

The numerous ir theories for neoliberalism politics essay



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Certainly, there is no doubt that numerous IR theories have periodically been enhanced, modified, and developed over the time according to the nature and consequences of the international actors in international systems. In the similar sense, the global issues and diverse, complex challenges of international actors resulting in many various consequences need IR theories to be explained, ascertained, and interpreted. Therefore, IR theories are so important to be used in the study of international relations to understand and explain the broad range of international events and issues ranging from the local to the global level outright. Likewise, the 21st century complex international events can be best explained by using neoliberalism as the basic theory rebuilt from the classical liberalism.

Neoliberalism which is the renewed liberal approach was established from around 1950s to 1970s, and it embraces four important strands: sociological liberalism, interdependence liberalism, institutional liberalism, and republican liberalism. With the renewed scientific approach and its framework of ideas/concepts about the optimism of the possibility of progress as well as changes that could be seen in today's phenomena at local and global level in reality, neoliberalism can best explain today's international events.

The first strand of neoliberalism is sociological liberalism that focuses on the transnationalism or the transnational relations of international actors, both state and non-state actors (Robert & Georg, 2007). According to the neoliberal scholar James Rosenau, transnationalism refers to “ the process whereby international relations conducted by state governments have been supplemented by relations among private individuals, groups, and societies

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that can and do have important consequences for the course of events” (Robert & Georg, 2007). Moreover, in this similar sense, sociological liberalism validates that IR is not just about the mere state-and-state relations but also about the transnational relations between individuals, groups, and organizations belonging to different states/countries. For sure, after the Second World War and particularly the collapse of Soviet Union, the rapid increase in not only the state actors owing to the decolonization and secessionism but also in non-state actors in international relations due to the emergence of complex, diverse global challenges. Therefore, in this 21st century, states are no longer in the position of the only single actors in international system. Along with state actors, non-state actors like individuals, groups, and organizations are also important in international relations today. For concrete example, Cambodian government alone cannot successfully prevent or even reduce HIV/AIDS at all. Thus, in cooperation with numerous transnational non-state actors like Oxfam, PSI, Save Children, the AIDS ACCESS Foundation of Thailand and the like, the Cambodian government can effectively and successfully cut down the number of HIV positives and neutralize as well as prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS to some particular extent. Similarly, in Cambodia today, International Labor Organization (ILO) actively functions on various areas ranging from the drafting of laws and the application of internationally-agreed standards to institution building, health and safety, labor migration, social protection, discrimination, crisis response, child labor and forced labor (ILO, 2010) since the government alone is inadequate or even impossible to successfully solve the issues related to labor violation and abuses. At global level, during the 2010 UN General Assembly in New York, NGO groups as lobbyists persuaded <https://assignbuster.com/the-numerous-ir-theories-for-neoliberalism-politics-essay/>

states to really put their preliminary agendas in practice for the sake of realization of the real sustained economic growth and sustainable development and to pay more attention to human rights and other related issues.

Moreover, another neoliberal scholar, Karl Deutsch, emphasizes that the high degree of transnational tie between societies leads to peaceful relations and social integration (Robert & Georg, 2007). “ Social Integration”, according to Deutsch, means “ sense of community” (Robert & Georg, 2007). Therefore, this theory means that with the sense of community, international state and non-state actors together resolve the common issues and global challenges. Recently, in his newly published article, Margaret has found that some conflicts in the world today often involve transnational armed groups who act autonomously from recognized governments, and these groups include transnational terrorist groups, rebel groups, cross-border irregular armed groups, insurgents, dissident armed forces, guerillas, international liberation movements, and multinational freedom fighters (Margaret, n. d.) which have posted great threats to international peace and security. For example, Al Qaeda terrorist groups today have many transnational networks in various countries and spread their terrorist marginal or large scale attacks in some particular countries like U. S., Russia, Britain, Afghanistan, Yemen, and Iraq. Therefore, with sense of community, not only state actors like Cambodia, U. S., France, Russia, Germany, Britain, as well as many other countries but also some specific non-state actors together have the same purpose to combat against the terrorism and maintain the international peace and security. Also, regarding to current global climate change, not only states

themselves but also numerous non-state actors like World Wild Fund for Nature (WWF), Greenpeace, International NGOs Sunday, and other transnational NGOs take the common actions to prevent the global climate change, protect environment, and pursue the sustainable environmental development in the world today.

