# Aff

## Links

### A2 Econ Link

#### Policy is key to economic gender equality—even gender-blind policies can contribute to feminist goals

Espino and de los Santos 21

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For labor market and social protection policies to fulfill their role, they need to adapt and respond to the nature of current labor markets. Economic growth does not automatically translate into new and better jobs. Since the 1980s, austerity macroeconomic policies have led to increasing unemployment in formal labor markets while increasing informal employment (UN Women 2017). While women’s labor force participation has been growing, limited decent job opportunities constrains women’s employment options in formal labor markets. In Latin America, the best outcomes in terms of formalization in the early 21st century have occurred in contexts of accelerated economic growth and institutional interventions and comprehensive policies, such as changes in legislation, labor enforcement of labor regulations and employment policies (Salazar-Xirinachs and Chacaltana 2018). Some of the formalization strategies specifically aimed at work with considerable informality rates. For instance, in several Latin American countries special taxation schemes were designed for micro and small enterprises and own-account workers and pieces of legislation were passed to regulate minimum wage and working hours of domestic and rural workers. However, thus far, informality rates have not changed dramatically, suggesting that there is a strong structural component in the regional labor market segmentation (UN Women 2017).Informal work in the Global South 203 The debate on benefits of formalization includes the perspective of organized women informal workers of the Global South. Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) argues that the right to the city (i.e., a claim to recognize the city as a co-created space) as well as economic rights should prevail when discussing, for instance, street vendor’s activities. A legalist approach that forces them to formalize may have negative effect on women’s well-being as this may push them out of employment. Alternatively, there are good examples of regularization via complex public, private and community partnership models such as in Bhubaneshwar. This city is among the first ones in India to acknowledge street vendors as an integral part of the city by establishing aesthetically pleasing fixed kiosks in legally sanctioned vending zones (Kumar 2012). Some public policies tend to be gender blind and lack awareness regarding the importance of promoting women’s autonomy and economic empowerment to move toward a more egalitarian society. Accordingly, policy changes regarding work formalization in Latin America do not have clear objectives regarding the gendered constraints women face in informal employment (except for those addressing domestic service work). However, in 2016–17, a growing number of economies in the Global South have implemented employment policies and measures based on both gender equality principles and formalization of the informal economy. Even when policy is gender-blind, it can benefit women. Otobe (2017) describes two such experiences: the National Human Resources and Employment Policy for Sri Lanka and the National Employment Policy of Mozambique. While articulation of policy measures on formalization of informal employment is not necessarily gender inclusive or responsive in either case, policy measures stated under gender issues could contribute to formalization by promoting formal employment for both women and men equally. Feminist insights on the impact of informal employment Remunerated work opportunities vary from low-waged precarious forms of informal employment to formal jobs, which normally offer higher wages, more stability and a certain level of social protection and security. Informal work may lead to economic and social empowerment as it contributes to poverty alleviation at the household level (USAID 2005) and it may ease the “double burden” of paid and unpaid work, through more flexible work schedules. However, freer access to informal labor markets will not eliminate the disadvantages arising from male-biased institutions (Meagher 2010). For example, gender pay gaps are often wider in informal employment compared to formal employment. For instance, in sub-Saharan Africa, the gender pay gap is 28 percent in informal employment compared to 6 percent for formal workers. In the informal economy, men predominate among employers and employees while women are over-represented among the least-secure and lowest-paying occupations (e.g., homeworkers and contributing family workers) (UN Women 2017). On the other hand, informal work could allow women to have their own incomes and access to the public sphere, thus reducing their dependence on male income-earners (Kabeer 2008, 2012). In their study of the Ecuador, Vega et al. (2016) conclude that the economic livelihood strategies are not necessarily translated into empowerment processes. Nevertheless, they argue that particularly young women see informal activities as temporary, in which case these strategies may be a means to enhance social mobility and to improve their prospects. Moreover, there are examples of informal, poor women workers organizing and being empowered, such as through SEWA (Self Employed Women’s Association) and WIEGO. Agenda for decent work Most studies of informal employment have not incorporated a critical perspective that examines gendered power relations (Chant and Pedwell 2008). They also lack an intersectional approach that takes into account the differences and relations among women. An in-depth study of these aspects requires quantitative and qualitative research, which will shed light on the processes and subjective elements and their impact on women’s autonomy and economic empowerment. Gender-blind analyses of the mechanisms and features of informality in labor markets lead to partial explanations and therefore partial solutions to informality. Thus, addressing economic and social causes of informal employment is as important as identifying and examining the implications of gender discrimination and employment segregation and the gender division of paid and unpaid work that contribute to informality. Moreover, it is necessary to incorporate an intersectional perspective, which addresses not only gender but a range of axes of social differentiation such as class, race, ethnicity, sexuality, age, nation, religion and ability (Chant and Pedwell 2008). Considering that informal employment is principally a problem of weak labor demand, macroeconomic policies should target increasing labor demand. Particularly, to tackle gender inequality in the labor market, there is a need to invest in public care services and create decent job opportunities in the areas of health, education, child and elderly care services (ILO 2018d). The redistribution of unpaid household work and care work not only within households (between women and men) but also among public and private sector actors should be included as part of public policies based on principles of equity and social co-responsibility. Public policies that facilitate equitable sharing of care work allow women to enter the labor force and to avoid precarious forms of work. These policies include parental leave policies and public provision of child and elderly care services. To combat occupational segregation, public interventions are important to address its root causes, including differences in educational attainment, training and experience as well as stereotypes about the roles of women and men in society. To provide women with income opportunities beyond informal employment it is also necessary to strengthen women’s income security, for example, by providing access to unemployment protection and public work programs (UN Women 2017). Addressing informality and decent work deficits require changes in the design and application of social protection programs. As the 101st Session of the International Labor Conference made clear in Recommendation No. 202, the social protection floor is a means of extending social security coverage where the contributory and noncontributory benefits operate in conjunction (ILO 2012). This combination may have positive impacts on job quality and may promote formalization. Given higher levels of participation of women in informal, precarious forms of work and the interruption of their work career because of their reproductive role and disproportionate care work burden, a strong non-contributory pillar of social protection scheme could be the key to promoting gender equality in social protection.

## State Good

\*\*\*Note: these cards can apply to any kritik

### Liberalism Good

#### Liberalism is key to checking oppression—policy reforms key to maintaining the liberal world order

Traub 22

James, nonresident fellow at New York University’s Center on International Cooperation. "Liberalism Isn’t Dead—but It’s Very Sick", Foreign Policy, 5/10/2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/05/10/liberalism-democracy-decline-autocracy-mounk-fukuyama-books/> LJS

