8 Liberalism

Tim Dunne

- Introduction 163
- Varieties of Liberalism 164
- Three liberal responses to globalization 171
- Conclusion and postscript: the crisis of Liberalism 177

READER'S GUIDE

The practice of international relations has not been accommodating to Liberalism. Whereas the domestic political realm in many states has witnessed an impressive degree of progress, with institutions providing for order *and* justice, the international realm in the era of the modern states system has been characterized by a precarious order and the *absence* of justice. In the introductory section, the chapter will address this dilemma of Liberalism's false promise as well as considering the moments in history when Liberalism has impacted significantly on the theory and practice of international relations. Like all grand theory, Liberalism is an aggregation of a number of different ideas. Section two seeks to uncover the most important variations on the Liberal theme, beginning with the visionary liberal internationalism of the Enlightenment, through to the liberal idealism of the inter-war period, and ending with the liberal institutionalism which became popular in the immediate post-war years. This discussion begs two important questions, dealt with in section three. What has become of these three historic elements in liberal thinking on international relations? And how have contemporary writers situated in these various strands sought to cope with globalization? The final section summarizes the arguments that have gone before, as well as reflecting more broadly on the fate of liberalism in international relations at the end of the millennium.

Introduction

Although Realism is regarded as the dominant theory of international relations, Liberalism[1] has a strong claim to being the historic alternative. Rather like political parties, Realism is the 'natural' party of government and Liberalism is the leader of the opposition, whose main function is to hound the talking heads of power politics for their remorseless pessimism. And like historic parties of 'opposition', Liberalism has occasionally found itself in the ascendancy, when its ideas and values set the agenda for international relations. In the twentieth century, Liberal thinking influenced policy-making élites and public opinion in a number of Western states after the First World War, an era often referred to in academic International Relations as **Idealism**. There was a brief resurgence of liberal sentiment at the end of World War II, with the birth of the United Nations, although these flames of hope were soon extinguished by the return of cold war power politics. The end of the cold war has seen a resurgence of Liberalism as Western state leaders proclaimed a 'New World Order' and liberal intellectuals provided theoretical justifications for the inherent supremacy of Liberalism over all other competing ideologies.

One of the most respected contemporary theorists in the field, Stanley Hoffmann, once famously wrote that 'international affairs have been the nemesis of liberalism'. 'The essence of liberalism', Hoffmann continues, 'is self-restraint, moderation, compromise and peace' whereas 'the essence of international politics is exactly the opposite: troubled peace, at best, or the state of war' (Hoffmann 1987: 396). This explanation comes as no surprise to realists, who argue that there can be no progress, no law, and no justice, where there is no common power. The fact that historically international politics has not been hospitable to liberal ideas should not be interpreted as a surrender by liberals to the logic of power politics. Liberals argue that power politics itself is the product of ideas, and crucially, ideas can change. So, even if the world hasn't been accommodating to liberalism to date, this does not mean that it cannot be made into a liberal world order. Given this disposition, it is not surprising that Liberalism is described in the literature as the 'tradition of optimism' (Clark 1989: 49–66).

While the belief in the possibility of progress is one identifier of a liberal approach to politics, there are other general propositions that unite the various strands of liberalism. Perhaps the appropriate way to begin this discussion is with a three-dimensional definition. Liberalism is an ideology whose central concern is the liberty of the individual; liberals see the establishment of the state as a necessary part of preserving liberty either from harm by other individuals or by states; the state must always be the servant of the collective will, not the master, and democratic institutions are the means of guaranteeing this. Here it is important to note that Liberalism is primarily a theory of government, one that seeks to reconcile order (security) and justice (equality) within a particular community. But as we will see in the course of the chapter, many advocates of this tradition have recognized that providing order and justice on the 'inside' may not be possible without reform of the 'outside'. The argument being made here is a crucial one. As long as states continue to exist in relation to one another as individuals did in the state of nature, the liberal project of providing peace and progress will forever be undermined.

As is often the case with general theories of international politics, we quite quickly move from identifying assumptions shared by all liberals to the realization that there are fundamental disagreements. As Box 8.1 demonstrates, liberals offer radically different answers to what they take to be the pre-eminent dilemma in international relations, namely, why wars occur: are they caused by imperialism, the balance of power, or undemocratic regimes? Furthermore, liberals diverge on whether peace is the goal of world politics, or order? And how should this be established, through collective security, commerce, or world government? Finally, liberals are divided on the issue of how liberal states should respond to non-liberal states (or civilizations), by conquest, conversion, or toleration?

Box 8.1 Liberalism and the causes of war, determinants of peace

One of the most useful analytical tools for thinking about differences between individual thinkers or particular variations on a broad theme such as Liberalism, is to differentiate between levels of analysis. For example, Kenneth Waltz's *Man, The State and War* examined the causes of conflict operating at the level of the individual, the state, and the international system itself. The table below turns Waltz on his head, as it were, in order to show how different liberal thinkers have provided competing explanations (across the three levels of analysis) for the causes of war and the determinants of peace.

'Images' of Liberalism	Public figure/ period	Causes of conflict	Determinants of peace
First image: (Human nature)	Richard Cobden (mid-19th c.)	Interventions by governments domestically and internationally disturbing the natural order	Individual liberty, free trade, prosperity, interdependence
Second image: (The state)	Woodrow Wilson (early 20th c.)	Undemocratic nature of international politics; especially foreign policy and the balance of power	National self-determination; open governments responsive to public opinion; **collective security**
Third image: (The structure of the system)	J. A. Hobson (early 20th c.)	The balance of power system	A **world government**, with powers to mediate and enforce decisions

Key points

- Liberalism is fundamentally anchored around the liberty of the individual. Domestic and international institutions are to be judged according to whether they further this aim. But note that this basic principle allows for significant variations, for example, those who believe that freedom needs to be constrained for the greater good.
- From the eighteenth century onwards, Liberalism has exerted a strong influence on the practice of world politics.
- The high-water mark of liberal thinking in international relations was reached in the inter-war period in the work of idealists who believed that warfare was an unnecessary and outmoded way of settling disputes between states.
- In view of the significant divergences within the liberal tradition—on issues such as human nature, the causes of wars, and the relative importance different kinds of liberals place on the individual, the state, and international institutions in delivering progress—it is perhaps more appropriate to think of not one Liberalism, but contending liberalisms.

Varieties of Liberalism

Liberal thinking on international relations can be dimly perceived in the various plans for peace articulated by philosophers (and theologians) from the sixteenth century onwards. Such thinkers rejected the idea that conflict was a natural condition for relations between states, one which could only be tamed by the careful management of power through balance of power policies and the construction of alliances against the state which threatened international order. In 1517 Erasmus first iterated a familiar liberal theme; war is unprofitable. To overcome it, the kings and princes of Europe must desire peace, and perform kind gestures in relations with fellow sovereigns in the expectation that these will be reciprocated. Other early liberal thinkers placed an emphasis upon the need for institutional structures to constrain international 'outlaws'. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, William Penn advocated a 'Diet' (or Parliament) of Europe. Indeed, there are some remarkable parallels between Penn's ideas and the institutions of the European Union today. Penn envisaged that the number of delegates to the Parliament should be proportional to the power of the state, and that legislation required a kind of 'qualified majority voting', or as Penn put it, the support of 75 per cent of the delegates.

