



International Journal of Political Science and Public Administration

Publisher's Home Page: <https://www.svedbergopen.com/>



Research Paper

Open Access

Criticism of the Liberal Theory of International Politics

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Article Info

Volume 4, Issue 1, June 2024

Received : 11 February 2024

Accepted : 22 May 2024

Published : 05 June 2024

doi: [10.51483/IJPSPA.4.1.2024.1-13](https://doi.org/10.51483/IJPSPA.4.1.2024.1-13)

Abstract

This article delves into the enduring relevance of Liberal International Relations (IR) Theory amidst persistent criticisms regarding power dynamics and its applicability in emerging states. Despite its detractors, Liberal IR Theory offers a nuanced understanding of state behavior, blending social contexts with power dynamics. It recognizes the intricacies of economic interdependence and advocates for a balanced approach in advancing democracy and human rights. While nationalism poses challenges to international institutions, their adaptability endures. Leaders, albeit constrained, retain the capacity to foster peace through visionary leadership and global cooperation. By acknowledging its limitations and fostering open dialogue, Liberal IR Theory continues to evolve, poised to contribute to a just and peaceful global order.

Keywords: *Liberal IR theory, Power dynamics, Economic interdependence, Human rights, Nationalism, Security dilemmas*

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1. Introduction

The Liberal Theory of International Politics has been a dominant framework for understanding global relations, particularly after the Cold War. However, recent critiques have highlighted several weaknesses inherent in the theory, questioning its effectiveness and relevance in the current geopolitical landscape. Despite these critiques, the liberal perspective continues to offer valuable insights into the complexities of international relations, particularly regarding the interplay between domestic and international factors. Moreover, the adaptability of liberal principles allows for ongoing refinement and adjustment, ensuring their continued relevance in addressing contemporary global challenges. Additionally, proponents argue that while criticisms may point out limitations, the core principles of liberalism provide a foundation for promoting cooperation, democracy, and human rights in an increasingly interconnected world.

Advocates of positive liberal theory, such as Moravcsik, highlight the importance of domestic and transnational influences on state behavior, challenging classical liberal assumptions (Slaughter, 2000).

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However, critics argue that the positivist approach of 'New Liberalism' neglects normative aspects crucial for a mature international legal theory, while the rationalist view of agency within Liberal Theory oversimplifies political action, disregarding ethical dimensions (Reus-Smit, 2001).

Despite these criticisms, positive liberalism provides valuable insights into the intricate interplay between domestic structures, international institutions, and state behavior, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of international cooperation and conflict (Slaughter, 2000). Main critiques and responses aside, while realist and liberal theories are often criticized for being too rigid, proponents of liberal theory assert their adaptability to societal dynamics and changing circumstances, facilitating a nuanced comprehension of international relations and offering a framework for addressing evolving global challenges (Berejikian and Dryzek, 2000).

Nonetheless, the Liberal Theory of International Politics faces significant scrutiny for its limitations in capturing the complexities of international relations, particularly its positivist approach and emphasis on state sovereignty (Mearsheimer, 2019). These aspects struggle to account for the influence of domestic and transnational contexts and the rise of nationalism and economic disparities in a multipolar world. Critics argue that the theory's portrayal of political action overlooks ethical dimensions, and its emphasis on state sovereignty conflicts with modern challenges such as hyper globalization and the resurgence of nationalism (Reus-Smit, 2001). However, proponents maintain that liberal principles offer valuable insights into promoting cooperation and human rights in an increasingly interconnected global environment.

The Liberal Theory of International Politics, while once dominant, is subject to significant criticism for its limitations in comprehensively addressing the complexities of international relations. These critiques underscore the need for a more nuanced understanding that incorporates political, economic, and normative factors to better inform the evolution of international law.

2. Literature Review

Ramona Alexandra Neagos's paper on asymmetric interdependence, power, and crisis in integrated systems provides a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between power asymmetry, interdependence, and systemic rupture in the European project (Neagos, 2022). The paper highlights the need for greater attention to be focused on understanding the causal mechanisms and implications of this relationship. It also emphasizes the importance of managing asymmetries through adequate institutional development to achieve equilibrium between the interests of states. Neagos's work contributes to the broader context of criticism of the liberal theory of international politics by examining the impact of power asymmetry on the European project. While the paper does not specifically address criticisms or gaps identified by other researchers, it provides a valuable perspective on the challenges posed by asymmetric interdependence in the European Union. Subsequent studies and developments in this field could build upon Neagos's work by further exploring the causal mechanisms and implications of power asymmetry in integrated systems.