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has played out like a terribly grim, but so far at least, profoundly ennobling laboratory experiment in the relative virtues of autocracy and liberal democracy. Yet evidence that a (more or less) liberal democracy can defeat or withstand an autocracy even in war—the one sphere that so obviously favors the latter—hasn’t, and probably won’t, meaningfully diminish the forces that have undermined liberalism in the West and around the world. Indeed, the sharp division between Western democracies that regard the invasion as an intolerable violation of moral principle and non-Western and barely liberal ones like India and South Africa that have treated it as geopolitics as usual only reinforces the idea that liberal democracy occupies a diminishing space in the world. It is possible that liberal democracy was a historically contingent experiment that depended on underlying conditions that no longer obtain. In his 2018 book, The People vs. Democracy: Why Our Freedom Is in Danger and How to Save It, Harvard scholar Yascha Mounk described those limiting conditions as broadly shared prosperity, relative demographic homogeneity, and sources of information that encompass the whole population. That was the last century, not this one. Yet if you believe that all alternatives to liberal democracy are much worse—indeed, unbearable—then you must proceed as if the illness it suffers from is curable. That is the premise of Mounk’s new work, the more optimistically titled The Great Experiment: Why Diverse Democracies Fall Apart and How They Can Endure, as well as Liberalism and Its Discontents by Francis Fukuyama, also a long-standing combatant in the liberalism wars. Liberalism, as Fukuyama describes it, functions as a political technology for the management of otherwise irreconcilable differences. Liberals from the time of Thomas Hobbes in the 17th century have erected a series of procedural rules and normative principles—above all, the rule of law and the rights of individuals to pursue their own preferences—to limit the reach of absolutist doctrines. Liberal rules and norms allow people of different views not only to get along but to subscribe to the implicit “contract” on which democratic government rests. Liberalism is endangered when the “factions,” to use James Madison’s term, that arise naturally in society cease to respect the rules and norms. But liberalism has a problem when those factions consist not of like-minded individuals but of tribes: ethnic or religious groups bound together less by changeable beliefs than by immutable characteristics. A “diverse democracy,” in Mounk’s sense, is a heterogeneous one. In such states, “where virtually everyone votes along religious or ethnic lines,” Mounk observes, “a large portion of the population forms a permanent minority,” locked out of power, while majorities use their power to dominate or marginalize minorities, as white people did to Black people in the American antebellum and Jim Crow South and as Hindus now do to Muslims in India. Liberalism addresses people as equal, free-standing citizens; but Mounk has concluded that the wish to stand apart from kin, culture, and state is less primordial than we think. Both experience and social science research show us that people are by nature “groupish.” The chief threat to liberalism over the last decade has been majoritarian nationalism provoked by real or alleged threats to collective identity—whiteness in the United States and Europe, Hinduism in India, Judaism in Israel, and Islam in Turkey. Against this rage, liberal universalism, the idea that we all have equal rights based in our common humanity, has steadily retreated. No one has developed an entirely convincing answer to the problem of diverse democracy. The “consociational” model, where power is allocated among groups that enjoy formal status, has worked out well in the Netherlands, divided between Catholics and Protestants, but very badly in Lebanon, where power-sharing among different religious factions has currently produced a vacuum of governance very close to anarchy. Slightly over 40 percent of the French public just voted for a presidential candidate who promised to restore the primacy of natives over newcomers and, not coincidentally, white people over people of color. The first wave of rise-of-illiberalism books—including Mounk’s and Fukuyama’s earlier books as well as Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt’s How Democracies Die and my own What Was Liberalism?: The Past, Present, and Promise of a Noble Idea—focused almost entirely on the right-wing nationalism of former U.S. President Donald Trump, French politician Marine Le Pen, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and others. That’s old news by now. One of the features of the new generation of liberalism-in-peril books is worry over the rise of an identitarian left that is equally contemptuous of liberal restraints. Fukuyama writes of a species of identity politics that “sees the lived experiences of different groups as fundamentally incommensurate.” White people cannot understand what it means to be Black; racism is not an individual attitude but is rather imprinted in the structures of power, and thus in collective consciousness. Mounk describes the “strategic essentialism” of those who insist that we treat race or gender as ineradicable essences. This is the new groupishness of the left. Anyone who has spent time in the advanced institutions of American culture—universities, art museums, foundations, newspapers—will recognize this mentality. It is, however, striking that while right-wing nationalism has circled the globe, the so-called woke left is an almost entirely U.S. phenomenon. It explains nothing about illiberalism in India or Poland and very little about France or Germany. Why is it that the most advanced progressive thinking in the United States, but not elsewhere, is obsessed with the policing of group boundaries and the honoring of group rights? Perhaps because of the unique role that racial anger and racial shame play in the United States. The effect, in any case, is to set up a kind of reciprocal tribalism, where the left and right goad each other to greater extremes. Both agree on the need to weed out evil books from libraries but disagree violently over the books in question; meanwhile, what historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr. called the “vital center” recedes to an ever more distant horizon. What is to be done? Fukuyama’s answer is to defend the citadel. In this slim volume (a euphemism for a long magazine article by a famous author that publishers are eager to issue in book form), Fukuyama, in the manner of philosopher Isaiah Berlin, traces the evolutionary path of the new illiberal ideologies, locating their origin in the postmodern critique of rationality of philosophers Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault, a doctrine of the radical left later picked up by the right. And then, like a stout crusader of liberalism, he smites them one and all. Fukuyama first refutes what might be called the neoliberal or free market heresy of liberalism, noting that while humans are indeed self-seeking, “they are also intensely social creatures who cannot be individually happy without the support and recognition provided by their peers.” But neoliberalism is a heresy, or a perversion, for liberal societies created the redistributionist state that promoted equality in the 20th century. Fukuyama goes on to note that liberalism is not so obsessed with the individual as to inevitably atomize society, as many Catholic conservatives claim: “Private associational life has grown enormously” in the liberal societies of the West. Nor must liberal states plead guilty to colonialism. How, after all, should we explain the rise of liberal East Asian states innocent of that charge? Fukuyama reminds liberals of what they stand for and why they are right to stand for it. Of course, that’s not a solution. Mounk writes that big books about ideas tend to be far better at explaining the problem than at offering solutions. Another way of putting it, though, is that illiberalism is the kind of problem to which solutions inevitably feel inadequate because the problem is not a failure of policy but of collective belief. How do you create conditions that will favor a restoration of a vanished consensus? For Mounk, that comes down to the question of mechanisms to contain and channel the tribalism that one cannot wish away. Ranked choice voting, for example, will help gain representation for minorities, he argues. Much of Mounk’s agenda resembles the current Democratic Party platform: broad-based economic growth, progressive taxation, and opportunities for social mobility—all designed to create a sense of collective rather than tribal good. In that vein, he argues—against the progressive left—for universal rather than race-conscious policies and for limits on immigration, a flash point for the nativist right. These are good solutions, but I do not see how they will cure the patient. (For the record, I was not entirely convinced by the solutions I offered in What Was Liberalism?) Mounk doesn’t entirely disagree: He writes that liberalism ultimately must be defended at the level of private and social behavior. He advises all of us to think for ourselves and be prepared to criticize our own side and restrain the impulse to vilify the other. I am guessing that most readers of his book will not need that advice, whereas the tribalists of left and right would sneer at it. I read The Great Experiment while thinking about India, the biggest and most diverse of the world’s democracies. India is also among the sickest patients in the liberal democracy ward. Born under the star of secularism and tolerance, India under Modi has increasingly become a theistic and intolerant society that advances the cause of Hinduism at the expense of its more than 200 million Muslims. I asked myself whether Mounk had anything to offer the many Indians who believe in the nation’s secular values and deeply fear their demise. The answer is: not much. Some diseases prove fatal; others can only be cured very slowly, as the patient’s own defenses finally rally. I am in favor of everything Mounk suggests; I am even more in favor of Fukuyama’s rousing call to truth. Only liberalism, as both authors argue, can allow us to live safely and prosperously in a diverse world. But I recognize that the restraints imposed by liberal rules and norms ask a great deal of citizens, far more than nativism, nationalism, or majoritarian tyranny do. We need to keep fighting for what is right even as we recognize that the road will be long.