These broad sketches of ideas from some of the progenitors of liberal thinking in international relations show how, from Penn's plans for a 'Diet' in 1693 to the Treaty on European Union in 1992, there are common themes underlying Liberalism; in this instance, the theme is the importance of submitting the separate 'wills' of individual states to a general will agreed by states acting collectively (see, for example, Kant's 'third definitive article' in Box 8.2. Yet it would be wrong to suggest that the development of liberal thinking on international affairs has been linear. Indeed, it is often possible to portray current political differences in terms of contrasting liberal principles. To return to the Treaty on European Union mentioned above, the debate which raged in many European countries could be presented as one in which the liberal principle of integration was challenged by another liberal principle of the right of states to retain sovereignty over key aspects of social and economic policies.

How should we understand this relationship between autonomy and **integration** which is embodied in Liberalism? One way might be to apply a historical approach, providing detailed accounts of the contexts with which various philosophers, politicians and international lawyers contributed to the elaboration of key liberal values and beliefs. Although the contextual approach has merit it tends to downplay the dialogue between past and present, closing off the parallels between Immanuel Kant (an eighteenth-century philosopher-king from Konigsberg) and Francis Fukuyama (the late twentieth-century political thinker and former employee of the US State Department). An alternative method, which is favoured in this chapter, is to lay bare the variety of liberalisms thematically rather than historically.[2] To this end, the following section identifies three patterns of thought as the principal constituents of Liberalism: **liberal internationalism**, **idealism**, and **liberal institutionalism**.

As Box 8.2 demonstrates, many of the great liberal figures such as Immanuel Kant believed that human potentiality can only be realized through the transformation of individual attitudes as well as the binding of states together into some kind of federation. In this sense, Kant combines a commitment to international institutions (embodied in both idealists and liberal institutionalists) as well as the liberal internationalists' belief that democratic forms of government are inherently superior. Like Kant, the thinking of many other great liberal thinkers reaches beyond the boundaries of any single category. For this reason it is important not to use the categories as labels for particular thinkers, but as representations of a discernible strand in the history of liberal thinking on international relations.

Liberal internationalism

Immanuel Kant and Jeremy Bentham were two of the leading liberal internationalists of the Enlightenment. Both were reacting to the barbarity of international relations, or what Kant graphically described as 'the lawless state of savagery', at a time when domestic politics was at the cusp of a new age of rights, citizenship, and constitutionalism. Their abhorrence of the lawless savagery led them individually to elaborate plans for 'perpetual peace'. Although written over two centuries ago, these manifestos contain the seeds of key liberal internationalist ideas, in particular, the belief that reason could deliver freedom and justice in international relations. For Kant the imperative to achieve perpetual peace required the transformation of individual consciousness, republican constitutionalism and a federal contract between states to abolish war (rather than to regulate it as liberal

Box 8.2 Immanuel Kant's 'Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch'

First Definitive Article: ***The Civil Constitution of Every State shall be Republican***

'If, as is inevitably the case under this constitution, the consent of the citizens is required to decide whether or not war is to be declared, it is very natural that they will have great hesitation in embarking on so dangerous an enterprise . . . . But under a constitution where the subject is not a citizen, and which is therefore not republican, it is the simplest thing in the world to go to war. For the head of state is not a fellow citizen, but the owner of the state, and a war will not force him to make the slightest sacrifice so far as his banquets, hunts, pleasure palaces and court festivals are concerned . . . ' (Kant 1991: 99–102)

Second Definitive Article: ***The Right of Nations shall be based on a Federation of Free States***

'Each nation, for the sake of its own security, can and ought to demand of the others that they should enter along with it into a constitution, similar to a civil one, within which the rights of each could be secured . . . . But peace can neither be inaugurated nor secured without a general agreement between the nations; thus a particular kind of league, which we will call a *pacific federation* is required. It would be different from *a peace treaty* in that the latter terminates *one* war, whereas the former would seek to end *all wars* for good . . . . It can be shown that this idea of *federalism*, extending gradually to encompass all states and thus leading to perpetual peace, is practicable and has objective reality' (Kant 1991: 102–5).

Third Definitive Article: ***Cosmopolitan Right shall be limited to Conditions of Universal Hospitality***

'The peoples of the earth have thus entered in varying degrees into a universal community, and it has developed to the point where a violation of rights in one part of the world is felt *everywhere*. The idea of a cosmopolitan right is therefore not fantastic and overstrained; it is a necessary complement to the unwritten code of political and international right, transforming it into a universal right of humanity' (Kant 1991: 105–8).

realists such as Hugo Grotius had argued). This federation can be likened to a permanent peace treaty, rather than a 'superstate' actor or world government.

Jeremy Bentham tried to address the specific problem of the tendency among states to resort to war as a means of settling international disputes. 'But, establish a common tribunal', Bentham argued, and 'the necessity for war no longer follows from a difference of opinion' (Luard 1992: 416). Like many liberal thinkers after him, Bentham showed that federal states such as the German Diet, the American Confederation, and the Swiss League were able to transform their identity from one based on conflicting interests to a more peaceful federation. As Bentham famously argued, 'between the interests of nations there is nowhere any real conflict'. Note that these plans for a permanent peace imply an extension of the social contract between individuals in domestic society to states in the international system, in other words, subjecting the states to a system of legal rights and duties. But crucially, liberal internationalists—unlike the idealists of the inter-war period—believed that a law-governed international society could emerge without a **world government**.

The idea of a natural order underpinning human society is the cornerstone of liberal internationalism. For the clearest statement of this position, we must turn to the Scottish political economist and moral philosopher, Adam Smith. By pursuing their own self-interest, individuals are inadvertently promoting the public good. The mechanism which intervenes between the motives of the individual and 'ends' of society as a whole, is what Smith referred to as 'an invisible hand'. Although Smith believed that the natural harmony between individual and state did not extend to a harmony between states (Wyatt-Walter 1996: 28) this is precisely what was emphasized by liberal internationalists in the nineteenth century like Richard Cobden. In common with many key figures in the Liberal tradition, Cobden was a political activist as well as a writer and commentator on public affairs. He was an eloquent opponent of the exercise of arbitrary power by governments the world over. 'The progress of freedom', he compellingly argued, 'depends more upon the maintenance of peace, the spread of commerce, and the diffusion of education, than upon the labours of cabinets and foreign offices' (Hill 1996: 114). For Cobden, politics was too important to be left to politicians.

It was primarily this liberal idea of a natural 'harmony of interests' in international political and economic relations which E. H. Carr attacked in his polemical work *The Twenty Years' Crisis*. Although Carr's book remains one of the most stimulating in the field, one 'which leaves us nowhere to hide' (Booth 1995*b*: 123), it could be argued that Carr incorrectly targets idealists of the interwar period as the object of his attack instead of the liberal internationalists of the nineteenth century. As we will see in the following section, rather than relying on a natural harmony to deliver peace, idealists fervently believed that a new international order had to be constructed, one which was managed by an international organization. This line of argument represents a significant shift from the nineteenth-century **liberal internationalism** to the **idealist** movement in the early part of the twentieth century.

