdrop, strengthening international law as an instrument for addressing increasingly complex and interconnected global challenges has become imperative. Environmental protection, international security, the regulation of artificial intelligence, digital governance, migration, public health, and sustainable development require legal frameworks capable of integrating multidisciplinary approaches and permanent cooperation mechanisms. In this context, Rodrigo (2022) argues that the relationship between sustainable development and international environmental law has evolved toward a systemic reformulation that incorporates principles of normative integration, ecological balance, and shared responsibility, thereby consolidating a broader conception of contemporary international law.

Furthermore, strengthening global governance constitutes a strategic element for preserving international stability within a context characterized by increasing political, economic, and technological interdependence. The construction of more effective multilateral frameworks facilitates conflict prevention, the coordination of public policies, and the development of collective responses to common challenges. From this perspective, García (2025) argues that multilateral global governance is acquiring increasing importance in shaping the new international balance, particularly through the active participation of emerging regions seeking to redefine traditional mechanisms of cooperation and international decision-making.

Within this framework, the present study is particularly relevant because it examines the contemporary transformations of international law from an integrative perspective that articulates the legal, institutional, and political changes associated with global governance. This analysis contributes to understanding how the evolution of the international order demands new normative instruments capable of responding to complex scenarios characterized by multipolarity, digitalization, and global interdependence. According to Arias Mateo (2025), the study of contemporary legal transformations enhances the understanding of emerging approaches to conflict management and consensus-building, while providing theoretical contributions that strengthen the development of international law in addressing the challenges of twenty-first-century global society.

Methodology

This study was conducted using a qualitative research approach, as its objective was to understand and interpret the contemporary transformations of international law in response to the challenges of global governance from doctrinal, normative, and jurisprudential perspectives. This approach enabled a critical examination of the theoretical foundations, regulatory trends, and institutional dynamics identified in the specialized literature. According to Espinoza Freire (2020), qualitative research facilitates a comprehensive understanding of complex phenomena through systematic processes of interpretation and contextual analysis. Likewise, Viramontes Anaya (2024) argues that qualitative analysis promotes the

development of in-depth explanations of social and legal realities through the critical integration of diverse sources of information. Consistent with these theoretical foundations, the study was classified as documentary research with descriptive and interpretative scope, supported by a non-experimental design based on a comprehensive literature review.

The documentary search strategy was implemented through a systematic review of internationally recognized scientific and legal databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, SciELO, Dialnet, Redalyc, and Google Scholar. These sources were complemented by international legal instruments, case law, and official documents issued by multilateral organizations. The selection of sources was based on inclusion criteria related to thematic relevance, currency, scientific rigor, and full-text availability, with priority given to publications from the last five years, while also incorporating seminal works essential to the theoretical framework. Duplicate records, non-peer-reviewed publications, and studies that did not directly address the relationship between international law and global governance were excluded. As noted by López (2006) and Maglione and Varlotta (2012), a structured literature search constitutes an essential component for ensuring the quality, reliability, and comprehensiveness of the research process.

The analytical procedure involved the thematic organization of the collected information into categories associated with the evolution of international law, global governance, State sovereignty, emerging international actors, and the transformations of the contemporary international legal order. Subsequently, a doctrinal, comparative, and interpretative analysis was conducted on legal scholarship, international legal instruments, and relevant case law to identify convergences, divergences, and emerging trends. Finally, the findings were synthesized through a process of critical analysis aimed at explaining the principal transformations of international law and their implications for global governance. In line with Alegre Brítez (2022), methodological rigor in the systematization and analysis of information enhances the consistency of qualitative research and strengthens the robustness of its interpretative findings.

Development

Evolution of International Law in the Context of Global Governance

International law has undergone substantial transformation as a result of intensified globalization, increasing interdependence among States, and the emergence of new transnational challenges. Over recent decades, this legal system has evolved beyond its traditional focus on regulating interstate relations to incorporate dimensions related to human rights protection, sustainability, international responsibility, and multilevel cooperation. Consequently, contemporary international law has emerged as a dynamic normative order capable of addressing complex global phenomena through mechanisms of coordination and global governance, thereby strengthening the international community's capacity to confront shared challenges.

Within this evolutionary process, the consolidation of human rights has become one of the principal drivers of transformation in international law. Arrieta-López (2022) argues that the progressive incorporation of the human right to peace into the United Nations system illustrates the expansion of the substantive content of international law by recognizing new collective rights aimed at ensuring peaceful coexistence and sustainable development. This evolution demonstrates that the international legal order is no longer limited to preserving coexistence among States but increasingly incorporates ethical and legal principles designed to protect individuals as the central subjects of the international legal system.