#### Modern liberalism good—defensive liberalism is the most effective tool for emancipation in modernity and reforms solve its flaws

Ikenberry 2020

G. John, the Albert G. Milbank Professor of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University. “Mastering Modernity.” A World Safe for Democracy: Liberal Internationalism and the Crises of Global Order. Pp 294-303. LJS

On what grounds can we defend liberal internationalism? This question can be answered by looking at six major debates that liberal internationalists have had among themselves over their project’s scope and character. In these debates, they have grappled with the trade-offs between efficiency and social stability, sovereignty and interventionism, and global openness and political community. They have debated the nature of “the global”—the forces and logic shaping the modern world and their implications for the security and well-being of liberal democracy. As they did in past crises, liberal internationalists must again debate the character, limits, and possibilities of their project. Efficiency versus Social Stability A core strand of liberal internationalism has been a commitment to open trade. Countries linked by trade and open markets gain both economically and politically. Ideally, trade generates efficiency and welfare gains for countries that participate, thus facilitating their growth and advancement. These mutual gains and interdependence have political effects, including heightened incentives to settle disputes peacefully. From the British repeal of the Corn Laws to the post-1945 building of a multilateral trading system, liberal democracies have consistently looked for ways to realize the gains of trade. Winners win more than losers lose, so if the winnings are distributed in ways that compensate the losers, everyone comes out ahead. But open trade is a disruptive threat to workers and communities, and the social bargains that soften the impact of economic dislocation are imperfect. In giving national governments space and policy tools to pursue economic stabilization and development, the “embedded liberalism” behind the reconstruction of the postwar Western world tried to reconcile open trade and free-market capitalism with social protections and economic security. As we saw in chapter 8, this compromise has broken down. The embrace of neoliberal policies and the deregulation and global integration of capital markets that accompanied the post–Cold War spread of economic and political liberalism have been driving forces. The Western governments’ capacity and willingness to maintain their social democratic commitments has waned. Even under the best of conditions, the model of international trade at the heart of economic liberalism oversimplifies reality. “It neglects all the noneconomic considerations that so often turn governments away from its prescriptions, such as the social and cultural side-effects of trade, or the frequent neglect of public goods, collective equipments, and education,” writes Stanley Hoffmann. “Above all, it ignores factors of inequality: the benefits from free trade spread slowly, if at all, and unevenly through the formidable barriers of privilege, class, and status within societies (in which small groups often monopolize the rewards) and the obstacles of unequal endowments and levels of development in the world.”1 Not all the rise in inequality or the breakdown in economic and social protections is traceable to the liberalization of trade and capital flows. Technological changes in the workplace and shifts from manufacturing to services also play a role.2 But efficiency gains from deeper economic integration seem to be slowing relative to the rise of economic insecurity and inequality. Dani Rodrik argues that the advanced industrial countries have already passed the point beyond which expanded trade does more to redistribute wealth within their societies than to increase efficiency and growth. Although economic globalization is intensifying the gaps between the winners and losers, it is not generating sufficient economic gains to compensate the losers.3 In making the case for economic openness, liberal internationalists will need to reestablish the foundations of embedded liberalism—that is, managed openness that reconnects trade and markets with social security and shared gains. The industrial world cannot return to the early decades of the Bretton Woods system, but it can look for new ways to balance openness and social protections. The aim of reforming international rules and institutions should be to enable national governments to make good on their social democratic commitments. “Democracies have a right to protect their social arrangements,” Rodrik argues, “and when this right clashes with the requirements of the global economy, it is the latter that should give way.”4 Economic openness can last in liberal democracies only if it is tied to a social ethic of fairness and shared benefits. Without inaugurating a new era of protectionism, liberal democracies have to reestablish the multilateral system of rules and institutions that allows states to manage openness, guided by the liberal norms of multilateralism, reciprocity, and nondiscrimination. They need to rebuild the social contract at home and renew the international rules and norms that balance openness with social stability. Sovereignty versus Interventionism The norms of sovereign equality and national self-determination are integral to the modern liberal international vision. As we have seen, by the second half of the twentieth century, the liberal international project was firmly built on a Westphalian foundation. To be sure, the United States and other liberal states have repeatedly practiced all the dark arts of power politics. Throughout the Cold War and post–Cold War decades, they have transgressed sovereignty norms through military intervention, covert action, and coercive regime change. But the norms and principles of state sovereignty remain firmly embedded in the institutions and legitimating rationale of the post–World War II liberal international order. American military interventionism during the Cold War played out as part of the geopolitical and ideological struggle with the Soviet Union. The Korean and Vietnam Wars were the most tragic and costly of the dozens of armed interventions carried out by the United States across the Cold War periphery. Since the Soviet Union fell, the reasons for interventions have expanded to include humanitarian disasters, human rights violations, and nonstate terrorist threats. In areas of humanitarianism, economic policy, and democracy promotion, the Western liberal states look increasingly as if they are trying to impose their own values and interests on weaker states.5 In this regard, it is useful to distinguish between two versions of liberal internationalism: defensive and offensive.6 Defensive liberalism is the older liberal orientation anchored in the norms of self-determination and the right of countries to maintain their own institutions and doctrines. Offensive liberalism is the more recent universalizing agenda that involves the reordering of other societies.7 Rising states such as China, India, and Brazil tend to embrace defensive liberalism and resist the intrusiveness of the newer liberalism. In accommodating these rising powers, liberal internationalism will need to rethink their offensive liberal impulses. Gaining agreement on the broader principles of order—sovereignty and multilateral rules and institutions that allow states to manage their interdependence—should take precedence over efforts to force convergence on the details of development or governance. In the areas of human rights and transnational terrorism, the dilemmas are less about the imposition of liberal values on unwilling states than about the circumstances under which the international community needs to act.8 When a state commits mass domestic violence such as genocide or ethnic cleansing, the outside world cannot simply look away. If a state is collapsed or unable to prevent transnational terrorist groups from operating on its territory, these circumstances might also require the international community’s intervention. The response proposed for these occasions is the evolving norm of “responsibility to protect” (R2P), which was adopted by the United Nations in 2005 and remains controversial.9 R2P is not a license for great powers to unilaterally intervene in weaker states. It is meant to stimulate international agreement on the circumstances under which agents of the international community—authorized by the United Nations—are morally obliged to prevent or stop atrocities. The burden of the norm is actually Westphalian in implication. Its goal is to strengthen the presumption that national governments must make good on their obligations as sovereign states and that the international order should help them do so. Only in the absence of this Westphalian state capacity—and under extreme conditions defined by the international community—do outside powers intervene. The goal for liberal internationalists should be to seek as wide an agreement as possible on the legal bases for intervention.10 Clubs and Open Systems The postwar liberal international order was built around exclusive groupings of states, such as NATO and the European Union, as well as wider multilateral organizations with more open membership, such as the United Nations. When the Cold War broke the world into bipolar blocs, the United States and its partners put their efforts into building the Western economic and security order. This Western political grouping resembled a club. It was a clearly defined, exclusive group of like-minded states with a shared identity based on their regime characteristics, geography, and historical experience. There was little doubt about who was inside and who was outside the order.11 As I argued in chapter 6, the club character of the postwar liberal order was important for its functioning. To be inside was to have rights and responsibilities. The club offered protection and provided governments with institutions and capacities to facilitate cooperation and problem solving. The compromises of embedded liberalism were organized within its confines. That there were barriers to entry only reinforced commitment and cooperation. In chapter 8, I argued that the erosion of this club-like nature is a defining feature of the current crisis. Open systems of multilateral cooperation, which reflect the Westphalian norms of sovereign equality and nondiscrimination that are embedded in the wider global order, are also integral to the liberal international vision. Membership in these organizations is predicated not on regime character, but only on recognition of a state’s sovereign status and its commitment and ability to carry out the responsibilities of membership. If the legitimacy of the club of liberal democracies lies in their shared social purposes, the legitimacy of open systems of order derives from the universalism inherent in Westphalian principles of sovereignty. An open system’s strength is its inclusiveness. For many realms of international relations—including arms control, pandemic disease prevention, environmental regulation, and management of the global commons—regime type is not relevant to cooperation. Addressing these problems requires as wide a participation of states as possible. The weakness of open systems is in enforcement. If the rules say that any state can be in or out as it chooses, the benefits of membership cannot be predicated on embracing a suite of values and