Idealism

Like liberal internationalism, the era of **idealism** (from the early 1900s through to the late 1930s) was motivated by the desire to prevent war. However, many idealists were sceptical that *laissez faire* economic principles, like free trade, would deliver peace. Idealists, like J. A. Hobson, argued that imperialism—the subjugation of foreign peoples and their resources—was becoming the primary cause of conflict in international politics. For Hobson, imperialism resulted from underconsumption within developed capitalist societies. This led capitalists to search for higher profits overseas, which became a competitive dynamic between states and the catalyst for militarism, leading to war. Here we see a departure from the liberal internationalist argument that capitalism was inherently pacific. The fact that Britain and Germany had highly interdependent economies before the Great War (1914–18), seemed to confirm the fatal flaw in the liberal internationalist association of **interdependence** with peace. From the turn of the century, the contradictions within European civilization, of progress and exemplarism on the one hand and the harnessing of industrial power for military purposes on the other, could no longer be contained. Europe stumbled into a horrific war killing fifteen million people. The war not only brought an end to three empires it was also a contributing factor to the Russian Revolution of 1917.

The First World War shifted liberal thinking towards a recognition that peace is not a natural condition but is one which must be constructed. In a powerful critique of the idea that peace and prosperity were part of a latent natural order, the publicist and author Leonard Woolf argued that peace and prosperity required 'consciously devised machinery' (Luard 1992: 465). But perhaps the most famous advocate of an international authority for the management of international relations was Woodrow Wilson. According to the US President, peace could only be secured with the creation of an international institution to regulate the international anarchy. Security could not be left to secret bilateral diplomatic deals and a blind faith in the balance of power. Like domestic society, international society must have a system of governance which has democratic procedures for coping with disputes, and an international force which could be mobilized if negotiations failed. In this sense, liberal idealism rests on a **domestic analogy** (Suganami 1989: 94–113).

In his famous 'fourteen points' speech, addressed to Congress in January 1918, Wilson argued that 'a general association of nations must be formed' to preserve the coming peace (see Box 8.3). The League of Nations, was of course, the general association which idealists willed into existence. For the League to be effective, it had to have the military power to deter aggression and, when necessary, to use a preponderance of power to enforce its will. This was the idea behind the **collective security** system which was central to the League of Nations. Collective security refers to an arrangement where 'each state in the system accepts that the security of one is the concern of all, and agrees to join in a collective response to aggression' (Roberts and Kingsbury 1993: 30). It can be contrasted with an alliance system of security, where a number of states join together usually as a response to a specific external threat (sometimes known as collective defence). In

Box 8.3 Woodrow Wilson's 'Fourteen Points' and the realism of idealism

1. Open covenants openly arrived at.
2. Freedom of the seas alike in peace and war.
3. The removal of all economic barriers to trade . . .
4. Reduction of national armaments.
5. A readjustment of all colonial claims . . .
6. The evacuation of Russian territory and the independent determination by Russia of her own political development and national policy.
7. The evacuation and restoration of Belgium.
8. The evacuation and restoration of France and the return of Alsace-Lorraine.
9. A readjustment of the frontiers of Italy along national lines.
10. Self-determination for the peoples of Austria–Hungary.
11. A redrawing of the boundaries of the Balkan states along historically established lines of nationality.
12. Self-determination for the peoples under Turkish rule . . .
13. The independence of Poland with free access to the sea guaranteed by international covenant.
14. The formation of a general association of nations under specific covenants for the purpose of affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike.

These '14 points' contain many idealist principles, in particular the importance of self-determination from colonial rule as well as the need for an international organization to maintain peace and security. But a close reading not just of the 14 points, but of the political context of the time, suggests that there was more than a twist of realism to the idealist principles articulated by Woodrow Wilson. This comes through strongly in the following passage. 'As a number of historians have shown, Wilson advanced his Fourteen Points for many reasons, but one, obviously, was a shrewd appreciation that liberal democracy was the best antidote to Bolshevism and reaction in a world turned upside down by global war. Even his support for self-determination was as much a strategic ploy as a moral demand. As the record reveals, the ultimate purpose of the slogan was not to free all nations, but rather to undermine the remaining empires on the European continent and win America friends in east and central Europe. Wilson understood, even if his later realist critics did not, the power of values and norms in international relations' (Cox, 2000: 6–7).

the case of the League of Nations, Article 16 noted the obligation that, in the event of war, all member states must cease normal relations with the offending state, impose sanctions, and if necessary, commit their armed forces to the disposal of the League Council should the use of force be required to restore the status quo.

The experience of the League of Nations was a disaster. Whilst the moral rhetoric at the creation of the League was decidedly idealist, in practice states remained imprisoned by self-interest. There is no better example of this than the United States' decision not to join the institution it had created. With the Soviet Union outside the system for ideological reasons, the League of Nations quickly became a talking shop for the 'satisfied' powers. Hitler's decision in March 1936 to reoccupy the Rhineland, a designated demilitarized zone according to the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, effectively pulled the plug on the League's life-support system (it had been put on the 'critical' list following the Manchurian crisis in 1931 and the Ethiopian crisis in 1935). Indeed, throughout the 1930s, the term crisis had become the most familiar one in international affairs.

Although the League of Nations was the principal organ of the idealist inter-war order, it is important to note other ideas which dominated liberal thinking in the early part of the twentieth century. Education became a vital addition to the liberal agenda, hence the origins of the study of International Relations as a discipline in Aberystwyth in 1919 with the founding of the Woodrow Wilson professorship. One of the tasks of the Wilson Professor was to promote the League of Nations as well as contributing to 'the truer understanding of civilizations other than

our own' (John *et al.* 1972: 86). It is this self-consciously **normative** approach to the discipline of International Relations, the belief that scholarship is about what ought to be and not just what is, that sets the idealists apart from the institutionalists who were to carry the torch of liberalism through the early post-1945 period.

Outside of the military–security issue area, liberal ideas made an important contribution to global politics even during the cold war. The principle of self-determination, championed by liberal internationalists for centuries, signalled the end of empire. The protection of individuals from human rights abuses was enshrined in the three key standard setting documents: the 1948 Universal Declaration, the Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, and the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Even the more radical calls in the mid-1970s for a 'New International Economic Order' emanating from poorer post-colonial states contained within it the kernel of a liberal defence of justice as fairness. The problem of the uneven distribution of wealth and power between the 'developed' and the 'developing' world is one which has been championed by a succession of liberal state-leaders, from the 1980 Brandt Report (named after the former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt) to the 1995 report by the Commission on Global Governance, chaired by Ingvar Carlson (then Swedish Prime Minister) and Shridath Ramphal (former Secretary-General of the Commonwealth).

Liberal institutionalism

According to the history of the discipline of International Relations, the collapse of the League of Nations signified the end of **idealism**. There is no doubt that the language of **liberal institutionalism** was less avowedly **normative**; how could anyone assume progress after Auschwitz? Yet certain fundamental tenets remained. Even in the early 1940s, there was a recognition of the need to replace the League with another international institution with responsibility for international peace and security. Only this time, in the case of the United Nations there was an awareness among the framers of the Charter of the need for a consensus between the Great Powers in order for enforcement action to be taken, hence the veto system (Article 27 of the UN Charter) which allowed any of the five permanent members of the Security Council the power of veto. This revision constituted an important modification to the classical model of collective security (Roberts 1996: 315). With the ideological polarity of the cold war, the UN procedures for collective security were still-born (as either of the superpowers and their allies would veto any action proposed by the other).[3] It was not until the end of the cold war that a collective security system was operationalized, following the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq on 2 August 1990 (see Box 8.4.)