In addition, James Rosenau stressed that the transnational relations of individuals, groups, organizations result in two important consequences (Robert & Georg, 2007). First, there is the extension of cross-border activities owing to better education, electronic communication, and travel (Robert & Georg, 2007). Surely, the widespread transnational extension of relations between individuals can be seen almost everywhere in this era. For example, Cambodian people openly and freely communicate with Americans, Japanese, Chinese, Israelis, or even Africans anytime and anywhere through modern telecommunication such as the Internet, telephone, electronic fax, and e-messages with fast speed and time saving. Additionally, individuals, groups, and organizations today can easily extend their relations through travelling from one place to another worldwide. Second, such transnational partnerships/relations constitute a hybrid type of governance in which non-state actors co-govern along with state actors and thereby adopt governance functions that have formerly been the sole authority of sovereign states (Robert & Georg, 2007). This means the capacities of states for control and regulations within their territories decrease in an even more complex world. Simply put, the national sovereignty of states declines when there is the increase in transnationalism. For the concrete instance, Angkor Centre for Conservation of Biodiversity (ACCB) criticizes Cambodian government when

there is the increasingly deforestation without the strict actions taken by the government. Thus, Cambodia's autonomous rights which are unquestioned and always rightful based on Westphalian sovereignty are now eroded. Moreover, commonly seen, transnational NGOs undermine states's sovereignty by creating a " world civic politics", and those NGOs lead to the " a new cosmopolitan order" that will reduce the autonomous rule-making authority of states (Englehart, 2004). For example, World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF), focusing on local communities, tries to foster environmentally friendly practices in its global activities with little regard for the particular institutions of individual states. Hence, in this sense, the increase in transnationalism is eroding states' autonomous rule-making authority of states to some extent.

The second strand of neoliberalism is interdependence liberalism. This strand states that the higher level of transnational relations between countries means the higher level of interdependence (Robert & Georg, 2007). According to David Mitrany, the greater interdependence in form of transnational tie between countries could lead to peace since the complex interdependence brings more friendly, reciprocal, and cooperative relationship between state governments (Robert & Georg, 2007). As clearly seen in Asia Pacific today, the economic interdependence among states (except North Korea) in this region is almost unprecedented after the Second World War and particularly the demise of Soviet Union along with the increase in transnationalism and the advancement of economic liberalism and globalization. As the degree of economic interdependence is remarkably high, this region remains quite peaceful despite some marginal disputes.

Therefore, based on the reality, the high level of economic interdependence among states in Asia Pacific leads to the higher level of peace maintenance in this region. For concrete example, after the China's economic reform in 1978 toward the world market economy with private sectors, the economic relations between China and Japan today have become more economically independent despite only some marginal/small tension on the issue of territorial claim between them. Japan needs China's big market potentials and conducts business in China on a larger scale. Plus, Japan sees that the growing surplus of cheap capital, in combination with a policy that explicitly encouraged foreign FDIs, particularly in the four newly created Special Economic Zones in Guangdong and Fujian provinces and in the coastal cities (Claes, Patrik, & Naoyuki, 2009). In return, China also benefits from more Japanese FDIs and foreign trade potentials. The figure of the bilateral trade and mutual investment based on Sino-Japanese economic interdependence reached from \$1 billion to \$266.79 billion in 2008 (Jifeng, 2010) and is estimated that there will be more positive outcomes after the global financial crisis in 2009. Consequently, as the economic interdependence rises, peace between Japan and China remains more optimistic since there has been no any large-scale devastating wars between these countries so far.

Besides, the third strand of neoliberalism, institutional liberalism, is an important strand of theory to best explain today's events. According to institutional liberalism, international institutions/organizations help cooperate among states such as UN, EU, ASEAN, WTO, WB, IMF, and the like and also make a set of rules, norms as well as international treaties like today Kyoto Protocol, TAC, TRIPS of WTO, UN and ASEAN Charter, and many

more binding international conventions/treaties for the sake of mutual advantages and durable peace (Robert & Georg, 2007). Sure enough, after the failure of League of Nations, the emergence of today's UN since 1945 is an international intergovernmental organization under UN Charter to help promote and maintain international peace and security as well as development through its peacekeeping operations, specialized agencies and development programs, and sanctions, particular the economic sanctions as penalty on the belligerent states. For example, the test of nuclear weapons by North Korea in 2006 and again in 2009, the sinking of South Korean Cheonan ship by North Korean torpedo, and currently the launch of North Korean artillery shells on South Korean islands that would threaten the world peace and security are strongly criticized by UN as well as other countries. In response, UN and other states, especially U. S., have imposed the heavy economic sanctions on North Korea in order to pressure North Korea to turn back to peaceful negotiations and to prevent more aggressive future actions. Without UN, perhaps North Korea would be more and more aggressive in violation of international norms and the world peace and security. Another good example is ASEAN. Under umbrella of ASEAN Charter, the existing international treaties, and declarations, ASEAN member states cooperatively build and foster mutual understanding, provide mutual reciprocal assistances, and build durable peace, stability, as well as prosperity. Consequently, there is no any noticeable large-scale devastating war or conflict in this Southeast Asian region.