responsibilities. Liberal internationalists, including Woodrow Wilson, have spoken up for both types of order. Initially, in offering American support for a postwar organization, Wilson argued in favor of open and universal membership. In his speech to the League to Enforce the Peace in May 1916, Wilson said the United States “shall be as much concerned as the nations at war to see peace assume an aspect of permanence.” This was why it would be in the nation’s interest to participate in a “universal association of the nations . . . to prevent any war begun either contrary to treaty covenants or without warning and full submission of the causes to the opinion of the world—a virtual guarantee of territorial integrity and political independence.” Eager not to be seen as committing the United States to upholding an unjust status quo, Wilson advanced general principles that would guide the settlement, including famously asserting that “every people” had “a right to choose the sovereignty under which they shall live,” and small states were entitled to “the same respect for their sovereignty and for their integrity that great and powerful nations expect and insist upon.”12 During the years of American neutrality, Wilson did not once mention that the peace settlement would be linked to the way states were internally governed or the character of their regimes.13 In January 1917, Wilson’s “peace without victory” speech explicitly called for a settlement between existing states and regimes. It was only after Wilson brought the United States into the war that he shifted the focus to freedom and democracy as prerequisites for peace. In his War Address in April 1917, Wilson now asserted that “a steadfast concert of peace can never be maintained except by a partnership of democratic governments. No autocratic state government could be trusted to keep faith within it or observe its covenants.”14 Wilson was now envisaging a more exclusive grouping of democracies that would be bound together ideologically and oriented toward building a democratic peace. After the war was over, Wilson essentially reverted back to the open and universal version of his program. For Wilson, in the end, the establishment of a League of Nations was more important than the specific logic of its membership. The question today for liberal internationalism is: How much of the clublike character of liberal order should and can be rebuilt? The goal is not to undermine or ignore the Westphalian principles that set the terms of wider global cooperation. But what is the future of the deeper, more exclusive cooperation among liberal democracies? In security relations, human rights, and the political economy of industrial society, liberal democracies have specific interests and values that illiberal states do not. Exclusive groupings within the wider international order are still an important means for advancing these values. So too is it important to strengthen the mechanisms of conditionality and the enforcement of norms and principles within the club. The European Union is struggling to respond to member states that transgress its common standards. NATO has also found itself struggling to deal with alliance members that lose their democratic character.15 The irony of the rise of China and Russia as overt challengers to Western liberal democracy is that it may strengthen the identity and functioning of the liberal democratic world as a political grouping, even as it gives illiberal states an alternative club to join. Relations with the Illiberal World Dealing with illiberal great powers is one of the oldest problems facing the liberal international order. Do you invite them in, anticipating that they will become socialized and move toward liberal democracy? Do you exclude them? Do you actively seek to confront their revisionist agendas, or seek peaceful coexistence? At different times over the past two centuries, liberal states have pursued all these strategies. The underlying reality is that the liberal international order—open, rules-based, and organized around a core of liberal democracies—is a threat to illiberal states. From their perspective, the United States and the liberal capitalist order are revisionist. The American grand strategy at the end of the Cold War was to invite the illiberal states into the liberal order. Once China and Russia gained the benefits of trade and exchange, went the reasoning, they would understand that it was in their interest to become “responsible stakeholders.” Implicit in this logic was the expectation that these states would engage in self-initiated regime change. They would slowly shed their autocratic and authoritarian institutions and move closer to the Western liberal democratic model. This has not happened, and liberal internationalists must now reassess their assumptions and consider new approaches. One option is to seek accommodation with these illiberal states by making the liberal international order less revisionist. This might mean curtailing efforts to promote “offensive” liberalism”—that is, efforts to push and pull these states toward the liberal democratic model. In effect, this strategy calls for making the liberal international order friendly to China and Russia by stepping back from the vision of a one-world liberal order. The emphasis instead would be on coexistence, building on the “defensive” liberal principles of self-determination, tolerance, and ideological pluralism. Liberal internationalism would be made more conservative.16 Another option is to confront illiberal states more aggressively. The assumption here is that China and Russia are the vanguard of a broader longterm challenge to the liberal international order. If it cannot contain the ambitions of these countries, the liberal order itself is threatened. This view hinges on a key claim about China: that it hopes to perfect an authoritarian model of industrial society that can compete with—and even surpass—the long-term growth capacity of liberal democracy. The jury is still out.17 But if China does succeed in offering the world an illiberal pathway to modernity, the stakes for the liberal democratic world rise and the rivalry can easily become a Cold War–style struggle between deeply antagonistic ideological and political projects. Finally, liberal internationalists might pursue a mixed strategy of looking for opportunities to cooperate with China and Russia on the playing field of Westphalian internationalism, focusing on shared functional problems such as arms control, environment, and the global commons, while actively seeking to consolidate and strengthen cooperation across the liberal democratic world. Here the assumption is that the liberal democracies—particularly if they are organized worldwide—have long-term advantages that will bend the grand struggle in their favor. The key is to renew and defend liberal democracy within like-minded states and to strengthen the institutions, functionality, and legitimacy of the liberal international order.18 Hegemony and Restraint on Power Over the past century, the liberal international project has become deeply entangled with the exercise of American power. Woodrow Wilson carried liberal internationalist ideas to the Paris Peace Conference. After World War II, the United States built a liberal hegemonic order organized around open, rules-based relations and a core of Western liberal democracies. As I argued in chapter 6, this liberal hegemonic order both amplified and legitimated American power as well as shaped and restrained it. The United States tied itself to the other leading liberal states and exercised power through an array of economic, political, and security institutions. How restrained it was during the postwar era is a subject of much debate. Institutional restraints were certainly not an iron cage, and the United States reserved the right to act unilaterally when it chose. Power politics was hardly eliminated from the democratic world. Nonetheless, this liberal hegemonic order did manifest important features of consent. The United States and the other Western liberal democracies used institutions to establish restraint and commitment, and in doing so, they created an order that was somewhat independent of balance-of-power and imperial logics. The presence of liberal institutions allowed these states to dampen the two forces that typically shape international order—anarchy and empire. These forces never totally disappeared, of course, but they retreated enough to define the Western order as a hierarchical order with liberal characteristics.19 Liberal internationalism has both benefited and suffered under American hegemony. Like Great Britain in the nineteenth century, the United States in the twentieth century incorporated liberal internationalist ideas and projects into its hegemonic order building while pursuing other great-power strategies. Great Britain held on to its empire, and the United States engaged in crude imperial ventures and cultivated close relations with illiberal states. But particularly after 1945, it is difficult to see how liberal internationalism— defined as open and rules-based order with progressive social purposes— would have fared any better if it were not closely tied to America’s efforts to organize and dominate the postwar international order. As I argued in chapter 6, American postwar leaders recognized the value of binding the nation to other liberal democracies and operating within the postwar system of multilateral institutions. This strategy made American power more legitimate and enduring. The liberal great power’s pursuit of enlightened self-interest was integral to the rise and spread of liberal ideas and projects. Yet the United States also demonstrated, repeatedly, that it can be an unfaithful steward of liberal internationalism. Under the Trump administration, it is actively seeking to undermine the liberal features of the existing global order. The challenge for liberal internationalists is to try to recover the connections between hegemony and liberal order. The reasons powerful liberal states might want to build and operate within a system of open, rules-based relations are clear enough. As I argued in chapter 8, the hollowing out of the security-community character of the existing liberal order is one reason it is now in crisis: today it is easier for leaders to offer alternative narratives of the American national interest. The Trump administration’s claims that the liberal order generates more costs than benefits for the United States also register with some voters. Yet the costs that the United States incurs from seeking to operate outside the rules and norms of liberal international order are also real—and over the long term, they are much greater. They include the loss of influence, credibility, and the cooperation of friends and allies. America’s democratic allies clearly want the United States to remain within this order. During the high tide of American unipolarity, it was possible for US officials to see less value in liberal rules and institutions. But in an era of declining American power, the value of cooperation with other liberal democracies should grow. Roles, responsibilities, expectations, bargains—these aspects of the postwar liberal order draw our attention precisely because the Trump administration ignores and undermines them. Yet lurking in this new danger is an opportunity to renegotiate the hegemonic character of liberal internationalism or, short of this, build a post-hegemonic consortium of like-minded states that could collectively underwrite a reformed liberal order.

