

Liberalism is the most
convincing of theories
politics essay



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Other theories of international relation have been created to guide a states relationship with the international society. These include the classical realism, liberalism, the English school and others. Of all the theories of international relations learned in this module, liberalism interests me most. Liberalism as a theory in international relation holds some interesting supports and views which are not only important but very crucial and practical in the modern global economy. It is a political philosophy that emphasizes the power of institutions and individual liberalism seeks a society where there exists a free market economy that simplify private enterprise, exchange of idea is independent, rule of law and a transparent system of government. International relations, liberalism is of specific importance as regards world peace and security, environmental protection, trade and fostering good relation between different states.

Liberalism and international relation

It is no doubts that the issues of peace, security, welfare, environment and trade are the weightiest matters in international relation. No any other theory addresses these issues as does the liberalism. The basic argument is that, both the state and non state actors are important as far as international relations are concerned (Burchill et al, 2005). The state does not perform alone player in the international scene by enhancing their state capability. Rather, the state has to bias to individual benefit and other non state actors to guide and determine its behavior when dealing with other states or nations on that area. Therefore an individual should not work for the state but the state should be work to complete the wishes and concern of people. The reasoning is that individuals make up the state and the world is one big

community of individual. This perception is specially very related with modern globalization and technological advancement which have seen the organization of a global community.

Dunne, Kurki and Smith (2007) could be observe that, the heart of assumption in all classical liberal theories is that domestic actors and structures strongly agree on foreign policy direction and the behavior of the state in international relations. Even though all under the powerful umbrella of liberalism, there exist different approaches with small differences in terms of how they view and interpret international relations. Mostly, liberalists could be seen on two dimensions. The first dimension comprises of those liberalists theories proceedings and interaction. It puts attention on the domestic actors and tries to understand, give explanation how their identities and interest to do decide foreign policy options and international relations (Burchill, 2005). The second dimension, on the other hand comprise of theories which bias themselves to structures and agents as the basis to international relations. Liberalists liable to this dimension take their care on institutional features within the state to explain international behavior (Dunni, Kurki & Smith, 2007). According to two dimensions are further differed based on whether their theoretical assumptions support rationalism or constructivism.

Despite the differences, liberalists hold important basic ideals which are particularly good and helpful in international relations. The basic principles of liberalism lay on the individual. The individual here also point to the collectivities of individuals such as institutions, firms and other organizations.

The individual and not the states interests should come first. The work of the <https://assignbuster.com/liberalism-is-the-most-convincing-of-theories-politics-essay/>

state is to support the rule of law and see to it that it is enforced. Since individuals are the ones who make up the state, the state cannot be active unilaterally except it is serving the benefit of those that it represents (Linklater, 2000; Richardson, 2001). The state derives power from the citizens and has controlled power to do unilaterally. The state should be governed in manner that respects the rights of its citizens to property, life and above all, individual freedom. Given that individuals expand to beyond the state such as international organizations and firms, are not only inconsistency but also cooperation can shape international affairs.

Liberalism believes in the power of human reason and individuals rational principles could be put into perform in international relations. For example, according to Kant extrapolating in 1795 the foundations of liberal thinking;

“ If the consent of the citizens is required to decide that war should be declared... nothing is more natural than they would be very cautious in commencing such a poor game, decreeing for themselves all are the calamities of war. Among the latter would be: having to fight, having to pay the costs of war from their own resources, having painfully to repair the devastation war were leaves behind, and, to fill up the measure of evils, load themselves with a heavy national debt that would embitter peace itself that can never be liquidated on account of constant wars in the future”. (Kant 1795)(as cited by Dunning, Kurki & Smith, 2007).

In a liberalist conduct state, individuals and not the state unilateral carefulness will have to determine on major decisions that affect international relations. The issue such as the war on terrorism which

absolutely involves two or more state actors would have to be agreed by the citizens. In so doing, they would have weighed the benefits and costs of supporting such a move and agree to responsibilities and whichever outcomes results.

The other point is those liberalists are very cheerful that, when individual are left free to make up their reason can attain mutually beneficial cooperation. Even though individuals, like they are left to reason freely tend to additional their own self interests. Such diverse self interests exist on just a few issues. In many of the issues individuals will have analogous views and interests. It is common interests on the majority of issues that foster mutual social interests and help set up good international relations. Thus of modernization and globalization are seen as the outcome of these reasoning. Since modernization represent progress be it economic or social which in turn develop the human life, so does international relations improve with liberalism.

According to Evans & Newnham (1998), the relevance and importance of liberalism in international relations could be seen in four areas. That are, the first area respects world peace. World peace cannot be achieved except there is the spread of democratic institutions in globally. By democratic institutions it means, there exist democratic systems in the state that allows people to freely scorn the elected government but no as to disagree with it, it's right to be the government (Shapiro, 2003). Therefore exists free spaces through which individuals and other non-state actors can act with decorum, independence and vision.

