

POLS 318: Theories of IR  
Lecture 6 (02.08.2021):  
A Theory of Liberalism

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# Overview

- 1 Quick review
- 2 Liberalism
- 3 Liberalism - Main Elements
- 4 Liberal Theories
- 5 Extra Material

# Review

## WHAT WE COVERED LAST MEETING?

- Neorealism:
  - The security dilemma - arms races.
  - Risks from offensive military expansion.
- Power Transition Theory
  - Hierarchy, role of the SQ.
  - Relative power.
  - Satisfied and Dissatisfied states.

Questions?? Email me!

# Liberalism

## International Cooperation



# Liberal Theory

## BACKGROUND

- Counter to realism.
- Cooperation - not competition.
- Structural hierarchy - enforcer of the rules.

*Liberal IR theory elaborates the insight that state-society relations - the relationship of states to the domestic and transnational social context in which they are embedded have a fundamental impact on state behavior in world politics." (Moravcsik 1997)*

# Liberal Theory

## Contrasts with Realism

- (1) System structure.
  - Global *hegemonic* power enforces norms and rules.
- (2) Focus on state preferences.
  - So not a system theory?
  - Yet:
    - ① State preferences = global preferences?
    - ② Rational outcomes based on preferences.

# Liberalism

## ASSUMPTIONS

### (1) Individual preferences drive state behavior

- "Bottom-up" theory.
- Aggregated preferences.
- Purpose → individual's material and ideal welfare
- Demands → scarce resources.
- Not a utopian approach, but a rational one.

# Liberalism

## ASSUMPTIONS

### (2) State - aggregates individuals views

- State is not an independent, abstract actor.
- A representing institution of social preferences.
- State members → constrain state behavior (policy).
- Not an equal representation of societal groups.

### (3) The state within the international system

- Places the state 'back into' the system.
- Implement preferences within system constraints.



# Liberalism

## SOCIAL NORMS



VERSUS



# Liberal Theory

## NORMS

- Respected patterns of behavior.
- Global acceptance of modes of conduct.
- Informal, no official laws to 'back them up'.
- Respect territorial boundaries.
- Promote cooperation - sanctions for violators.

# Norms

## Dynamic nature of global norms

- Norms change with time and experience.
- Changes → patterns of global interactions.
- Not rules → easier to modify.

## Changing norms - Examples:

- ① Political assassinations.
- ② Conduct towards Prisoners of Wars (POWs).
- ③ Torture - society point of view.

▶ PublicViews

# Liberalism

## INTERNATIONAL REGIMES



# Liberalism

## Global Regimes

- Set of international laws, rules, and organizations that are designed to promote coordination among actors with shared interests.
- Joins norms to facilitate cooperation and pursuit of wealth.
- Promote ideas and reputational costs of violations.
- International laws as constraint on behavior.
- Effects on short and long-term.

# Business Regime

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# Trade Regimes



# Theory of Interdependence

## Keohane and Nye (1977)

- Political economy (IPE)  $\iff$  security affairs.
- Distribution of shared interests  $\iff$  distribution of power.
- **Policy interdependence**  $\rightarrow$  States preferences and behavior.
- Costs and benefits from implementing their preferred policies.
- *Transnational externalities* - constraint on global behavior.



# Theory of Interdependence

## INTERDEPENDENCE AND CONFLICT

What patterns of interdependence among nations lead to conflicts?

- Compatible preferences (optimal externalities).
- Zero-sum → tensions and conflict.
- Mixed motives - coordination and increase in overall welfare.