### A2 Liberalism = Imperialism

#### Liberalism is key to checking imperialism—liberal ideology elevates universal rights

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If liberal internationalism had an urge for empire, it also had an urge to oppose it. In the late nineteenth century, liberal thinkers in the United States and Europe added their voices to movements against empire and colonialism. After the world wars, many liberal internationalists, particularly in the United States, championed the League of Nations and the United Nations as institutions that enshrined principles of self-determination and sovereign equality—and thus offered a path away from empire. As the twentieth century unfolded, liberal internationalists grew increasingly committed to postimperial forms of order. These changes in orientation played out in the struggles between the United States and Britain during and after World War II over imperial preferences and global spheres of influence. The shift away from empire emerged as part of the general reimagining of liberal internationalism in the 1940s and during the Cold War, when the United States put its weight behind a world organized around sovereign states as it pursued its expanding geopolitical interests and built postwar order. In important respects, however, it was not the West that turned liberal internationalism against empire and imperialism but the non-West, which seized upon ideas and principles—universal in character but often instrumental in origin and purpose—and applied them to struggles over sovereignty, rights, and rules. Wilson-era liberal internationalism had offered global ideas, but it retained an old-style Western parochialism. The vision of liberal order put forward by Wilson and his peers was more “civilizational” than “universal.” The League of Nations would be open to the wider world, but it was organized around the Western liberal democracies. States that were considered insufficiently mature to join the community of sovereign states would have to wait until they were ready. As Edward Keene argues, the League of Nations entailed the “internationalization” of civilization—so there were limits on the universal or global scope of membership and standing. “Although ideological concerns were beginning to become more important in defining the boundaries of the civilized world, racial discrimination was still a major element in deciding which peoples were entitled to membership in the new organization and thus to have their sovereign status recognized.”62 With the rebuilding of order after World War II and the establishment of the United Nations, this civilizational view—the distinction between the “family of civilized nations” and the rest of the world—gave way to a more universalistic and inclusive conception. Keene argues, “Simply put: the United Nations was envisioned as, or quite rapidly became, an organization of all the world’s peoples, with universal participation in the projects of preserving peace and developing global civilization, whereas the League had, above all, been an organization of civilized nations, working collectively for all the world’s peoples.” Postwar notions of states, peoples, sovereignty, and civilization were becoming less based on nineteenth-century notions of the social hierarchies of peoples. As Keene notes, “the development of the UN system reflected a much more inclusive attitude toward non-European peoples, in keeping with the recognition that they were no less civilized than their European counterparts.”63 What changed between 1919 and 1945 was the conception of how peoples and societies from different regions and civilizations related to each other as moral and legal entities, a move driven in part by a fuller acknowledgment of the universal reach of the notion of sovereign equality.64 But it was also driven by the growing salience of the “rights of peoples”—the spread of the claim that all human beings, by virtue of being human, have fundamental and inalienable rights. Behind this shift were changing views of modernity and civilization. Civilization itself was weakening as an intellectual construct, and modernity was not seen simply as something spreading outward from its Western center. The new divide was not the West versus the non-West—which had become untenable—but the liberal democratic world versus the illiberal world. Modernity empowered both sides of this political universe. In World War II, the great struggle on behalf of civilization had been against Nazi Germany, a European power that was itself employing scientific theories of race to legitimate its violence and aggression—ideas that had been used in the nineteenth century to defend European imperial domination over “backward” non-European peoples.65 In this sense, the old civilizational justification for two world orders—a Western system of civilized states and a backward and uncivilized world beyond—did not fail because non-European peoples gradually joined the “family of civilized nations.” It collapsed when civilized states—Germany, Japan, and Russia—joined the noncivilized world.66 As I noted in chapter 5, this shift in thinking occurred in the United States during the war years and continued during the Cold War. The rise of fascism and totalitarianism led Roosevelt and his contemporaries to let go of their notions of civilization, race, and nation and rethink the nature of liberalism and modernity. With threats to the liberal capitalist order now coming from inside the West, what it meant to be civilized could no longer be defined by race or culture or geography. This sentiment was captured by Leonard Woolf in a short book published in 1939, Barbarians at the Gate, in which he argued that civilization was not a geographical or even a cultural construction but a way of regulating individual behavior within human communities. Europe might have found a distinctive approach to restraining violence, tyranny, and predation, but civilization was distributed more widely around the world—and so too was the antithesis of civilization, or what Woolf called barbarism. Writing on the eve of World War II, Woolf argued that “the barbarian is, therefore, not only at the gates; he is always within the walls of our civilization, inside our minds and our hearts.”67 This new sense that the dangers to the liberal democratic world came from inside that world forced American and European internationalists to rethink their principles and projects. American liberal internationalists began to make more serious efforts to separate their project from the legacies of European imperialism. This separation was driven by evolving ideas about sovereignty and self-determination, grand shifts in geopolitical interests, depression, and wartime politics within Western liberal democracies, as well as by more immediate struggles brought on by the war and the way it changed the Anglo-American relationship. The United States did not have the same attachments to empire as the British, and cracks opened up within the West on whether and how the world would transition away from empire.68 This was seen most clearly at the Atlantic Charter meeting in 1941, where Roosevelt and Churchill disagreed over the future of the British imperial preference system and the principles of sovereign rights and self-determination.69

#### Liberalism is ideologically opposed to imperialism—the right to self-determination created an anti-colonial feedback loop between liberal democracies, former colonies, and oppressed groups within great powers