The second importance is belief of liberalism is that mean exist a natural harmony of interests. In this regard, people and states will have the independence to make their own rational judgments and as a result is building national interest, international interests one and the similar. In basically, this core belief rests on the first one, it about democratic institutions. Where there is the being of democratic institutions, the state will not have the power to proceed unitary without respecting the will of its citizens. The state exists for the people and therefore it would not have any other alternative but to make decisions that majority of the people agree with. Individual actors will however have diverse interest spanning beyond their national boundaries. It is these spanning interests that in the long run create a natural harmony of interests. People will not have to be enforced to agree or harmonize their interests with other states but rather their needs will drive them to it.

The third belief is concern the conflict resolution and respect for the rule of law. This belief similarly succeeds the second one of the democratic institutions. Under liberalism, self determination is never a suitable concept. Where conflicts therefore arise, there should be recognized judicial procedures or any other corresponding procedures that should be followed in resolving the differences. Such procedures could be negotiations or international institutions and area such as European Union, the United Nations or the International Criminal Court. Disputes resolved through these means will not only bring justice to the parties involved but will also be seen to reverence the rule of law (Griffith, 1999).

The fourth and the last belief is that, collective security replaces the notion of self-help. When the people have vested interests spanning beyond national boundaries, they will grasp upon themselves that war, insecurity and terrorism will not only make affect that one state where insecurity exists, but also the interests that they hold in that state. They are likely union unity to against such ills. In addition, liberalism is about maintenance morality and decisions from supporting of ethical. States should therefore interfere on issues such as those affect on environment because it does not only affect a single state.

There are generally four liberalistic concepts that are used to explain how cooperation in international relations can be achieved with liberalism and to make the world much better. These are the social liberalism, interdependence liberalism, republican liberalism and the institutional liberalism. That can be following the detail in below of this.

Sociological liberalism

According to this section of liberalism, international relations do not only apply to governments but as well as between private individuals groups and a whole of societies. Sociological liberalism views focusing international relations on the state to state actors like very limiting. in its place, international relation situations can be improved and can be made much more better if non state actors also were included to play a role. In generally of the liberalist, individuals are more peace loving than governments and the more they link up and network with each other beyond the states boundaries better for international relations.

When the individual actors link up and cooperate beyond their national boundaries they form up transnational relations. According to Jackson & Sorenson (2007), the transnationalism is the immediate outcome achieved when international relations advanced by “ the states is supplemented by relations among individuals, groups and societies”. This relationship is stronger and long-lasting than any other kind of relationship because it has important consequences. This is because, if the states get to disagree, there are too many actors who depend and have helped set up that kind of relationship. This kind of relationship is often compared to the cobweb by illustrate the many non-state actors with all different types of external ties and interest with another. Transnational relations help establish a new form of human society which works beside or even in completion with the states. Non state actors have especially been empowered by technology and can be increased social communication (Sullivan, 2002). Due to pressure from these actors the state has no selection but to conform. A good example here would be the political situations of Kenya and Madagascar in Africa. Upon the disputed Kenyan presidential elections that were followed by ethnic aggression in 2008, it was non state actors that pressurized the contenders try to stop or broker the power sharing deal (Lafargue, 2009). In addition the modern world, as individual firms and businesses investment in other countries, they necessitate cooperation particularly if the investments are of public nature such as roads, communication infrastructures, and other public investments. The individual firms are becoming more important than the state itself due to globalization and innovations technological.

Interdependence Liberalism

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As transnational relations increase, so does the level of interdependence to nearly the level of dependence. This both dependences therefore means that, individuals and the state are affected by what happens in other countries. Such as issues of war, terrorism, the pollution of the environment and some even economic policies will affect more than one country or neighbor countries (Daddow, 2009). In a good example here it is the political instability in Somalia and the current global financial crisis. The instability in Somalia has seen an increased security pressure of terrorist and terrorist groups which take advantage of the situation to advance their ill. In addition, there have been increased piracy in the chasm and the east African coast have seen many ships sailing the route be hijacked only to be released after payment for ransoms. The lack a purposeful of government has therefore degenerated from being a Somali problem to a world problem. Many of the ships being hijacked are not even headed to Somalia. For example in other in global crisis, it started in the United States. It has since affected all economies and although people at varying degrees. Such issues show how the level of interdependence has grown. Another philosophical issue there concerns the environment. Green house gases emission in China or the United States do not only affect climate or lead to global warming in the two countries only, but also in whole of the world. Even though some countries such as in Africa may have a little contribution on this, they may on the contrary be the main victims of climate change through hunger, poverty and malnutrition. Resolving such that issues need to requires the cooperation by both state and non state actors in all countries.