An important argument by liberal institutionalists in the early post-war period concerned the state's inability to cope with modernization. David Mitrany, a pioneer **integration** theorist, argued that transnational co-operation was required in order to resolve common problems (Mitrany 1943). His core concept was **ramification**, meaning the likelihood that co-operation in one sector would lead governments to extend the range of collaboration across other sectors. As states become more embedded in an **integration** process, the 'cost' of withdrawing from co-operative ventures increases.

This argument about the positive benefits from transnational co-operation is one which lies at the core of **liberal institutionalism** (and remains central to neo-liberal institutionalists, as noted in the following section). For writers such as Haas, international and regional institutions were a necessary counterpart to sovereign states whose capacity to deliver welfare goals was decreasing (1968: 154–8). The work of liberal institutionalists like Mitrany and Haas, provided an important impetus to closer co-operation between European states, initially through the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952. Consistent with Mitrany's hypothesis, co-operation in the energy sector provided governments with the confidence to undertake the more ambitious plan for a European Economic Community enshrined in the Treaty of Rome in 1956.

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, a new generation of scholars (particularly in the US) influenced by the European integration literature, began to examine in greater analytical depth the impact of modernization on the states system.[4] In particular,

Box 8.4 Case study 1: The Gulf War and collective security

Iraq had always argued that the sovereign state of Kuwait was an artificial creation of the imperial powers. When this political motive was allied to an economic imperative, caused primarily by the accumulated war debts following the eight-year war with Iran, the annexation of Kuwait seemed to be a solution to Iraq's problems. The Iraqi President, Saddam Hussein, also assumed that the West would not use force to defend Kuwait, a miscalculation which was fuelled by the memory of the support the West had given Iraq during the Iran–Iraq war (the so-called 'fundamentalism' of Iran was considered to be a graver threat to international order than the extreme nationalism of the Iraqi regime).

The invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990 led to a series of UN resolutions calling for Iraq to withdraw unconditionally. Economic sanctions were applied whilst the US-led coalition of international forces gathered in Saudi Arabia. Operation 'Desert Storm' crushed the Iraqi resistance in a matter of six weeks (16 January to 28 February 1991). The Gulf War had certainly revived the UN doctrine of collective security, although a number of doubts remained about the underlying motivations for the war and the way in which it was fought (for instance, the coalition of national armies was controlled by the US rather than by a UN military command as envisaged in the Charter). President Bush declared that the war was about more than one small country, it was about a 'big idea; **a new world order**'. The content of this new world order was 'peaceful settlement of disputes, solidarity against aggression, reduced and controlled arsenals, and just treatment of all peoples'.

they rejected the state-centric view of the world adopted by both traditional realists and behaviouralists. World politics, according to liberal institutionalists (or pluralists as they are often referred to) were no longer an exclusive arena for states, as it had been for the first three hundred years of the Westphalian states system. In one of the central texts of this genre, Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye argued that the centrality of other actors, such as interest groups, transnational corporations and international non-governmental organizations, had to be taken into consideration (1972). Here the overriding image of international relations is one of a cobweb of diverse actors linked through multiple channels of interaction.

Although the phenomenon of **transnationalism** was an important addition to the International Relations theorists' vocabulary, it remained underdeveloped as a theoretical concept. Perhaps the most important contribution of **pluralism** was its elaboration of **interdependence**. Due to the expansion of capitalism and the emergence of a global culture, pluralists recognized a growing interconnectedness between states which brought with it a shared responsibility for the environment. The following passage sums up this position neatly:

> We are all now caught up in a complex systemic web of interactions such that changes in one part of the system have direct and indirect consequences for the rest of the system. (Little 1996: 77)

Clearly absolute state autonomy, so keenly entrenched in the minds of state leaders, was being circumscribed by interdependence. Moreover, this process is irreversible (Morse 1976: 97). Unlike realists however, liberal institutionalists believe that the decline of state autonomy is not necessarily regrettable, rather, they see transnationalism and interdependence as phenomena which must be managed.

Key points

- **Liberal internationalism**: The strand in liberal thinking which holds that the natural order has been corrupted by undemocratic state leaders and out-dated policies such as the balance of power. Prescriptively, liberal internationalists believe that contact between the peoples of the world, through commerce or travel, will facilitate a more pacific form of international relations.
- **Idealism**: Although there are important continuities between liberal internationalism and idealism, such as the belief in the power of world public opinion to tame the interests of states, idealism is distinct in that it believes in the importance of constructing an international order. For idealists, as opposed to internationalists, the freedom of states is part of the problem of international relations and not part of the solution. Two requirements follow from their diagnosis. The first is the need for explicitly normative thinking: how to promote peace and build a better world. Second, states must be part of an international organization, and be bound by its rules and norms.
- Central to **idealism** was the formation of an international organization to facilitate peaceful change, disarmament, arbitration, and (where necessary) enforcement. The League of Nations was founded in 1920 but its collective security system failed to prevent the descent into world war in the 1930s. The victor states in the wartime alliance against Nazi Germany pushed for a new international institution to represent the society of states and resist aggression. The United Nations Charter was signed in June 1945 by fifty states in San Francisco. It represented a departure from the League in two important respects. Membership was near universal, and the great powers were able to prevent any enforcement action from taking place which might be contrary to their interests.
- **Liberal institutionalism**: The third figure in the pattern of Liberalism. In the 1940s, liberal institutionalists turned to international institutions to carry out a number of functions the state could not perform. This was the catalyst for integration theory in Europe and pluralism in the United States. By the early 1970s, pluralism had mounted a significant challenge to realism. It focused on new actors (transnational corporations, non-governmental organizations) and new patterns of interaction (interdependence, integration).

Three liberal responses to globalization

The previous section has delineated three elements in the history of liberal thinking on international relations. Below, the chapter will bring this conversation between contending liberalisms up to date, hence the prefix 'neo' attached to each variant. Although the underlying arguments within each element remain constant, there have been discernible shifts in the political purposes to which those arguments have been utilized.

Neo-liberal internationalism

One of the 'big ideas' in the theory and practice of international relations in the 1990s is known as '**the democratic peace thesis**'. The kernel of this argument, which can be traced back to Kant's philosophical sketch on Perpetual Peace, is that liberal states do not go to war with other liberal states. In this sense, liberal states have created what Michael Doyle has termed, a 'separate peace'. Although liberal states are pacific in relation to other liberal states, Doyle recognizes that liberal democracies are as aggressive as any other type of state in their relations with authoritarian regimes and stateless peoples (Doyle 1995*b*: 100).

Although the empirical evidence seems to support the democratic peace thesis, it is important to bear in mind the limitations of the argument. In the first instance, for the theory to be compelling, supporters of the '**democratic peace thesis**' must provide an explanation as to why war has become unthinkable between liberal states. Over two centuries ago, Kant argued that if the decision to use force was taken by the people, rather than by the prince, then the frequency of conflicts would be drastically reduced. But logically this argument implies a lower frequency of conflicts between liberal and non-liberal states, and this has proven to be contrary to the historical evidence. An alternative explanation for the '**democratic peace thesis**' might be that liberal states tend to be wealthy, and therefore have less to gain (and more to lose) by engaging in conflicts than poorer authoritarian states. Perhaps the most convincing explanation of all is the simple fact that liberal states tend to be in relations of amity with other liberal states. War between Canada and the US is unthinkable, perhaps not because of their liberal democratic

constitutions, but because they are friends (Wendt, 199: 298–99). Indeed, war between states with contrasting political and economic systems may also be unthinkable because they have a history of friendly relations. An example here is Mexico and Cuba, who although claiming a common revolutionary tradition nevertheless embrace antithetical economic ideologies.