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A second force separating liberal internationalism and empire was the ideas themselves, filtered through political movements both in the liberal democracies and outside the Western world. Roosevelt’s Four Freedoms and the Atlantic Charter, the most sweeping of these ideas, can be seen as efforts by wartime democratic leaders to mobilize their people for war. In this sense, they served an instrumental purpose. For Roosevelt, the Atlantic Charter was a way to legitimize for the American people their imminent entrance into the war. It was an effort to counter Nazi propaganda by offering subjugated nations and neutrals in Europe a sweeping liberal democratic vision of a better world to come. But even if universalist principles are uttered for instrumental reasons, once they enter into the discourse they become part of the contested ideological landscape upon which political struggles are waged.76 To be sure, some liberal internationalists were deeply committed to presiding over liberalism’s separation from empire. Roosevelt’s closest adviser on postwar planning, Sumner Welles—the driving force behind the Atlantic Charter and later the United Nations—earnestly sought to use wartime negotiations with the British to escort Britain’s empire offstage. He and other Wilsonians had spent the 1930s reflecting on the failures of 1919, looking for new ways to build a cooperative global order that, as Welles put it, “implies the juridic equality of every nation and the acceptance of a moral order and of effective international law.”77 Welles sought to lay down principles that would weaken the political standing of empire in the postwar world.78 But it was the wider use of self-determination and sovereign equality that gave these principles impact. This struggle was waged on many fronts, driven by geopolitical and ideological clashes and movements within the West and between it and the non-West. It is not simply—or primarily—a story of the West “externalizing” its ideas and institutions to the rest of the world. NonWestern peoples and societies seized on the principles and institutions that the West had developed for itself and adapted them for their own purposes in their struggles for independence. Witnessing the decolonization movements in 1964, Rupert Emerson observed that when non-Western people “press for equality, democracy, and the right of self-determination, they are asking their present and erstwhile rulers to live up to the ideals which these same rulers have transmitted to them and proclaimed as their own. . . . The nationalism which developed in the imperial West in the nineteenth century, with its implied right of self-determination, can in this sense be seen as one of the key sources of anti-colonialism.”79 Westphalian and liberal internationalist ideas were both pushed and pulled into the rest of the world. The “reception and remolding of Western ideas” by peoples and societies in the non-West, C. A. Bayly argues, “set limits on the nature and extent of their domination by European power-holders.”80 The formal and informal unraveling of empire and colonialism is one of the great dramas of the post-1945 era. From the 1950s to the early 1960s, the previous century’s era of imperial expansion underwent a radical reversal. Robin Winks notes, “One after another, the colonized territories tried to establish their independence from European control. From Guinea to Somalia, from Morocco to India, the flags of France, Britain, Italy, Holland, Belgium, Spain, and Portugal came down. In their place were hoisted newly designed flags of the newly sovereign states. By the mid-1980s, no substantial area was under colonial rule, although the radically discriminatory regime prevailed in the Republic of Africa.”81 The predominant view in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century was that the imperial system would remain the core organizing logic of world order. Yet, in less than a hundred years, these empires—along with the Soviet Union—had disappeared.82 Political movements in the United States and the other liberal democracies also had a behind-the-scenes impact on their government’s policies toward empire. In the nineteenth century, the British anti–slave trade movement pressed the Parliament to abolish the slave trade throughout the British Empire. During and after World War I, the women’s suffrage movement in the United States and Britain became increasingly active in international affairs. The war itself affected the lives of women, galvanizing the suffragist movement and illuminating the role of war in modern society. Many in the movement made a direct connection between the right to vote and campaigns for peace and worldwide social justice.83 During the war, women’s groups on both sides of the Atlantic, led by figures such as Jane Addams and Emily Greene Balch, actively participated in debates on the postwar settlement.84 Together, Addams and Balch became leaders of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, devoted to peace education, international dialogue, and socially progressive causes, for which they later received the Nobel Peace Prize.85 This group and others explicitly linked the denial of women’s rights and social justice in their societies to the pursuit of militarism and imperialism abroad. During the 1940s, domestic political struggles—particularly over civil rights—and the continuing activities of progressive movements reinforced liberal internationalist efforts abroad. Americans struggling for civil rights explicitly linked their causes with anticolonial movements.86 The linkage showed itself, for example, in June 1942, when Walter White, representing the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, met with Sumner Welles and urged the Roosevelt administration to call a “Pacific Conference” devoted to ending colonial rule in Asia. White wanted FDR to meet with Indian leaders such as Nehru and Gandhi and the Chinese nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek to announce America’s support for Asian statehood and national self-rule. White also suggested that, with the “Pacific Charter” in hand, a delegation of Americans, led by Wendell Willkie and a “distinguished American Negro whose complexion unmistakably identifies him as being a colored man,” should go to India and announce American support for the Indian struggle.”87 The idea did not have great support in the administration. Even those who took issue with the British Empire were unwilling to take steps that might weaken Britain’s position in the struggle with Nazi Germany. After World War II, the American civil rights movement and social justice campaigns drew connections between their struggles and the struggles of nationalist and anti-imperialists abroad. In 1947, W. E. B. Du Bois used the platform of the United Nations for “An Appeal to the World,” describing the injustices of racial segregation and inequality in the United States and associating the struggles of African Americans with the victims of colonialism in Africa and elsewhere. “Our treatment is not merely an internal question for the United States,” he argued, “it is a basic problem of humanity.”88 Not only did civil rights activists appeal to international audiences for support and solidarity, many US political leaders also saw progress on civil rights as integral to fighting the Cold War. During these decades, the American government’s relationship to civil rights legislation was shaped by the sense that it was necessary to manage its international image. As the historian Mary Dudziak argues, “the need to address international criticism gave the federal government an incentive to promote social change at home.”89 The connections also ran in the other direction as the American civil rights movement, along with other social justice advocates, put pressure on the US government to support anticolonial causes abroad.90

#### Liberalism is structurally opposed to imperialism—liberal organizations are vehicles for anti-colonial and anti-patriarchal struggle

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Third, the international organizations established after the two world wars created platforms and capacities that experts and activists could use in their struggles against empire. While the League of Nations and, later, the United Nations helped Britain and other European states secure what remained of their imperial holdings, they also served as institutional sites for activism and repositories of universalistic norms and principles that opponents of empire could deploy in their struggles for self-rule. Both the league and the United Nations created institutional channels for groups that previously had little input into diplomacy or the shaping of international rules and practices to provide a counterweight to the old imperial order. These groups included women’s organizations, international activists, and non-Western governments and peoples.91 As I have noted, the Great War did not quell the European appetite for empire, and the League of Nations was widely seen in Europe and Great Britain as an opportunity to strengthen the prestige and administration of imperial rule. But the league also played a role—if a conflicted and awkward one—in moving the world toward the end of empire and the spread of selfdetermination. “If one considers its work in stabilizing new states and running the minorities protection and mandates system,” Susan Pedersen argues, “the League appears as a key agent in the transition from a world of formal empires to a world of formally sovereign states.”92 Pedersen looks specifically at the league’s Permanent Mandates Commission, the system established in 1921 to manage the territories in Africa, the Middle East, and the Pacific that Germany, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman Empire had lost in the war. The mandates system did not directly alter the aims of the remaining imperial powers, which sought to preserve their colonies and continued to see empire as a civilizing mission. “What was new,” Pedersen argues, “was the apparatus and the level of international diplomacy, publicity, and ‘talk’ that the system brought into being.” The mandates system was a vehicle for “internationalization”—a process “by which certain political issues and functions are displaced from the national or imperial, and into the international realm.”93 Unintended by its architects, the mandates system became a vehicle by which those favoring self-determination and revision of the Versailles settlement could press their claims. It provided a platform for internationalists, humanitarians, nationalists, and others who sought to expose the dark side of imperial rule. The wider league complex of institutions had the same effect, drawing international commissions, organizations, lobbyists, and experts into a sprawling and ongoing debate about the future of European empire and the normative foundations of statehood.94 It would take decades and another world war to bring about a global system of sovereign states. But the league pointed the way. India took advantage of the League of Nations to gain rights and recognition before its independence in 1947. Great Britain, in an effort to strengthen its presence and voting share at Versailles, overcame the opposition of the other great powers to gain separate representation for its dominions, including India. Although still a British dependency, India—along with Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa—actively participated in the conference’s deliberations and signed the peace treaty on the basis of “legal equality.”95 Because the Covenant of the League of Nations was part of the peace treaty, India acquired the right to become a founding member of the league, the only state among the thirty-one original members that was not legally self-governing. India’s internal and external relations continued to rest with the British government, but as one observer notes, “for the first time in the modern period, [India] came into direct and formal contact with the outside world.”96 Between 1919 and 1947, India’s position within the international legal system remains anomalous. While formally not a sovereign state, India exercised treaty-making power and participated in almost every international conference after 1920. As a league member, India attended the Washington Conference on Naval Armaments in 1921, signed the Washington treaty, and was admitted to the International Labour Organization, the Permanent Court of International Justice, and other league-related organizations. It signed numerous multilateral treaties, including the KelloggBriand Pact of 1928.97 In 1945, India was invited to the San Francisco Conference of the United Nations, and it became a founding member of the new world organization. Over this period, India’s self-governing status remained limited and many Indian nationalist leaders saw their country’s presence in these international bodies as a capitulation to British imperialism. Nonetheless, India took advantage of the status it gained over these decades to pave the way for independence, consolidating India as a diplomatic unit and giving its nationalist movement international recognition.98 The United Nations was even more explicit in facilitating the transition away from empire. It formally enshrined the idea of universal membership in a world of sovereign states and provided the legal and political framework for the recognition and integration of new states into the postimperial Westphalian order. As decolonization accelerated, the United Nations rapidly expanded from 51 original members in 1945, to 100 in September 1961, and to 159 by the end of 1985. Ironically, the United Nations is widely seen as the embodiment of internationalist ideas, but its greatest achievement may be the global triumph of the sovereign state system. Adam Roberts notes the United Nations’ importance in providing a framework for decolonization: The UN sometimes assisted the process of decolonization through referenda, and also through General Assembly resolutions—most notably the 1960 Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. But its most important contribution was in providing a framework for entry into international society of the numerous new and reconstituted states, many of which were intensely vulnerable. For them, the UN was not just the main means of securing diplomatic recognition, but also a world stage, a negotiating forum, a provider of well-paid jobs, and a source of symbolic protection. The UN embodies principles, including racial equality and the sovereign equality of states, that were vital to the decolonization process.99