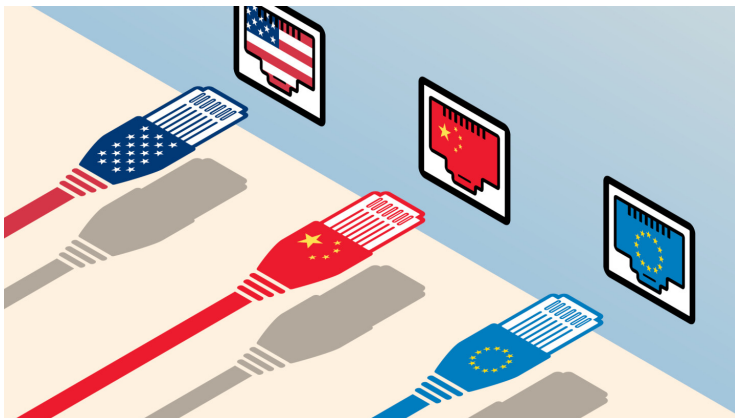
# Liberal Theory

## Commerce and trade

- Market incentives for trans-border transactions.
- Aggregated preferences → incentives for open/closed market.
- Changes in global and domestic economy → transnational economic exchange.
- Incentives for facilitating or blocking policies.

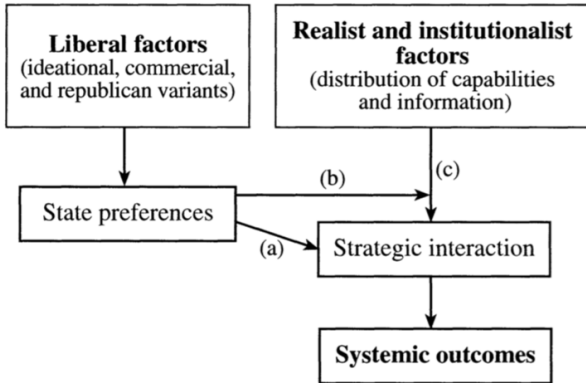
# Liberal Theory

## Free trade vs. Protectionism



# Liberal Theory

**Exogenous variables**



**FIGURE 1.** *A two-stage model of state behavior*

## Recommended readings

More studies on Liberal theories:

- 1 Axelrod, Robert, and Robert O. Keohane. "Achieving cooperation under anarchy: Strategies and institutions." *World politics* 38, 1 (1985), 226-254.
- 2 Owen, Erica, and Noel P. Johnston. "Occupation and the political economy of trade: job routineness, offshorability, and protectionist sentiment." *International Organization* 71, 4 (2017), 665-699.
- 3 Bown, Chad. "What is NAFTA, and what would happen to US trade without it?", *The Monkey Cage Blog*, (2017), (Link)

# Public Views of Torture

**Table 1.** Survey Questions about Extreme Interrogation and Detention Techniques

Interrogation	Strongly Support				Strongly Oppose (1)	No Answer	Mean	S.D.
	(5)	(4)	(3)	(2)				
Applying electric shocks to the suspect	8.3%	13.1%	23.6%	26.2%	26.4%	2.2%	3.40	1.40
Holding the suspect's head under water	8.6%	10.8%	22.5%	26.1%	28.9%	2.8%	3.44	1.45
Making the suspect go naked	8.7%	11.9%	25.9%	28.2%	22.1%	2.9%	3.31	1.41
Exposing the suspect to extreme heat or cold	10.2%	17.8%	27.0%	22.8%	19.1%	2.9%	3.11	1.42
Punching or kicking the suspect	6.8%	8.1%	25.8%	32.3%	24.3%	2.4%	3.49	1.34
Forcing the suspect to remain in a physically stressful position for long periods of time	13.5%	24.3%	26.0%	17.7%	15.8%	2.4%	2.88	1.40
Withholding food and water from the suspect	11.2%	21.1%	24.3%	23.7%	17.0%	2.5%	3.03	1.41
Bombarding the suspect with loud noise for long periods of time	13.3%	25.9%	27.3%	16.8%	14.0%	2.4%	2.82	1.37
Not allowing the suspect to sleep	17.3%	29.5%	25.0%	13.6%	12.0%	2.3%	2.64	1.36
Yelling at the suspect	24.4%	31.7%	27.2%	8.6%	5.4%	2.5%	2.28	1.22
<b>Detention</b>								
Not allowing the suspect to meet with a lawyer	8.8%	10.7%	25.9%	31.1%	21.0%	2.2%	3.36	1.35
Holding the suspect indefinitely without charge	7.6%	15.3%	26.6%	28.2%	19.7%	2.3%	3.27	1.35
Trying a suspect before a military commission instead of a criminal court	18.2%	25.5%	31.7%	11.4%	10.5%	2.4%	2.60	1.32