The paper by Jack Levy and William Mulligan (2022) examines the systemic effects of economic interdependence and the militarization of diplomacy, focusing on the period of 1914 and beyond. It contributes to the broader context of the criticism of the liberal theory of international politics by highlighting the complex and conditional nature of the relationship between trade and peace. The authors argue that in economically interdependent systems, a great power at a competitive disadvantage may be incentivized to adopt more militarized strategies in the competition for support among smaller states. The paper draws on case studies of Austro-Hungarian and Russian influence strategies before the First World War and Prussian strategies among German states before the Franco-Prussian War. While the paper provides valuable insights, it does not address all the criticisms or gaps identified by other researchers. Subsequent studies and developments have built upon this work to further explore the relationship between economic interdependence and conflict.

Bonifai *et al.* (2022) article in the *International Studies Review* explores the intricate relationship between globalization and nationalism in world politics. Challenging simplistic views, it reveals how these forces coexist and shape each other. Within the context of criticizing the liberal theory of international politics, the article offers nuanced insights, emphasizing the persistence of nationalism alongside globalization. While it enriches the discourse with its comprehensive analysis, some scholars highlight the need for further exploration,

particularly regarding the potential negative consequences of nationalism and the role of non-state actors. Since its publication, subsequent studies have expanded upon its findings, delving deeper into regional dynamics and governance implications. Methodologically, the article combines qualitative analysis and case studies, drawing on constructivism and realism to elucidate its arguments. In summary, Bonifai *et al.*'s work provides a valuable contribution to understanding the complex interplay between globalization, nationalism, and international relations, stimulating ongoing research and debate in the field.

Alexiadou and O'Malley (2021) challenge the one-sided view of strong leadership in parties. While great for winning elections, they argue it can weaken democratic institutions. This critique resonates with concerns about strong leadership undermining democratic processes, though it doesn't directly address Liberal Theory. Their work is valuable for highlighting the downside of strong leaders on party structures, but needs further exploration across contexts and causality. Recent research has built on this by examining how parties can manage these tensions and the impact of populist leaders.

Economic interdependence has been a topic of interest in the study of international relations, particularly in relation to the likelihood of conflict between states. Liberal theorists argue that economic interdependence decreases the probability of war, while realists argue the opposite. Mina Tanious's (2019) paper examines the impact of economic interdependence on the American-Chinese relationship regarding Taiwan since 1995. The findings suggest that economic interdependence significantly decreases the onset of conflict between the two parties, as evidenced by a decrease in the number and duration of armed conflicts. This study contributes to the field by highlighting the role of economic interdependence in influencing the intensity and occurrence of conflicts between interdependent states. It also challenges the liberal theory of international politics by showing that economic interdependence does not completely prevent conflict but rather influences its characteristics. The paper does not explicitly discuss criticisms or gaps identified by other researchers or subsequent studies building upon it.

Lowe and Neubauer (2019) argue that rising nationalism challenges the optimistic view of globalization in Liberal Theory. Their work highlights how universities, caught between internationalization and national identity, navigate these tensions. While valuable for its critique and focus on institutions, it lacks specific solutions and may not fully capture broader societal aspects. Research since has explored how universities can balance these forces and the impact of nationalistic policies on student mobility.

Misunderstanding the maladies of liberal democracy promotion by Youngs (2012) is a significant contribution to the broader context of criticism of the liberal theory of international politics. Youngs critiques the prevailing approach to democracy promotion, arguing that it is based on a flawed understanding of democracy and fails to consider local contexts and dynamics. Other researchers have also identified similar criticisms and gaps in the field, such as the limited ability of international actors to influence democratization processes and the decline in credibility and trust in democracy promoters. Subsequent studies and developments have built upon Youngs' work by further exploring the complexities of democracy promotion, the role of international institutions, and the challenges faced in translating academic knowledge into practical expertise. The literature references theories such as the Theory of Deliberative Democracy and methodologies based on practice-theoretical approaches. Overall, Youngs' work has sparked important discussions and paved the way for further research in the field of democracy promotion.

Moravcsik's work (1997) on "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics" has made significant contributions to the field of international politics. It provides a comprehensive liberal theory that takes into account the preferences of states and actors in shaping international relations. This work fits within the broader context of the criticism of the liberal theory of international politics, as it addresses some of the gaps and criticisms identified by other researchers. It offers a more nuanced understanding of liberal internationalism and its implications for peacebuilding and state-building in post-conflict countries. Moravcsik's theory has been influential in shaping subsequent studies and developments in the field, particularly in the areas of liberal institutionalism and the role of ideas in international politics. The work also references key theories such as republican liberalism and commercial liberalism, drawing on the insights of thinkers like Immanuel Kant and Adam Smith. Overall, Moravcsik's work has provided a valuable framework for understanding the complexities of international politics from a liberal perspective.

This review critiques Liberal Theory in International Politics. It argues the theory overlooks power imbalances within cooperative systems, and that economic ties don't guarantee peace. Nationalism's strength is also seen as a challenge. The review highlights ways scholars address these issues, like considering state preferences and the complexities of promoting democracy. By acknowledging these limitations, scholars can develop a more comprehensive understanding of international relations. This nuanced approach can then be used to create more effective policies and institutions for promoting peace and cooperation on the global stage.

