

POLS 318: Theories of IR

Lecture 6 (09.08.2020): 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.
- Public views of Realism.

Questions?? Email me!

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

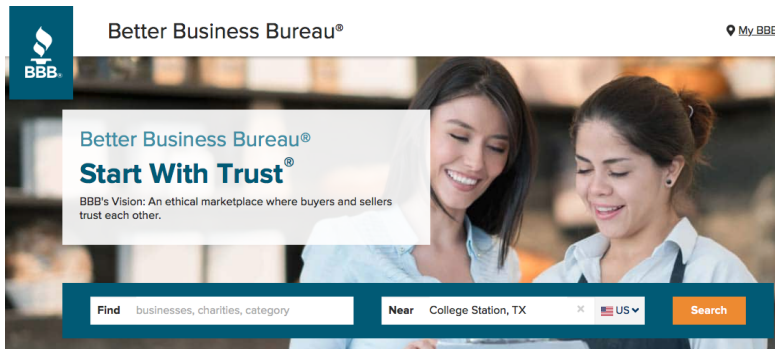


Liberalism

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




The screenshot shows the BBB homepage with a dark teal header. On the left is the BBB logo. The main content area features a large background image of two women smiling and looking at a tablet. Overlaid on this image is a white box with the text: "Better Business Bureau®", "Start With Trust®", and "BBB's Vision: An ethical marketplace where buyers and sellers trust each other." In the top right corner of the page is a "My BBB" link with a location pin icon. At the bottom, there is a search bar with two input fields: "Find businesses, charities, category" and "Near College Station, TX". To the right of the second field is a dropdown menu showing "US" with a flag icon. An orange "Search" button is located to the right of the search fields.

Better Business Bureau®

My BBB

Better Business Bureau®
Start With Trust®
BBB's Vision: An ethical marketplace where buyers and sellers trust each other.

Find businesses, charities, category

Near College Station, TX  US

Search

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.

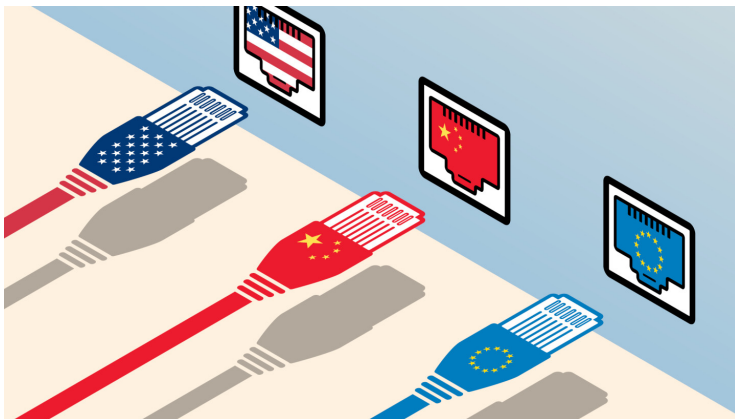
Liberal Theory

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

Stages in the process of interstate interaction

Outcome variable

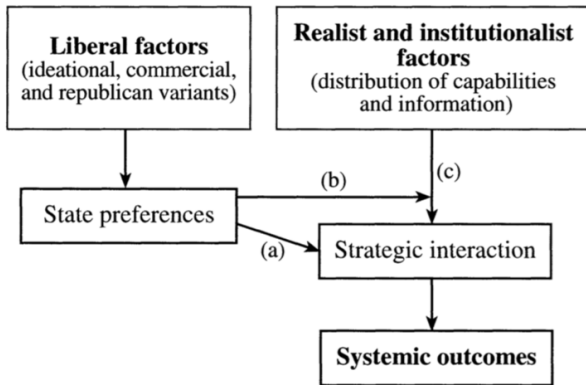


FIGURE 1. *A two-stage model of state behavior*

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 (5)	(4)	(3)	(2)	Strongly Oppose (1)	No Answer	Mean	S.D.
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
Detention								
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