Irrespective of the scholarly search for an answer to the reasons why liberal democratic states are more peaceful, it is important to note the political consequences of this hypothesis. In 1989 Francis Fukuyama wrote an article entitled 'The End of History' which celebrated the triumph of liberalism over all other ideologies, contending that liberal states were more stable internally and more peaceful in their international relations (Fukuyama 1989: 3–18). Whilst restating a familiar liberal internationalist theme, albeit with a Hegelian spin, Fukuyama's article and subsequent book served the political purpose of underlining the superiority of American values, thereby providing legitimacy to those who sought to 'export' liberalism. It was no longer a case of liberalism in one country, as it had appeared to some realists during the cold war, but rather liberalism for all countries.

What instruments are available to states to spread liberal values and widen the zone of peace? There are a wide range of options open to Western states in their attempt to globalize liberalism. At one end of the spectrum, the collapse of state structures (for example, in Somalia or Yugoslavia) prompts many liberals to call for forcible humanitarian intervention. But as critics from the realist 'right' and critical theory 'left' often argue, intervention even for liberal reasons often exacerbates the problem. Since the question of humanitarian intervention is dealt with in detail in Chapter 22 the paragraphs below will focus on the non-military instruments at the disposal of state leaders and international institutions for promoting liberal values in global politics.

At the political level, the powerful states in the international system are able to use institutional leverage as a means of embedding formerly non-liberal states into the liberal world order. The EU has done this extensively in its relations with former communist states of Central and Eastern Europe. The 'bargain' can be seen in terms of material rewards (access to the single market and structural adjustment funds) in return for accepting western values in the economic and political/social spheres. Increasingly, the US has used a combination of punitive and rewarding strategies to spread liberal ideas in previously illiberal parts of the world (see Box 8.5).

Box 8.5 Defending and extending the liberal zone of peace

Contemporary liberal internationalists believe history proves that liberal states act peacefully towards one another. Yet this empirical law does not tell liberal states how to behave towards non-liberal states. Should they try to convert them, thereby bringing them into the zone of peace, or should they pursue a more defensive strategy? The former has not been successful in the past, and in a world of many nuclear weapons states, crusading could be suicidal. For this reason, Michael Doyle suggests a dual-track approach.

- The first track is preserving the liberal community which means forging strong alliances with other like-minded states and defending itself against illiberal regimes. This may require liberal states to include in their foreign policy strategies like the balance of power in order to contain authoritarian states.
- The second track is more expansionist and aims to extend the liberal zone by a variety of economic and diplomatic instruments. He categorizes these in terms of 'inspiration' (hoping peoples living in non-democratic regimes will struggle for their liberty), 'instigation' (peace-building and economic restructuring) and 'intervention' (legitimate if the majority of a polity is demonstrating widespread disaffection with their government and / or their basic rights are being systematically violated).

Doyle concludes by warning liberals against assuming that the march of liberalism will continue unabated. It is in our hands, he argues, whether the international system becomes more pacific and stable, or whether antagonisms deepen. We must be willing to pay the price—in institutional costs and development aid—to increase the prospects for a peaceful future. This might be cheap when compared with the alternative of dealing with hostile and unstable authoritarian states (Doyle, 1999).

In relations with the Third World, where there are fewer prospects for exerting regional institutional leverage, the most effective tool has been conditionality: the policies developing countries must pursue in return for economic benefits such as loans or investment. More recently, **conditionality** has expanded from the requirement to liberalize and privatize the economic sector, to include targets on 'good governance', and compliance to human rights norms. While proponents might claim some successes, its reception in Asia has been contested. The rapid economic development of some Asian states has made them economically less dependent on Western aid or expertise, and at the same time they have become increasingly critical of the liberal internationalist assumption that liberal values are universally shared. The Australian dilemma, illustrated in Case Study 2 (Box 8.6) between promoting human rights in the Asia-Pacific region without damaging its economic and security interests, might serve as a microcosm for future relations between a weaker West and a potential economic colossus like China.

The attempt by Western states to globalize liberalism has highlighted a number of endemic weaknesses in the neo-liberal internationalist position.[5] First, from an intellectual point of view, theorists like Doyle and Fukuyama are complacent about the degree to which their own society is indeed liberal and prone to overestimate the number of stable liberal democracies in the world. Second, a defeat for Stalinist-style communism does not mean that liberalism has triumphed over all other ideologies. Social democracy remains an important ideology in Northern Europe, and a variety of forms of non-liberal consitutionalism exist, for example, in Asia and to a lesser extent in Japan. Third, Western states have done little to remove the suspicion among radicals in their own countries and public opinion in South-East Asia, that the project of spreading liberal values is a convenient fiction for promoting the commercial interests of Western firms. Finally, the neo-liberal internationalist agenda of the 1990s highlights the often conflicting principles which underpin liberalism. Promoting economic liberalization, particularly in economically impoverished countries, frequently comes into conflict with the norms of democracy and human rights. Two examples illustrate this dilemma. First, the more the West becomes involved in the organization of deve oping states' political and economic infrastructur the less those states are able to be accountable t their domestic constituencies, thereby cuttin through the link between the government and th people which is so central to modern liberal forms o representative democracy (Hurrell and Woods 199 463). Second, in order to qualify for Western aid an loans, states are often required to meet harsh eco nomic criteria requiring cuts in many welfare pro grammes; the example of the poorest children in parts of Africa having to pay for primary school edu cation (Booth and Dunne, 1999: 310)– which is thei right according to the Universal Declaration o Human Rights—is a stark reminder of the fact that economic liberalism and political liberalism are frequently opposed.

Neo-idealism

Like the idealists of the inter-war period, neo-idealists have a good deal in common with liberal internationalism: both share a commitment to democratic forms of government, and both believe that interdependence breeds peace. That said, neo-idealists believe that peace and justice are not natural conditions, they are the product of deliberate design. Moreover, the processes of globalization have added to the enormity of this task. Encouraging or even coercing non-liberal states to become more democratic is only part of what is required in order to bring about a truly liberal world order. Consistent with the original idealists, neo-idealists argue that reform needs to take place at the international level like states themselves, international institutions need to be made more democratic.[6] Similarly, neo-idealists believe that global social movements must be brought into the decision-making structures since these are often closer to ordinary people than their own governments. In addition to tackling the global 'democratic deficit', neo-idealists are more prone to point to the dark side of globalization than liberal internationalists. These arguments are discussed in greater length below.

Liberal internationalists tend to use the term globalization in positive ways, as though we lived in a global village, signifying economic and mora

Box 8.6 Case study 2: Promoting liberal values in an illiberal region — The Australian dilemma*

How can Australia, with its broadly Western liberal values, be accepted by northern neighbours such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and the Philippines? Is it enough that the countries of the region share common interests (in trade and maintaining a stable order) or are there cultural barriers to co-operation? The case of Australian–Indonesian relations is a fascinating example of the conundrum over what happens when the fault-lines between civilizations come to the surface. Decades of diplomatic indifference were brought to an end in 1988, when the two Foreign Ministers began negotiating the Timor Gap Zone of Co-operation Treaty, outlining agreed boundaries for mineral exploitation in the Timor Sea. Undoubtedly the normalization of bilateral relations with Indonesia is beneficial for trade and security. However, Indonesia has one of the worst human rights records in world politics: democracy is not part of its political culture, political protests are put down with excessive violence, and the operations of the Indonesian Army are guided by the goal of imposing order through terror.