Republican liberalism

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Republican liberalism examines liberal democracies as the most important of peaceful type of political system. Since there are only two types of democracies in the world, democratic and non democratic, three types of relationships in international relations are possible. These are: between a democratic and another democratic state between non-democratic and another non-democratic state, and between a democratic and another non-democratic state. The best form of international relationship happens to be one between two democracies. This is because more often than not domestic politics will determine the shape and nature of international relationship that state engages in democratic nations are founded on the principles of a domestic culture that promotes peaceful disagreement resolution, general moral values and commonly beneficial ties of economic cooperation and freedom making them difficult to engage in war with each other. Democratic relationship therefore fosters a form of democratic peace because democracies are managed by citizens who are not at any one time shore up the idea of attractive in a war between two democracies. Republican liberalists single out war as the most serious evil in international relations (Steans, 2009). If a country is governed through democratic values, then it will be able to extend in the same when dealing with other nations. Democratic countries are also possible to agree on such issues as environment, world trade and other international issues. A liberal world is more than any other theory promotes respect for democracy in institutions and that promises the most peaceful international relations.

Institutional Liberalism

Liberalists strongly support for the establishment of international institutions because they make collaboration easier and likely (Weber, 2004). An example includes the European Union which although founded on simple values has highly developed to become a monetary union using the same currency amid member states (Kelstrup, 2000). Other institutions such ASEAN have been in the front line to simplify the six party talks to end the present stand off between the United States and the Republic of North Korea nuclear disarmament efforts. Institutions help encourage international cooperation and reduce the lack of trust and fear. This is facilitated by suitable and clear information about each other behavior and expectations. Liberalism helps to solve the most modern day issues in the international system.

Liberalism, war, peace and security

Wars were destroying effects to the nation, its people and the international community. Since the World War I and war II, it has been within the interest of nations to practice a world that is free from war peaceful and secure. The liberal consideration advocates that all states work together or at least reaches to a consensus to these fundamental issues (Barkawi & Laffey, 2001). By advocating that states move towards establishing democratic values in their governance, democratic peace is achievable. Moreover, institutionalization, existence of economic ties and freedom between states helps decrease chances of war by promoting conversation, engagement and peaceful conflict resolution (Koldziej, 2005).

Liberalism and the environment

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The effects of environmental pollution know on boundaries. Such as the issues a droughts, global warming, increasing of sea level as well as the hurricanes are very costly effects brought by environmental degradation. Liberalists there believe that, it is the moral duty of states to cooperate and stop or mitigate these damaging effects. There are two basic principles of liberalism that requires us to protect and guard the environment. These are the right to have each individual basic needs met and the fact of sensible pluralism. Under the first principle, the environment does not only help in providing our basic needs but also verify us of survival. Liberalism is concerned about the current and the future generation ability to meet the basic requirements and therefore calls for promise to environmental sustainability (Dobson & Saiz, 2006) On the other hand, no rational individual will resist that survival depends on the physical environment and that it is good. In addition, no rational individual would argument the costly effects of years of environment ignore being experienced in the world today. It is therefore within the liberalist reasonable pluralism that calls for a shared responsibility and action towards environmental protection.

Liberalism and international trade

Liberalism advocates for the establishment of international institution and a move towards free trade. It calls for the abolishment of limitations and barriers to world trade. Protectionism, inequitable of trade and economic practices are critical issues at the heart of international relations. This is more with respect to the foreign relations between two world economic powers China and the United States. Through calling on increased combination, free trade, and peaceful conflict resolution, liberalism can help <https://assignbuster.com/liberalism-is-the-most-convincing-of-theories-politics-essay/>

resolve most contradictory issues in international relations in the world today. Market liberalism offers the promise of a free, wealthy and pluralistic society for all people (Boaz, 2008).

Liberalism and welfare

Major issues of welfare comprise of health, hunger, poverty and human rights. Liberalism advocates that the state respects individual liberty. Democratic peace cannot be achieved if these welfare issues are not addressed. Moreover, no single state works in isolation due to the complex interdependence between nations. Liberal democracies consequently should intervene and cooperate in welfare issues (Sutch, 2001).

Conclusion

In conclusion, liberalism as theory guiding international relations is best placed to handle most modern issues affecting a states relationship with the international community. As have been already outlined, liberalism is the best placed theory in international relations that promises a secure and peaceful world, sustainable environment, trade without restrictions and other barriers, and respects human rights. For it however to work smoothly and yield better results, all countries must accept and be ready to adopt it. This is as evidenced by the fact that best relations and democratic peace only thrives between two democracies. So long as there continues to be non-democratic countries, applicability of liberalism faces many challenges especially with the consequences of globalization. There therefore might be need to alter some principles of liberalism in order to accommodate and guide relations with non-democracies.