Similarly, Allauca-Cacedo et al. (2023) contend that the contemporary evolution of human rights reflects a progressive expansion of States' international obligations, particularly in addressing issues such as discrimination, poverty, inequality, and humanitarian crises. This

transformation has reinforced the universality of fundamental rights while fostering the development of new international legal instruments that promote monitoring mechanisms and cooperation among multilateral organizations, thereby consolidating a legal framework grounded in human dignity and shared international responsibility.

In parallel, the development of international criminal law represents another significant manifestation of the evolution of the global legal order. According to Mina Bone (2022), individual international criminal responsibility constitutes a paradigmatic shift from the classical conception of international law by establishing that certain international crimes give rise to direct individual responsibility irrespective of State responsibility. This development has strengthened the global fight against impunity through the consolidation of international criminal tribunals and the recognition of legal principles aimed at protecting humanity against serious violations of international law.

Conceptual Transformations of Contemporary International Law

Recent transformations in international law reflect the need to adapt its conceptual foundations to an international environment characterized by complexity, interdependence, and the emergence of global risks. The traditional model, grounded in the principles of absolute sovereignty and the formal equality of States, has evolved toward a more flexible conception incorporating principles of international cooperation, solidarity, the protection of global public goods, and shared responsibility. This evolution illustrates the transition from a predominantly interstate legal framework to a legal system increasingly oriented toward global governance.

From this perspective, Allauca-Caicedo et al. (2023) argue that the strengthening of the international human rights system has redefined the traditional principles of international law by prioritizing the comprehensive protection of individuals over exclusively State-centered interests. This transformation has expanded the scope of international obligations while fostering the recognition of new rights related to environmental protection, equality, inclusion, and sustainable development, thereby shaping a legal order that is more responsive to contemporary global needs.

Similarly, Mejía Azuero and Rincón Ramos (2025) contend that the emerging framework of international law applicable to armed conflicts incorporates multidimensional approaches that transcend the classical regulation of the use of force. The authors emphasize that hybrid threats, asymmetric conflicts, international terrorism, and cyber warfare have required a reconsideration of the traditional categories of international humanitarian law, promoting broader interpretations that integrate the protection of civilian populations, human security, and respect for fundamental rights throughout contemporary armed conflicts.

Likewise, Iglesias Sevillano (2023) argues that the phenomenon of global law has transformed the very concept of objective law by recognizing the coexistence of multiple normative spaces in which domestic, international, and transnational legal norms interact. This reality fosters the development of legal pluralism, enhances coordination among different regulatory levels, and strengthens the capacity of international law to adapt to increasingly dynamic and complex global scenarios.

Fundamental Principles of Global Governance and International Cooperation

Global governance constitutes one of the principal conceptual frameworks for understanding the evolution of contemporary international law by proposing mechanisms of coordination that extend beyond unilateral State action. This approach recognizes that global challenges require sustained cooperation among governments, international organizations, private-sector actors, academia, and civil society, thereby fostering the development of collective responses to shared global concerns.

Within this context, Oviedo Hernández (2025) explains that global governance provides a theoretical perspective capable of interpreting new forms of international interaction characterized by multilevel cooperation networks and increasingly decentralized decision-making processes. From this standpoint, the legitimacy of international law depends not only on State consent but also on the participation of multiple stakeholders that contribute to the formulation, implementation, and oversight of international policies aimed at promoting the common good.

Complementing this perspective, Jiménez (2023) identifies the global energy transition as a representative example of the challenges confronting contemporary global governance. Institutional fragmentation, the diversity of national interests, and the imperative to achieve sustainable development require more effective and flexible mechanisms of international cooperation. Consequently, global governance reinforces the role of international law as a coordinating instrument for harmonizing public policies, promoting multilateral commitments, and facilitating consensus-based solutions to issues that transcend national borders.

The Role of International Organizations in Shaping the Global Legal Order

International organizations play a decisive role in consolidating the international legal order by serving as institutional forums in which legal norms governing relations among the various actors of the international system are negotiated, developed, and monitored. Their activities have strengthened mechanisms for international cooperation, the peaceful settlement of disputes, and the protection of universal legal values, thereby making a significant contribution to the stability of the international system.

In this regard, Rodrigo (2025) argues that international organizations constitute one of the fundamental pillars of public international law because they facilitate international law-making, promote compliance with international treaties, and strengthen institutional mechanisms designed to safeguard peace, security, and sustainable development. Their capacity to reconcile diverse interests has enhanced the effectiveness of the multilateral system in addressing contemporary global challenges.