The brutality of the Indonesian army towards East Timor in particular has received widespread condemnation ever since the occupation of that part of the island in 1975. Slow but important steps towards democratization in the late 1990s presented the rest of the world with an opportunity to pressurize the Indonesian Government into holding a referendum on whether the East Timorese wanted independence or a continuation of the status quo. This strategy bore fruit, and when given the chance, on 30 August 1999, the people of East Timor voted overwhelmingly for independence (despite significant levels of intimidation). The ensuing campaign of terror indicated that Indonesia's pledge to ensure peace and security in the province was not being fulfilled; moreover, there was mounting evidence that the Indonesian Army was funding the militia groups. Australia responded to this crisis robustly, calling for an interim international peacekeeping force. Indonesia was initially reluctant to accept such a force, especially one led by an 'outsider' in the region. Days of lobbying by key state leaders and international financial institutions—Indonesia is in receipt of massive loans following the collapse of its currency in 1997/8—forced Indonesia to capitulate. On 20th September 1999, the first troops of 'Operation Stabilize' arrived in East Timor and began the process of restoring peace and security in the newly independent state.

What implications does this case hold for understanding the defence of human rights? The case is a fascinating one for the reason that Asia has always militantly defended its right to determine its own affairs; according to the 'ASEAN way' sovereignty is not thought to be something that should be compromised in the way that many smaller European states accept (even encourage). Yet here we had an Australian-led force, with a robust mandate, defending the right of the East Timorese to democracy and self-determination. Ten years earlier, most commentators would have regarded such a scenario as completely implausible. How then did it become possible? One set of reasons concerns the changing standard of what counts as acceptable behaviour in international society. The balance between soverignty and human rights has tipped significantly in favour of the latter in times of crisis. Moreover, even those governments less prone to crusading for human rights, find themselves being forced to defend them. This is exactly the position that Australia found itself in. Although it was the Labor governments of the Hawke–Keating–Evans era who lent considerable support to the pursuit of human rights norms in international relations, it was their right-wing successor who risked soldiers lives in pursuit of those ends. Arguably, the fact that the Prime Minister, John Howard, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Alexander Downer, *did not* aggressively pursue human rights in foreign policy might have made them seem more acceptable to the region. What is clear is that had Australia rationally calculated its interests in a realist manner, it would not have advocated the need for an interventionary force. This was bound to antagonize the Government in Jakarta who Australia needs good relations with for reasons of trade and security. How, then, was it able to placate both Indonesia and the wider region? Perhaps the best argument is that Australia was able to present itself as a 'bridging power' between the political cultures of Europe and North America and those of its Asian neighbours. Mindful of the concerns of many Asian states, Australia focused its attention on security the support of ASEAN countries such as Thailand and the Philippines as a means of convincing Indonesia of the operation's legitimacy (Dunne, Hill, and Hanson: 2000).

* In this case study the collective noun 'Australia' is used in the knowledge that there are multiple identities in Australian political culture. The referent, therefore, is the Australian government/state.

interconnectedness. Yet for more radical neo-idealists, the world seems more like a scene from the film *Blade Runner* with post-modern technologies coexisting with ethical anarchy and urban decay. Neo-idealists like Richard Falk recognize that globalization and community are frequently at odds with each other. 'This tension between the ethical imperatives of the global neighbourhood and the dynamics of economic globalisation', he argues, is 'an evasion that has been characteristic of all post-Wilsonian variants of liberal internationalism' (1995*a*: 573). In this sense, neo-liberal internationalism has fallen prey to the neo-liberal consensus which minimizes the role of the public sector in providing for welfare, and elevates the market as the appropriate mechanism for allocating resources, investment, and employment opportunities. Although the globalization of liberalism has improved the per capita income of the vast majority of the world's population, the rate of increase among the powerful states has been far greater. According to the United Nations Development Programme the share of global income of the richest fifth of the world's population is 72 times greater than the poorest fifth. The average daily income of these 'have-nots' is less than $1 a day.[7]

Neo-idealists offer a radically different set of prescriptions to liberal internationalists. At the level of international institutions, writers such as David Held, Norberto Bobbio, and Danielle Archibugi (Archibugi and Held 1995) among others, believe that global politics must be democratized. Held's diagnosis begins by revealing the inadequacies of the 'Westphalian order' (or the modern states-system which is conventionally dated from the middle of the seventeenth century). During the latter stages of this period, we have witnessed rapid democratization with a number of states, but this has not been accompanied by democratization of the society of states (Held 1993). This task is increasingly urgent given the current levels of interconnectedness, since 'national' governments are no longer in control of the forces which shape their citizens' lives (for example, the decision by one state to permit deforestation has environmental consequences for all states). After 1945, the UN Charter set limits to the sovereignty of states by recognizing the rights of individuals in a whole series of human rights conventions. But even if the UN had lived up to its Charter in the post–1945 period, it would still have left the building blocks of the Westphalian order largely intact, namely: the hierarchy between great powers and the rest (symbolized by the permanent membership of the Security Council); massive inequalities of wealth between states; and a minimal role for non-state actors to influence decision-making in international relations.

In place of the Westphalian and UN models, Held outlines a **'cosmopolitan model of democracy'**. This requires, in the first instance, the creation of regional parliaments and the extension of the authority of such regional bodies (like the European Union) which are already in existence. Second, human rights conventions must be entrenched in national parliaments and monitored by a new International Court of Human Rights. Third, reform of the UN, or the replacement of it, with a genuinely democratic and accountable global parliament. Without appearing to be too sanguine about the prospects for the realization of the **cosmopolitan model of democracy**, Held is nevertheless adamant that if democracy is to thrive, it must penetrate the institutions and regimes which manage global politics.

Neo-idealism emphasizes not just macro-institutional democratic reform, but also democratization at the 'grass-roots'. Radical liberals like Richard Falk argue that global civil society has emancipatory potential. The evolution of international humanitarian law, and the extent to which these laws are complied with, is largely down to the millions of individuals who are active supporters of human rights groups like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch (Falk 1995*b*: 164). Similarly, global protest movements have been largely responsible for the heightened global sensitivity to environmental degradation. This emphasis by neo-idealists on what Falk calls 'globalization from below' is an important antidote to mainstream liberalism's somewhat status quo oriented world view which sanctifies market forces, and seeks only piecemeal reform of international institutions such as the UN.

Neo-liberal institutionalism

In the 1980s, pluralism metamorphosed into **neo-liberal institutionalism**.[8] One of the problems with the former 'label' is that few of the thinkers actually identified themselves with the movement. By contrast, liberal institutionalism has attracted some of the most prolific and influential thinkers in the field, and has become the new orthodoxy in a number of key North American schools of International Relations. In addition to a high degree of self-identification on the part of contemporary liberal institutionalists, the second important revision to the earlier pluralism can be identified in the far more focused research agenda of liberal internationalism. The third and most substantive revision to **pluralism** concerns the shift back towards a state-centric approach to world politics (a shift signalled by Keohane and Nye in 1977).