Moreover, the last major strand of neoliberalism, republican liberalism, can best explain today's events. This strand of neoliberal theory claims that the

liberal democracies are more peaceful and law-abiding than the other political systems (Robert & Georg, 2007; WP, n. d.). Simply put, the argument is that democratic states do not fight with each other. In his essay “Perpetual Peace” written in 1795, Immanuel Kant agreed with the above argument and validated that the constitutional republics was only one of several necessary conditions for a perpetual peace because the majority of people in the republican or democratic political system would never vote to go to wars unless in self-defense (WP, n. d.; Ludwig, 2002; Robert & Georg, 2007) and will not advocate and support wars between other democracies. To support the argument, Melvin Small and J. David Singer responded in 1976 that they found an absence of wars between democratic states and only the marginal/small disputes that would be possible to occur. For example, regarding to the Khmer-Thai border dispute, the possibility of large-scale wars between both democratic countries, Cambodia and Thailand, is so small since the majority of people of these two countries do not want to have wars with one another, and state governments themselves are not willingly to wage any large-scale wars that would harm the nature of democracy and their national interests. Moreover, at regional level, according to the Copenhagen criteria of 1993, the potential member countries of EU must be democracies (Andrew & Joshua, 2007) because it is generally believed that democracies rarely go to war with one another and that human rights, market-oriented policies, and rules of law are strictly respected. For sure, currently so far we have not seen any large-scale devastating armed conflicts or wars among those 27 democratic EU countries. Additionally, according to Immanuel Kant, it is possible to encourage what he called “spirit of commerce” for mutual and reciprocal

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economic gain between democracies in economic cooperation and exchange, and the republican liberalism also argues that peace in democracies is strengthened through economic cooperation and interdependence (Robert & Georg, 2007). Surely, in the same EU case, based on the 1991 Maastricht Treaty, all EU members have to eliminate their tariff and non-tariff barriers in order to make the trade flow smoothly in a single EU market (Andrew & Joshua, 2007) for the mutual economic reciprocity leading to peace. Strongly note that the recent EU financial crisis teaches EU a great lesson to reformulate or modify its fundamental economic policies among its democratic member states toward more effective and more productive EU economies through cooperation in democratic nature which results in peace in EU region.

Moreover, Immanuel Kant agree that democracies hold the common moral values which lead to the formation of “ peaceful union” in which there is the promotion of the mutual understanding and peaceful ways of resolving conflicts are seen morally superior to violent behaviors in democracies (Robert & Georg, 2007). Supportively, according to Michael Doyle, the republican or democratic countries have democratic political cultures in nature based on peaceful conflict resolutions (Robert & Georg, 2007). To support apply this theory in today’s events, we should take a study case of Korean peninsula crisis. Since the end of the Korean War in 1953, there has been no any peace agreement reached by two Koreas. Noticeably, the tensions have been waged since North Korea under the authoritarian/dictatorial regime has developed its nuclear program and tested its nuclear weapons in 2006 and again in 2009. The process of

peaceful conflict resolutions have been taken by many states involved and two Koreas themselves through many negotiations and diplomatic Six-party talks in order to put an end to the North Korea's nuclear program and reach the peace agreement between both Koreas. However, the talks and other diplomatic negotiations have so far produced no any successful result. In May 2010, North Korean torpedo attacked a South Korean Navy ship named Cheonan carrying 104 personnel of whom 46 seamen were killed. And again in November 2010, North Korea fired dozens of its artillery shells onto a South Korean island and killed two South Korean soldiers and two civilians. Since the North Korea is under nondemocratic or authoritarian/dictatorial regime, there are low possibilities that peaceful conflict resolutions could be reached to realize the peace agreement and normalization of diplomatic relations, and there is the high belief that armed conflict or violence could be waged any time in the Korean peninsula as we have seen so far the tensions and armed race between these two Koreas. Again, back to the example of the current Khmer-Thai border issue, even though some marginal confrontations happened, two democratic state governments still have pursued peaceful resolutions through bilateral diplomatic negotiation. At local and national level, diplomatic relations, economic cooperation, foreign trade, tourism, socio-cultural events, and the like are normally processing. And it is optimistically believed that there would be a peaceful resolution reached by these democratic countries, Cambodia and Thailand, regarding to border issue.

In conclusion, in sociological liberalism, on one hand, the transnationalism or transnational relations of not only state actors but also non-state actors

could pave the way for resolutions of the common issues and global challenges. States' national sovereignty, on another hand, is being eroded since there is the high degree and the expansion of transnationalism. Moreover, in interdependence liberalism, it is strongly validated that the higher level of transnational relations means the greater level of interdependence. Consequently, this strong tie/interdependence, particularly economic interdependence, leads to peace and reciprocity among states involved. Also, the institutional liberalism claims that the international institutions could maintain national benefits as well as strengthen the relationship and peace among states through cooperation, norms, rules of law, and international treaties. Last but not least, the republican liberalism strongly believes that the high possibility of peace could be reached and maintained mostly in the republic or democratic countries. Clearly seen, the neoliberalism consisting of four main strands mentioned above is a basic theory to best explain today's events ranging from local individuals, groups, and organizations to international state actors and from national issues to global challenges in the current complex, diverse international relations.