3. The Statement of the Problem

This study investigates central criticisms levied against Liberal IR Theory. The primary critique hinges on whether the theory, by placing significant emphasis on social contexts, inadvertently downplays the crucial role of power dynamics in international relations. The discussion probes deeper into two specific scenarios that raise concerns about the applicability of Liberal IR Theory:

Limited Applicability in Nascent States: Liberal IR Theory's focus on established social factors might not be readily applicable to newly formed states. In these contexts, domestic social contexts are either still emerging or experiencing rapid transformations. The traditional emphasis on liberal principles like individual rights and freedoms may not align neatly with the immediate priorities of these societies, such as establishing basic governance structures, ensuring security, and fostering economic development. Additionally, the absence of well-established institutions and norms might hinder the practical application of liberal ideals.

Nuances of Economic Interdependence: The assumption that economic interdependence automatically leads to increased cooperation between states is contested. While the discussion acknowledges a widespread notion of economic interdependence fostering cooperation, it highlights the need to consider more nuanced perspectives. The analysis acknowledges how stronger states might strategically leverage their economic power to gain advantages in the international arena. They could potentially use economic ties as a tool to influence smaller states, sometimes resorting to militarized strategies to secure their interests. This challenges the simplistic view that economic interdependence inevitably results in harmonious collaboration.

This study investigates criticisms of Liberal IR Theory, particularly whether it overlooks power dynamics in favor of social contexts. The core question revolves around the theory's ability to comprehensively explain international relations. The discussion focuses on two limitations: applicability in newly formed states with weak social contexts, and the assumption that economic interdependence automatically leads to cooperation.

The mythology analyzes Liberal IR Theory through literature review, examining its core ideas and criticisms. It then uses conceptual analysis to explore key concepts like power and social contexts, and applies comparative analysis to assess the theory's fit in various situations like new states or economic interdependence.

4. Assumptions and Idealism in Liberal International Relations Theory

Liberal International Relations Theory is a paradigm within the field of international relations that emphasizes the role of state-society relations, individual rights, and economic interdependence in shaping state behavior and the international system. It contrasts with realism's focus on power and state interests.

Liberal theories posit that state preferences, shaped by societal ideas, interests, and institutions, are fundamental in determining state behavior in international politics, challenging the realist focus on capabilities and the institutionalist emphasis on information and institutions (Moravcsik, 1997). This perspective highlights the dynamic interaction between domestic factors and global dynamics in shaping state actions. Additionally, it underscores the importance of understanding societal values and norms in analyzing state behavior on the international stage. Furthermore, liberal theories emphasize the need for a comprehensive approach that incorporates both domestic and international factors in explaining state behavior.

Critiques of liberal international relations theory argue that it may overemphasize Western liberal assumptions, such as the imposition of Western models of state sovereignty, democracy, and market economics, which can lead to counterproductive results in international state-building efforts (Chandler, 2010). However, proponents of liberal theory contend that its principles can be adapted to diverse cultural contexts, fostering more inclusive and effective approaches to state-building. Furthermore, they argue that while Western models

may serve as a starting point, liberal theory encourages ongoing dialogue and adaptation to local circumstances, mitigating potential negative impacts. Additionally, liberal theorists advocate for collaboration and cooperation among diverse stakeholders to address the challenges associated with international state-building endeavors.

Liberal international relations theory is critiqued for its foundational assumptions about human nature derived from classical liberal texts, which have been questioned for their deductive and empirical limitations in social theorizing (Hall, 2006). However, defenders of liberal theory argue that while these assumptions may have limitations, they provide a valuable framework for understanding the importance of individual agency and the potential for cooperation in international relations. Additionally, they contend that liberal theory encourages ongoing refinement and adaptation based on empirical evidence and evolving understandings of human behavior.

The theory is also criticized for neglecting the role of emotion and emotional relationships in international politics, which can significantly impact diplomacy, negotiation, and post-conflict peacebuilding (Crawford, 2000). However, proponents of liberal theory argue that while emotions may not be explicitly addressed, the principles of mutual respect, dialogue, and cooperation inherent in liberal approaches can foster positive emotional relationships among states. Additionally, they contend that recognizing and addressing emotional dynamics can enhance the effectiveness of diplomatic efforts and contribute to more sustainable peacebuilding outcomes in conflict-affected regions.

Despite critiques, liberal theory is recognized for its flexibility, dynamism, and broad-based approach, especially in globalization, considering factors like communication technology, market economy, and capital mobility (Singh, 2019). This adaptability allows liberal theorists to incorporate emerging trends and changing dynamics in the international system, making it a relevant framework for understanding contemporary global challenges. Additionally, liberal principles of openness and interdependence align well with the interconnected nature of the modern world, providing insights into how states can navigate complex transnational issues such as climate change, economic interdependence, and global security threats.