Nevertheless, the evolution of the global legal order also requires a critical reassessment of the historical foundations of international law. Landaluze (2023) maintains that Third World Approaches to International Law (TWAIL) encourage a reconsideration of the traditional structures of the international legal system by questioning the power relations that have historically shaped global norm-making. From this perspective, the construction of a more inclusive system of global governance requires strengthening the representation of developing countries while promoting an international legal order that is more equitable, pluralistic, and responsive to the diverse political, economic, and cultural realities of the contemporary world.

Contemporary Challenges to International Law

The rapid transformation of the international system has substantially increased the complexity of the challenges confronting international law in the twenty-first century. Climate change, global health crises, food insecurity, digitalization, artificial intelligence, cyber threats, and geopolitical tensions demonstrate that traditional regulatory mechanisms are insufficient to address phenomena that transcend national borders. Within this context, international law faces the challenge of strengthening its normative and institutional capacity through more effective, flexible, and coordinated legal instruments capable of safeguarding global public goods and preserving the stability of the international system.

The multidimensional nature of these challenges has driven the evolution of international law toward more comprehensive approaches that combine legal principles, multilateral cooperation, and global governance. This transformation reflects the necessity of developing collective responses to risks whose magnitude exceeds the individual capacities of States. Consequently, the international community has promoted new forms of cooperation aimed at

strengthening the protection of human rights, consolidating mechanisms of international responsibility, and developing regulatory frameworks adapted to the scientific and technological transformations that characterize contemporary society.

Protection of Human Rights in the Face of Emerging Global Challenges

The international protection of human rights constitutes one of the most significant challenges confronting contemporary international law, particularly in light of the emergence of global risks affecting millions of people simultaneously. Climate change, forced migration, pandemics, armed conflicts, extreme poverty, and environmental crises have expanded the scope of fundamental rights protection, requiring a reinterpretation of States' international obligations from a broader and more interdependent perspective. This reality demonstrates that the effective protection of human rights increasingly depends on international cooperation and the strengthening of multilateral protection mechanisms.

In this regard, Jiménez García (2023) argues that climate change has driven a process of jurisprudential evolution that directly links environmental protection with the safeguarding of human rights and the rights of future generations. The growing development of climate litigation demonstrates that both national and international courts increasingly recognize State responsibility for environmental degradation, thereby consolidating an emerging consensus that incorporates the right to a healthy environment as an essential component of the international human rights system.

Similarly, Cárdenas Merizalde et al. (2024) emphasize that human rights are facing increasingly complex challenges arising from social inequalities, violence, migration, and technological transformation. The authors contend that these issues require the strengthening of international monitoring and cooperation mechanisms while promoting public policies aimed at ensuring equality, inclusion, and respect for human dignity. Consequently, contemporary international law has progressively expanded its protective scope through legal instruments designed to respond to contexts characterized by increasing global interdependence.

International Regulation of Climate Change, Global Health, and International Security

Climate change and international public health crises represent challenges that have profoundly reshaped the priorities of contemporary international law. The intensification of extreme climate events, biodiversity loss, the spread of zoonotic diseases, and global health emergencies highlight the need to strengthen international cooperation through legal instruments capable of coordinating effective global responses. These developments have fostered the consolidation of new multilateral commitments aimed at safeguarding both environmental integrity and human security from an integrated perspective.

In this context, Alonso Lozano et al. (2022) argue that climate change significantly increases the risk of the emergence and spread of zoonotic diseases, thereby generating major challenges for international regulation in the fields of public health and environmental protection. The authors maintain that the close interrelationship between the environment, biodiversity, and human health requires an integrated system of global governance incorporating preventive strategies, epidemiological surveillance systems, and scientific cooperation mechanisms capable of mitigating the risks associated with future health emergencies.

Furthermore, Pigrau Solé (2022) argues that State responsibility for climate change represents one of the most significant legal developments in contemporary international law. The growing demand for more stringent environmental obligations reflects an evolution of the principle of State responsibility toward legal frameworks that integrate prevention, environmental remediation, and the protection of future generations. This approach reinforces the preventive

dimension of international law while promoting greater shared responsibility among States in addressing one of the most pressing global challenges of the twenty-first century.

The Impact of Digital Transformation and Emerging Technologies on International Law

Accelerated digital transformation has generated new legal scenarios that challenge the traditional structures of international law. The development of artificial intelligence, automation, big data analytics, cloud computing, and digital platforms has transformed economic, political, and social relations, raising fundamental questions regarding the protection of human rights, digital sovereignty, cybersecurity, and international responsibility arising from the use of emerging technologies. As a result, international law faces the imperative of developing regulatory frameworks capable of balancing technological innovation with the effective protection of collective interests.