The core principles of neo-liberal institutionalism can be distilled into the following four principles.

- **Actor:** Liberal institutionalists take for granted the state as a legitimate representation of society. Although emphasizing the importance of non-state actors in his early pluralist work, Robert Keohane's understanding of neo-liberal institutionalism admits that non-state actors are subordinate to states (Keohane 1989*a*: 8).
- **Structure:** Liberals broadly accept the structural condition of anarchy in the international system, but crucially, anarchy does not mean co-operation between states is impossible, as the existence (and proliferation) of **international regimes** demonstrates. In short, regimes and international institutions can mitigate anarchy by reducing verification costs, reinforcing reciprocity, and making defection from norms easier to punish (see Chapter 14).
- **Process:** Integration at the regional and global level is increasing. Here the future direction of the European Union is considered to be a vital test case for neo-liberal institutionalism.
- **Motivation:** States will enter into co-operative relations even if another state will gain more from the interaction, in other words, 'absolute gains' are more important for liberal institutionalists than 'relative gains' (emphasized by neo-realists).

It is vital to bear in mind the context out of which neo-liberal institutionalism developed. Leading neo-liberal institutionalists such as Axelrod, Keohane, and Oye, developed their ideas in response to Kenneth Waltz's theory of neo-realism outlined in his 1979 work *Theory of International Politics*. Moreover, this response was from within the mainstream as opposed to the radical critical theory challenge from the margins which also developed in the 1980s (Ashley 1984; Cox 1981). Given this context, it is not surprising that **neo-liberal institutionalism** often seems closer to contemporary realism than to the tradition of liberal thinking about international relations.

As the analysis of **neo-idealism** demonstrates, radical liberals do not take the state for granted. Legitimacy is not something that states possess by right, but something which has to be earned through humane government and democratic procedures. Moreover, early liberal institutionalists, such as Mitrany and Haas, were sceptical about whether states could deliver liberal goals of order and justice even if they had the will. Accordingly, they prescribed devolving power down to local government/regional assemblies or up to supra-state organizations or world government.

Apart from a considerable divergence between the complacent statism of neo-liberal institutionalism, and the scepticism towards the state shown by early liberal institutionalists, there is one other significant demarcation between **neo-liberal institutionalism** and the other two elements in liberal thinking. Both **liberal internationalism** and **idealism** were wider ranging, more critical, and above all, more *political* than contemporary neo-liberal institutionalism (Long, 1996). (For a much more in depth analysis of neo-liberal institutionalism, see Chapter 9). In his defence, Keohane is justly critical of the naïve assumption of classical liberal internationalists that commerce breeds peace. A free trade system, according to Keohane, provides incentives for co-operation but does not guarantee it. Here he is making an important distinction between co-operation and harmony. 'Co-operation is not automatic', Keohane argues, 'but requires planning and negotiation' (1989: 11). On this point, we see an interesting overlap between the inter-war idealists and neo-liberal institutionalism. However, the fact that both camps see co-operation as the handiwork of individuals and institutions (as opposed to being part of a natural order) should not blind us to the point that Keohane et al see the role of institutions as regulating interests rather than transforming identities, as neo-idealists believe.

Key points

- The research agenda of **neo-liberal internationalism** is dominated by the debate about liberal states: how far the liberal zone of peace extends, why relations within it are peaceful, and what pattern is likely to evolve in relations between liberal states and authoritarian regimes? Crucially, in the post-cold war era, neo-liberal internationalists have lent their voices in support of Western (particularly American) attempts to use the levers of foreign policy to put pressure on authoritarian states to liberalize.
- Neo-idealists have responded to globalization by calling for a double democratization of both international institutions and domestic state structures. Radical **neo-idealism** is critical of mainstream liberalism's devotion to 'globalization from above' which marginalizes the possibility of change from below through the practices of global civil society.
- The most conventional of all contemporary liberalisms is **neo-liberal institutionalism**. At the centre of their research programme is how to initiate and maintain co-operation under conditions of anarchy. This task is facilitated by the creation of regimes. Notice that neo-liberal institutionalists share with realists the assumption that states are the most significant actors, and that the international environment is anarchic. Their accounts diverge, however, on the prospects for achieving sustained patterns of co-operation under anarchy

Conclusion and postscript: the crisis of Liberalism

There is something of a crisis in contemporary liberal thinking on international relations. The euphoria with which liberals greeted the end of the cold war in 1989 has to a large extent been dissipated; the great caravan of humanity, kick-started with the revolutions of 1989, is once again coming to a spluttering halt. Successive post-cold war conflicts, in Afghanistan, Liberia, Chechnya, Somalia, Burundi, and Rwanda (to name a few) remind us that in many parts of the world, the conditions which fuelled these tensions in the cold war period remain in place; for example, the geopolitical rivalry to grant massive arms transfers to states involved in 'civil' wars.

The audit of global politics at the beginning of the twenty-first century, from a liberal point of view, begins to take on a much darker hue when the wars of the former Yugoslavia are included. Unlike the tragedies of Rwanda and Burundi, the conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo took place on the doorstep of the liberal zone. How could the national hatreds exhibited by all the warring parties take root once again in Western soil? Liberal internationalists like Michael Ignatieff despaired that acts of ethnic cleansing had returned to haunt Europe fifty years after the Holocaust. After all, it was the **Enlightenment** which provided a vocabulary for articulating liberal ideas such as human rights and humanitarian law. 'What made the Balkan wars so shocking' argued Ignatieff 'was how little these universals were respected in their home continent' (1995).

In the remaining paragraphs, by way of a response to Ignatieff, I suggest two explanations for the growing disenchantment with Liberalism. First, as we have seen throughout the chapter, Liberalism does not have a single voice; moreover, competing liberal arguments can often be used to defend different positions. The imperative to intervene in the wars of the former Yugoslavia, advocated by Ignatieff and other liberal internationalists, is backed up by the cosmopolitan liberal principle of the equal worth of all individuals: a sentiment captured by the words of

Box 8.7 Key concepts of Liberalism

Collective security

Refers to an arrangement where 'each state in the system accepts that the security of one is the concern of all, and agrees to join in a collective response to aggression' (Roberts and Kingsbury, 1993: 30).

Conditionality

The way in which states or international institutions impose conditions upon developing countries in advance of distributing economic benefits.

Cosmopolitan model of democracy

Associated with David Held, and other neo-idealists, a cosmopolitan model of democracy requires the following: the creation of regional parliaments and the extension of the authority of such regional bodies (like the European Union) which are already in existence; human rights conventions must be entrenched in national parliaments and monitored by a new International Court of Human Rights; the UN must be replaced with a genuinely democratic and accountable global parliament.

Democratic peace

A central plank of liberal internationalist thought, the democratic peace thesis holds that war has become unthinkable between liberal states.

Democracy promotion

The strategy adopted by leading Western states and institutions—particularly the US—to use instruments of foreign and economic policy to spread liberal values. Advocates make an explicit linkage between the mutually reinforcing effects of democratisation and open markets.

Enlightenment

Associated with rationalist thinkers of the eighteenth century. Key ideas (which some would argue remain mottoes for our age) include: secularism, progress, reason, science, knowledge, and freedom. The motto of the Enlightenment is: '*Sapere aude*! Have courage to use your *own* understanding' (Reiss 1991: 54).