#### Liberalism is least coercive and self-reflexive

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How do we square these contradictory impulses? If liberal internationalism has offered a vision of a postimperial global order, is it also implicated in a pattern of liberal interventionism, or liberal imperialism? Some critics see liberal internationalism as a fig leaf with which elites disguise and legitimate more traditional great-power impulses. The problem with liberal internationalism is that it does not put a sufficient ideological or political brake on American interventionism. Other critics make an even stronger argument—that liberalism itself drives American interventionism. As ideologies and political projects, liberalism and liberal internationalism are inherently revisionist. It is American liberalism that leads the United States to intervene and seek to reshape other societies. For realist critics, the liberal sources of American interventionism look particularly striking since the end of the Cold War, when the United States emerged unrivaled and undisciplined by the bipolar balance of power. Equipped with unipolar power and liberal internationalist ideas, the United States found itself supporting the expansion of NATO and the European Union, engaging in humanitarian intervention, projecting itself into regional conflicts and civil wars, and pursuing violent regime change, most fatefully in the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The suggestion is that a more realist-oriented America would have pursued a more restrained vision of the national interest.106 The liberal tradition has certainly informed the conduct of American foreign policy. As I noted in chapter 6, during the Cold War, liberalism became a “fighting faith” that tied American power to a global struggle to protect the liberal democratic world when that world was under attack from powerful illiberal forces. A great contest between open societies and totalitarian challengers was an ideological struggle but also a military and geopolitical struggle. Leading liberal thinkers of the day, such as Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Isaiah Berlin, and Raymond Aron, considered the survival of the democratic way of life to be at extreme risk. Western liberal democracies had stumbled in the 1920s and 1930s by failing to respond to the instabilities and inequalities of capitalist society. In response, these Cold War liberals, as Jan-Werner Müller argues, sought to “craft a principled politics of freedom for the twentieth century.”107 Their view of the threats to liberal democracy focused on both the troubled internal politics of Western societies, where the political center was threatened by extremism on the Right and the Left, and the wider world-historical struggle then unfolding with the Soviet Union and international communism. Schlesinger’s influential 1949 book The Vital Center epitomized this worldview. It offered a defense of pluralism and open societies and called for the continuation of New Deal–style reform by activist governments. But in response to the larger global challenge, Schlesinger urged collective action by the liberal democracies, led by the United States, to defend their institutions and the liberal international order from totalitarian rivals.108 The challenge to liberal democracy was manifest in a worldwide struggle between alternative visions of modernity. Cold War liberalism offered a narrative that put liberal internationalism in the service of an activist American foreign policy.109 Is the American liberal tradition inherently interventionist? Do liberal principles predispose the United States to actively seek to impose democracy on other states? A long tradition of realist thinking has argued that they do. As Henry Kissinger maintains, “the idea that peace depends above all on promoting democratic institutions has remained a staple of American thought to the present day,” and he traces this idea back to Woodrow Wilson.110 The United States is often depicted as a “crusader state” seeking, under the sway of liberal ideas, to remake the world in its own image.111 More recently, realist scholars have linked American liberalism to controversial American foreign policy actions in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks, such as the doctrine justifying preventive war and forcible regime change. John Mearsheimer argues that liberalism provides the impulse and legitimating rationale for repeated episodes of American military interventionism. Liberal ambitions spurred the United States to push Western institutions to the doorsteps of Russia and China and provided the rationale for the disastrous war in Iraq. Similarly, Michael Desch traces American interventionism to the founding ideas of liberal internationalism. He sees Kantian liberalism as providing the philosophical justification for military efforts to democratize illiberal sovereign states by force. In effect, the liberal tradition generates what David Hume called an “imprudent vehemence” toward illiberal regimes.112 These claims bring the debate back to the question of whether liberalism contains an “urge” to empire. Mearsheimer and Desch essentially take the view of liberalism that is elaborated by Uday Mehta in Liberalism and Empire. Here it is not empire but military interventionism that the leading liberal state uses to bring backward people and regimes into the modern world. Intervention and regime change are embedded in the assumptions that liberalism makes about the “state of nature” and the conditions for peace. Only when all states embrace representative government will liberal democracies be truly safe. But the urge to intervene to promote democracy is clearly contingent, not absolute. Most liberal internationalists would almost certainly agree that, all else being equal, liberal democracies would be safer in a world dominated by liberal democracies. But whether this justifies forcible regime change is another matter. Kant’s view of intervention was surely more complicated—and contingent—than Desch admits. Kant did believe that a republican constitution is the ideal, he also acknowledged that even despotic states have a claim of legitimate authority that entitles them to nonintervention. Kant did argue that “perpetual peace” depends on all states developing republican forms of rule, but this does not generate a right by liberal states to bring about such a result by force.113 Michael Doyle has shown that liberalism is conflicted—even “congenitally confused”—on the question of intervention. Liberalism embraces principles that are in tension with each other. On one hand, liberal principles accord all states, including illiberal states, the right to noninterference, even when these states inflict harm on their own populations or violate their rights. On the other hand, liberalism also emphasizes that the rights of individuals in these societies must also be respected, and this opens the door—at least under extreme conditions—to intervention.114 Doyle argues that Kant “made a strong case for respecting the right of non-intervention because it afforded a polity the necessary territorial space and political independence in which free and equal citizens could work out what their way of life would be.”115 But Kant could also imagine polities that so abused their people—committing massacres or genocide, for example—that the duty of nonintervention would not apply. This contingency, of course, raises the question of how liberal states should decide whether and how to respond. Liberalism thus offers arguments for and against intervention. Georg Sørensen has described these alternative logics as the “liberalism of imposition” and the “liberalism of restraint.”116 The liberalism of imposition is manifest in the state’s employment of power to expand liberal principles. John Stuart Mill argues this position when he writes that noncivilized societies—which he calls “barbarous” nations—do not observe the rules and traditions of international morality, and therefore their independence does not merit full respect. Liberalism of restraint, Sørensen argues, stresses a different set of liberal values, such as “pluralism, non-intervention, respect for others, moderation, and peaceful cooperation on equal terms.”117 This is the vision that Gerry Simpson has called “charter liberalism,” with its values embodied in the United Nations Charter. States are accorded equality of treatment, their sovereign independence is respected, and each state is allowed to determine how to establish its own rights and protections.118 Restraint liberals recognize that some states will violate basic rights, but until some extreme line of violence and genocide is crossed diversity is tolerated, in the belief that over the long run, these societies will evolve toward universal standards of rights and decency.119 These debates within the liberal tradition burned fiercely during the years surrounding the Bush administration’s invasion of Iraq. How much was liberal internationalism implicated in this decision? The Bush administration articulated a sweeping new doctrine of national security based on American global dominance, the preventive use of force, “coalitions of the willing,” and the struggle between freedom and tyranny. In the spring of 2003, this doctrine provided the intellectual backdrop for the invasion of Iraq. As the invasion turned into a protracted war, the Bush administration increasingly invoked liberal internationalist ideas to justify its actions. In his now famous second inaugural address, George W. Bush stood on the steps of the US Capitol and proclaimed, “We are led, by events and common sense, to one conclusion: the survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands.”120 The echoes of Woodrow Wilson and the Cold War liberal internationalism of Truman and Kennedy were unmistakable. But was Bush truly Wilson’s heir? Liberal internationalists themselves debate this issue.121 Some argue that Bush followed a “neoconservative” stand of liberal internationalism, focused on putting the full weight of American power behind bringing the “blessings of liberty” to oppressed people.122 Others argue that this neoconservative turn in American foreign policy was a distortion of liberal internationalism and that the Bush grand strategy was more imperial than liberal. Multilateralism is at the heart of the liberal international vision, these people argue, but the Bush administration willfully put the United States above the rules and institutions of the liberal order. In the long run, liberal democracies will be safer and more secure in an international order undergirded by shared rules and norms, cooperative security, and mutual restraint—and the Bush administration was undermining such an order.123 Liberal internationalists clearly differ on the importance of democracy promotion to their project, and on whether democracy is best promoted through force or example.124 But were the ideological origins of the Iraq War really traceable to liberal internationalism? The principal architects of this ill-fated venture were, by all accounts, Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz.125 It is difficult to describe the political ideology of any of these officials as liberal internationalism. For all three, the primary objective of the war was the preservation and extension of American primacy in a region important to American national interests. They saw Iraq as a regional revisionist state with a demonstrated record of chemical-weapons use and a long-standing ambition to acquire nuclear weapons, making it a military threat to American forces and allies in the region. The decisive defeat of Iraq was also meant to provide a worldwide demonstration of America’s capacities and willingness to defend its global position against challengers such as North Korea and Iran and to dispel lingering doubts created during the Clinton years about America’s willingness to use force. In the decade before the war, Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Wolfowitz had all been associated with efforts to enunciate a post–Cold War American grand strategy of preventing the emergence of a peer competitor.126 All three had publicly urged the overthrow of the Saddam Hussein regime for more than a decade before the 2003 invasion. Their utterances betrayed no trace of liberal internationalism. Put simply, the Bush administration’s policy in Iraq was decidedly realist. Prominent academic realists opposed the war, offering eloquent critiques of American hubris and grand strategy.127 But the case for war was also argued, at least initially, in realist terms. Democracy promotion was among the rolling rationales for the war offered by the Bush administration, but it is difficult to believe that this goal was the originating impulse for the war. It is more plausibly seen as the administration’s public justification for the war and possibly a template for postwar Iraqi reconstruction. Democracy was not a core objective: it emerged later, as a program for making Iraq into a pillar of the hegemonic American order in the region.128 Some liberal internationalists supported the war and others opposed it, but many of those supporters were less focused on democracy promotion than on the genuinely frightening threats that weapons of mass destruction posed and on the search for responses to this threat when deterrence and arms control were not effective. (It turned out, of course, that the reason Hussein could not be persuaded to give up his weapons of mass destruction was that he had nothing to give up, and he wanted to hide this fact from neighboring enemies like Iran.) Finding cooperative solutions to rising problems of security interdependence was at the top of the post–September 11 liberal internationalist agenda, but it tended to get lost in the controversies over the Iraq War.129 Even if one could disentangle American liberalism from power politics, it is not clear that a purely realist-oriented foreign policy would be more restrained or enlightened. There is no necessary link between liberal internationalism and coercive regime change. Liberalism may provide reasons to intervene abroad, but it also provides ideological and institutional mechanisms that restrain the exercise of military power. Realist critics think they can prevent another Iraq by removing liberal internationalist ideas from policymaking. But liberal internationalism also inspired the building of the wider system of postwar rules, institutions, and partnerships. Realists cannot assume that this system would have been built in a purely realist world of offshore balancing. If the goal is a “restrained” foreign policy, the postwar system of rules and institutions that ties the liberal democracies together under shared commitments and rules of conduct is surely part of the solution and not the problem.130 A large part of the resistance to the Bush administration’s war in Iraq was based on standards of conduct that the United States had championed. Western Europeans, for example, criticized the war as a transgression of liberal internationalist notions of sovereignty, multilateralism, and international law. Two scholars have called this “liberal anti-Americanism.”131 If military interventionism is not inherent in either liberalism or realism, the question comes down to the quality of political institutions and decision making. Does the United States learn from its mistakes? The lack of enthusiasm for new Iraqi-style interventions does suggest that foreign policy decision makers—liberal internationalists or not— do rethink their views.