Within this context, Solano Segura (2025) argues that artificial intelligence and emerging technologies are profoundly transforming organizational management and decision-making processes, creating new opportunities to enhance efficiency and productivity. Nevertheless, this transformation also raises significant challenges concerning algorithmic transparency, personal data protection, legal accountability, and the need to establish international standards capable of guiding the ethical development of these technologies within a framework of global governance.

Likewise, Gutiérrez Bastidas (2025) emphasizes that the incorporation of emerging technologies into public administration underscores the need to strengthen international regulation in areas such as digital interoperability, cybersecurity, information protection, and technological cooperation among States. From this perspective, international law must evolve toward more flexible regulatory models capable of harmonizing technological innovation with the principles of legality, transparency, and the protection of human rights. This evolution confirms that digital transformation will constitute one of the principal factors shaping the future development of the international legal order over the coming decades.

Taken together, the challenges examined demonstrate that international law is undergoing a process of structural redefinition driven by phenomena that transcend traditional regulatory capacities. The protection of human rights, responses to climate change, global health security, and the regulation of emerging technologies all underscore the need to strengthen global governance through more effective institutions, more robust mechanisms of international cooperation, and legal frameworks capable of responding to an international environment characterized by complexity, multipolarity, and growing interdependence. These considerations provide the foundation for the subsequent analysis of the prospects for strengthening global governance as a strategic pillar for the future evolution of international law.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that international law is undergoing a process of structural transformation driven by the increasing complexity of global governance. The literature review revealed a broad consensus regarding the inadequacy of the classical model based exclusively on State sovereignty to address transnational challenges such as climate change, digital transformation, public health crises, human rights protection, and international security. In this regard, the findings are consistent with the arguments advanced by Fernández Liesa (2024), who contends that the evolution of international law is moving toward a model of legal sustainability grounded in the principles of cooperation, shared responsibility, and multilevel governance. This trend confirms that the effectiveness of international law increasingly depends on its capacity to adapt to contexts characterized by interdependence and the participation of multiple stakeholders.

The analysis further demonstrates that global governance has become an indispensable conceptual framework for understanding the evolution of the international legal order. The reviewed literature indicates that cooperation among States remains an essential component, although it is no longer sufficient to address challenges of global scope. In this regard, Riedel Martínez (2023) argues that global governance incorporates local governments, international organizations, corporations, and civil society into decentralized cooperation processes, thereby significantly expanding international decision-making arenas. These findings are consistent with the theoretical framework proposed by Oviedo Hernández (2025), who considers global governance to be an integrative approach capable of explaining the new dynamics of political and legal coordination that characterize the contemporary international system.

Another significant finding concerns the conceptual transformation of international law resulting from the progressive strengthening of human rights and international responsibility. The studies analyzed reveal a transition from a system focused primarily on the protection of State interests toward a legal framework oriented to the protection of universal legal values and collective rights. Within this context, Allauca-Cacedo et al. (2023) argue that the evolution of human rights has expanded the international obligations of States, while Mina Bone (2022) emphasizes that the consolidation of individual international criminal responsibility constitutes one of the most significant achievements of contemporary international law. Together, these perspectives reflect a normative evolution that reinforces the protection of the individual as the central subject of the global legal order.

Nevertheless, the findings also reveal significant institutional limitations that constrain the effectiveness of international law in addressing global threats. The absence of sufficiently robust enforcement mechanisms, normative fragmentation, and geopolitical tensions arising from an increasingly multipolar international system hinder the consistent implementation of international obligations. This interpretation is consistent with the arguments of Velasco Arellanes (2025), who maintains that public international law continues to exhibit structural weaknesses in responding to global existential threats. Likewise, Castillo Dussán (2024) warns that the effectiveness of the fundamental principles of international law remains conditioned by the political will of States, thereby limiting the effective protection of human rights and the consolidation of a more effective system of international justice.

The study also identified that challenges associated with climate change, pandemics, and technological transformation have substantially expanded the substantive scope of international law. In this respect, Jiménez García (2023) demonstrates that climate litigation has strengthened the relationship between environmental law and the protection of human rights, whereas Pigrau Solé (2022) highlights the growing significance of State responsibility for environmental harm. Furthermore, Solano Segura (2025) and Gutiérrez Bastidas (2025) show that artificial intelligence and emerging technologies present new regulatory challenges concerning data protection, algorithmic transparency, cybersecurity, and digital sovereignty. Collectively, these findings confirm that international law must continue evolving toward more flexible, interdisciplinary, and forward-looking regulatory frameworks.