Idealism

Idealists seek to apply liberal thinking in domestic politics to international relations, in other words, institutionalize the rule of law. This reasoning is known as the domestic analogy. According to idealists in the early twentieth century, there were two principal requirements for a new world order. First: state leaders, intellectuals, and public opinion had to believe that progress was possible. Second: an international organization had to be created to facilitate peaceful change, disarmament, arbitration, and (where necessary) enforcement. The League of Nations was founded in 1920 but its collective security system failed to prevent the descent into world war in the 1930s.

Integration

A process of ever closer union between states, in a regional or international context. The process often begins by co-operation to solve technical problems, referred to by Mitrany as ramification.

Interdependence

A condition where states (or peoples) are affected by decisions taken by others; for example, a decision to raise interest rates in Germany automatically exerts upward pressure on interest rates in other European states. Interdependence can be symmetric, i.e. both sets of actors are affected equally, or it can be asymmetric, where the impact varies between actors.

Liberalism

An ideology whose central concern is the liberty of the individual. For most liberals, the establishment of the state is necessary to preserve individual liberty from being destroyed or harmed by other individuals or by other states. But the state must always be the servant of the collective will and not (as in the case of Realism) the master.

Liberal institutionalism

In the 1940s, liberals turned to international institutions to carry out a number of functions the state could not perform. This was the catalyst for integration theory in Europe and pluralism in the United States. By the early 1970s, pluralism had mounted a significant challenge to realism. It focused on new actors (transnational corporations, non-governmental organizations) and new patterns of interaction (interdependence, integration).

Liberal internationalism

The strand in liberal thinking which holds that the natural order has been corrupted by undemocratic state leaders and outdated policies such as the balance of power. Prescriptively, liberal internationalists believe that contact between the peoples of the world, through commerce or travel, will facilitate a more pacific form of international relations. Key concept of liberal internationalism: the idea of a harmony of interests.

Box 8.7 continued

Normative

The belief that theories should be concerned with what ought to be, rather than merely diagnosing what is. Norm creation refers to the setting of standards in international relations which governments (and other actors) ought to meet.

Pluralism

An umbrella term, borrowed from American political science, used to signify International Relations theorists who rejected the realist view of the primacy of the state and the coherence of the state-as-actor.

World government

Associated in particular with those idealists who believe that peace can never be achieved in a world divided into separate sovereign states. Just as the state of nature in civil society was abolished by governments, the state of war in international society must be ended by the establishment of a world government.

the poet John Donne, 'any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind'. But other liberals, of a more communitarian persuasion, argue that our obligations to all of humankind are less significant than our duties to citizens of our own state. On this line of argument, the tragedy in Bosnia may diminish us all, but this is not a sufficient reason to risk the lives of our fellow citizens in defence of abstract moral universals. How can Liberalism be our guide when, from different perspectives, it can support intervention and non-intervention? Hoffmann is surely right to argue that the case of degenerating states reveals how sovereignty, democracy, national self-determination, and human rights 'are four norms in conflict and a source of complete liberal disarray' (1995: 169).

A deeper reason for the crisis in Liberalism, and one which is prompted by Ignatieff's argument, is that it is bound up with an increasingly discredited Enlightenment view of the world (Laidi, 1998). Contrary to the hopes of liberal internationalists, the application of reason and science to politics has not brought communities together. Indeed, it has arguably shown the fragmented nature of the political community, which is regularly expressed in terms of ethnic, linguistic, or religious differences. Critics of Liberalism from the left and right view the very idea of 'moral universals' as dangerous. Communitarian-minded liberals worry that the universalizing mission of liberal values such as democracy, capitalism, and secularism, undermine the traditions and practices of non-Western cultures (Gray 1995: 146). Radical critics are also suspicious of the motives for promoting liberal values. The Marxist writer Immanuel Wallerstein has a nice way of putting this in terms of universalism as 'a "gift" of the powerful to the weak' which places them in a double-bind: 'to refuse the gift is to lose; to accept the gift is to lose' (in Brown, 1999). The key question for Liberalism at the dawn of a new century is whether it can reinvent itself as a non-universalizing, non-Westernizing political idea, which preserves the traditional liberal value of human solidarity without undermining cultural diversity.

QUESTIONS

1. Do you agree with Stanley Hoffmann that international affairs are 'inhospitable' to Liberalism? What arguments might one draw upon to support or refute this proposition?
2. Was the language of international morality, used by idealists, a way of masking over the interests of Britain and France in maintaining their dominance of the post-World War I international system?

3 Are democracies more peaceful than authoritarian states? If so, why?

4 Should liberal states promote their values abroad? If so, by what means?

5 How much progress (if any) has there been in liberal internationalist thinking since Kant?

6 Which element of Liberalism best explains the development of the European Union, (neo)liberal institutionalism or (neo)idealism?

7 Are all forms of Liberalism premissed on an optimistic view of human nature?

8 Evaluate the success of Australia's foreign policy towards Indonesia and the Asia-Pacific Region? Has it been a good liberal citizen in the region?

9 What do neo-liberal institutionalists have in common with idealists? At what point do their accounts of international relations diverge?

10 Given the different strands in liberal thinking, can we meaningfully talk about a coherent liberal tradition?

GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

Excellent general discussions of Liberalism include the following: S. Hoffmann, *Janus and Minerva* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1987), 394–436; M. J. Smith, (1992), 'Liberalism and International Reform', in T. Nardin and D. Mapel (eds.), *Traditions of International Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Useful short extracts from classical liberal thinkers are contained in E. Luard (ed.), *Basic Texts in International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1992). Two recent edited collections have much to say about Liberalism and how liberal states should conduct international relations: M. Cox, G. J. Ikenberry, and T. Inoguchi (eds.), *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies and Impacts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1–17, and T. V. Paul and J. A. Hall, *International Order and the Future of World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). For thought-provoking critiques of Liberalism as a theory of politics and society, see John Gray, *Enlightenment's Wake: Politics and Culture at the Close of the Modern Age* (London: Routledge, 1995) and Z. Laidi, *A World Without Meaning: The Crisis of Meaning in International Politics*, trans. J. Burham and J. Coulon (London: Routledge, 1998). Critical essays on Liberalism in international relations can be found in the 'Millennium Special Issue', *The Globalization of Liberalism?* 24: 3 (1995); and Michael Cox, Ken Booth, and Tim Dunne (eds.), *The Interregnum: Controversies in World Politics 1989–1999* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

NOTES

1. Upper case 'Liberalism' signifies the broad Liberal tradition in international thought, whereas lower case 'liberalism' signifies a particular kind of liberal thinking, or an individual liberal thinker. International Relations refers to the academic discipline, and international relations refers to the practices of international actors.
2. For an alternative system of classifying liberalisms, see Doyle (1995).
3. Between 1945 and 1990, there were 232 resolutions vetoed, between 1990 and 1994, there were only 4 vetoes.

4. Arguably, pluralism is an inadequate term in view of its usage in political philosophy to denote a form of liberalism which privileges difference over universalism.
5. For an excellent discussion of the 'crisis of liberal internationalism', see Hoffmann (1995
6. The link between the inter-war idealists, and the work of writers who I have termed 'neo-idealist' is brought out well by Luigi Bonanate (1995).
7. 'Ten Years of Human Development', *Human Development Report* 1999, the United Nations Development Programme, www.undp.org.
8. Often referred to in the literature as either neo-liberal institutionalism (Keohane 1989) or simply neo-liberalism.