### A2 US Bad

#### US liberalism was key to anti-imperial struggle—opposition to imperial powers and building platforms for state sovereignty

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Finally, the deepest and most far-reaching force separating liberalism from empire has been the struggle over the global expansion of the Westphalian state system. A world of sovereign states was a precondition for the spread of liberal internationalism. Therefore, the struggle to extend sovereign rights of statehood to peoples and nations was the real bulwark against empire. By building on and reinforcing this grand shift from empire to the nation-state, liberal internationalism ultimately placed its “project” within the Westphalian system—it became, in a sense, the set of ideas for organizing the world once the world finally shed its imperial foundations. Empire had ordered the world for centuries, and when the twentieth century asked what would replace empire as the world’s organizing logic, liberal internationalism stepped forward as the alternative. How the Westphalian state system came to encompass the world is a question that still requires scholarly attention.100 The sovereign state arrived quite late for most regions outside the West—essentially in the twentieth century, after the world wars. For most of the past five hundred years, European great powers were not eager to export or universalize the Westphalian order. They held on to empire and colonies until forced to give them up. In this sense, the spread of Westphalia is not a story of the imposition of a Western idea on the rest of the world, but of the failure of the European state system to sustain empire.101 To pursue movements for independence and selfdetermination on their own, peoples and societies outside Europe took advantage of the cracks and clashes in the European imperial system. As noted earlier, Edward Keene argues that great wars between liberal and totalitarian states discredited the old civilizational vision of sovereignty and imperial hierarchy. Christian Reus-Smit finds, in the universalization of norms of sovereignty and self-determination after two hundred years of struggles over individual rights, a story of the “evolution and transmission of the legitimating institutions that sustain sovereignty.”102 This surely is part of the explanation. But it remains to be explained why empires, as a form of global order, failed. John Darwin argues that empires have tended to fail for four reasons: “external defeat or geopolitical weakness; ideological contagion and the loss of legitimacy; domestic enfeeblement at the centre of empire—the loss of political will and economic capacity; and colonial revolt.”103 All of these triggers of imperial crisis seemed to be present in the twentieth century. Considered as wars of empire, the world wars decisively weakened and brought to an end the European system of empire. In this drama, the United States played an important role in both undercutting empire and promoting the Westphalian state system. It did this first during the two world wars, by joining and later leading coalitions of allies that ultimately defeated states with expansive imperial projects. In World War I it was Imperial Germany, which had conquered a large area of Eastern Europe and seized much of the Russian Empire’s western territories. This war resulted in the collapse of four long-established European empires: Romanov Russia, Habsburg Austria-Hungary, Hohenzollern Germany, and Ottoman Turkey. World War II effectively finished off the Japanese empire and severely weakened the British and French empires, though the latter two, because they were on the winning side, took a couple of decades to dissolve. During the Cold War, the United States also engaged in balancing against the Soviet Union—seeking to contain the expansion of Soviet power and influence as well as thwarting communist coups and revolutions in many weak, independent states. At the same time, as noted earlier, the United States played a variety of roles in facilitating states’ ability to survive as independent members of international society. It led efforts to institutionalize Westphalian norms of nonaggression and sovereign independence, first with the League of Nations and then with the United Nations Charter. In the second half of the twentieth century, the American-led international order institutionalized open trade and multilateral cooperation, providing the infrastructure for a global economic system, which in turn strengthened the smaller states’ ability to sustain their sovereignty. Also in the second half of the twentieth century, the American system of military alliances dampened violent conflicts among allied states, particularly in Europe and East Asia, and this prevented the Westphalian system from falling back into violent conflict and empire building.104 Thus the “American century” was also the century of the global spread of the nation-state. They were different political projects, but each helped the other gain ground.