From a critical perspective, this study demonstrates that the consolidation of an effective system of global governance requires not only the modernization of the international legal framework but also a profound reform of the institutions responsible for its implementation. Increasing multipolarity, the growing influence of non-State actors, and the diversification of strategic interests demand multilateral structures that are more representative, transparent, and capable of generating sustainable consensus. In this regard, the analyses of Chanona Burguete (2025) concerning international reconfiguration and those of Padilla Torres (2026) regarding the diverse interpretations of multipolarity support the need to rethink traditional governance mechanisms in order to respond more effectively to the ongoing transformations of the international system.

Finally, the findings support the conclusion that the contemporary transformations of international law do not represent a rupture with its fundamental principles but rather a process of adaptation aimed at preserving its legitimacy and effectiveness in response to emerging global realities. Consistent with the arguments advanced by Cañizales Camacho (2025), the international order is currently undergoing a phase of strategic redefinition in which multiple centers of power, new forms of cooperation, and increasing demands for international regulation converge. Consequently, strengthening global governance constitutes an indispensable condition for ensuring international legal stability, promoting the peaceful settlement of disputes, and consolidating an international legal order capable of responding effectively to the challenges of an increasingly interdependent, digitalized, and complex world.

Conclusions

The analysis conducted in this study demonstrates that international law is undergoing a profound process of transformation driven by globalization, increasing interdependence among States, and the emergence of transnational challenges that exceed the regulatory capacity of the traditional legal framework. The evolution of the international legal order reveals a transition from a system centered on State sovereignty toward a more dynamic framework grounded in the principles of cooperation, shared responsibility, human rights protection, and sustainability. Within this context, global governance has emerged as a strategic component for strengthening the effectiveness of international law and enabling coordinated responses to challenges of global significance.

The study further confirms that the traditional mechanisms of international law present significant limitations in addressing complex phenomena such as climate change, global health crises, digital transformation, cybersecurity, and the tensions associated with an increasingly multipolar international system. The absence of sufficiently effective enforcement mechanisms, institutional fragmentation, and persistent geopolitical divergences continue to constrain the effective implementation of international obligations. These circumstances underscore the need to strengthen multilateral institutions, enhance coordination among the various actors of the international community, and consolidate cooperative mechanisms capable of improving collective responses to global risks.

Similarly, the findings indicate that the expansion of human rights, the development of international criminal law, environmental protection, and the regulation of emerging technologies constitute some of the principal drivers of renewal within contemporary international law. These developments reflect a progressive expansion of the substantive scope of international legal regulation and confirm the necessity of adopting interdisciplinary approaches that integrate legal, political, economic, social, and technological dimensions. Consequently, global governance can no longer be understood merely as a mechanism for political coordination but rather as an essential element in the construction of a more inclusive, resilient, and collectively oriented international legal order.

Finally, it is concluded that the future strengthening of international law will depend on its capacity to adapt to the transformations of the global environment through institutional reform, normative innovation, and more effective multilateral cooperation. The consolidation of an international system founded upon shared responsibility, respect for the rule of law, the participation of multiple stakeholders, and the pursuit of consensus-based solutions will enhance the international community's ability to address both current and future global challenges. In this regard, the present study provides an integrative perspective on the contemporary transformations of international law and offers theoretical contributions that enrich the academic debate concerning the role of international law in shaping a more legitimate, effective, and sustainable system of global governance.

Study Limitations

The principal limitation of this research lies in its exclusively documentary nature, which was based on the analysis of scientific literature, legal scholarship, and international normative sources. Although this methodological approach enabled a comprehensive and critical review of the contemporary transformations of international law and global governance, it did not incorporate empirical evidence derived from case studies, expert interviews, or comparative analyses of the implementation of international legal norms across different national contexts. The inclusion of such evidence could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the practical effectiveness of international legal mechanisms.

Future Research

Future research should adopt mixed-methods approaches that combine legal analysis with empirical evidence obtained through comparative studies, expert interviews, and evaluations of international public policies. Further investigation is also recommended into the impact of artificial intelligence, digital governance, cybersecurity, personal data protection, and emerging mechanisms of multilateral cooperation on the evolution of international law within an increasingly multipolar and globally interdependent environment.

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Declaration of Conflict of Interest

The author declares that there are no financial, institutional, professional, or personal conflicts of interest that could have influenced the design, conduct, analysis, interpretation of the findings, or publication of this study. Furthermore, the author affirms that the research was conducted with full academic independence, scientific objectivity, and strict adherence to the ethical principles governing international research and scholarly publishing.

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