Liberal International Relations Theory offers a distinct perspective on world politics, focusing on the influence of domestic and transnational social contexts on state behavior. While it provides a comprehensive framework that accounts for a variety of factors beyond power politics, it faces critiques for potentially over-relying on Western liberal assumptions and neglecting emotional dimensions of international relations. Despite these critiques, its adaptability and consideration of globalization's multifaceted impacts grant it a significant place in the study of international relations.

5. Economic Interdependence and Power Asymmetries

Economic interdependence and power asymmetries lie at the heart of liberal theory's interpretation of international relations. However, the implications of these concepts are far from straightforward, attracting significant criticism regarding their ability to foster peace and cooperation.

Economic interdependence and power asymmetries have a significant impact on the dynamics of international relations. Asymmetric distribution of power can act as a factor of systemic rupture, leading to distrust and fractures among allied states (Neagos, 2022). Understanding how these factors interact is crucial for promoting cooperation and stability in the global order. Additionally, exploring strategies to mitigate power imbalances can help create a more equitable and peaceful international system.

The disparity in power can tempt smaller states to engage in brinksmanship, while larger states may be tempted to bully, resulting in stalemated conflicts (Womack, 2015). This dynamic highlights the importance of international institutions that can mediate disputes and establish norms of acceptable behavior. Furthermore, fostering economic interdependence between states can create a disincentive for conflict, as both sides become reliant on the benefits of peaceful cooperation. Ultimately, addressing power imbalances through diplomacy and economic integration can help create a more stable and secure international environment.

At the system level, economically interdependent systems can incentivize great powers at a competitive disadvantage to adopt more militarized strategies (Jack Levy and William Mulligan, 2022). However, economic interdependence has been shown to decrease the likelihood of conflict between states, influencing the intensity,

use of armed force, and number of conflicts that occur (Mina and Tanius, 2019). This seemingly contradictory relationship highlights the complex interplay between economic ties and military action. Deeper analysis is needed to understand the conditions under which interdependence fosters peace or fuels competition. Furthermore, exploring alternative security arrangements that rely less on military dominance could be a key strategy for mitigating the negative effects of power imbalances in an interdependent world.

Understanding the interactions between economic interdependence and power asymmetries is crucial for analyzing the effects of market size and power in international relations (Abraham *et al.*, 2011). This analysis can help us predict how trade agreements and resource allocation might impact global stability. Additionally, by understanding these dynamics, we can develop policies that promote a more balanced and equitable distribution of economic benefits. Furthermore, this knowledge can inform strategies to prevent smaller economies from being exploited by larger ones, fostering a more cooperative and mutually beneficial international economic system. Ultimately, a nuanced understanding of this complex relationship is essential for navigating the challenges and opportunities of an increasingly interconnected world.

6. Critique of Liberal Democracy Promotion

The fervent pursuit of liberal democracy as a universal ideal has undoubtedly yielded progress in fostering human rights and political participation around the globe. However, a growing chorus of critiques underscores the potential pitfalls associated with promoting democracy, particularly when undertaken with a one-size-fits-all approach. This chapter delves into the complexities surrounding democracy promotion, highlighting the unintended consequences that can arise and the challenges of imposing Western models on diverse cultural landscapes.

Critiquing liberal democracy promotion involves both pointing out genuine limitations that need addressing for effective functioning in all contexts and challenging the imposition of Western values. Critics argue that democracy promotion should allow for local adaptation and empowerment of civil society (Youngs, 2012). They highlight the alienation between populations and democratic institutions, as well as the cynical use of pro-democracy rhetoric to justify undemocratic decisions (Viatcheslav, 2010).

Finding the right balance is key. Promoting democratic values can foster participation, transparency, and human rights. However, a one-size-fits-all approach can backfire. By acknowledging the strengths of different political systems and fostering open dialogue, we can create space for locally-driven democratic reforms that resonate with the specific needs and contexts of each society. Ultimately, the goal should be to empower citizens and ensure their voices are heard, regardless of the specific form of government.

Additionally, the coherence of democracy promotion is questioned, as it may conflict with other goals such as market liberalization and trade policy reforms (Hobson, 2009). The contestation of democracy promotion is seen as conflicts over justice, with different understandings of appropriate norms and institutions existing in target countries (Theuns, 2016).

These critiques raise important points. Successful democracy promotion requires careful consideration of local contexts. Rigid adherence to a single model may not only be ineffective but can also breed resentment. Instead, efforts should focus on building the underlying pillars of democracy, such as respect for human rights and the rule of law. This approach allows for organic growth of democratic institutions that are tailored to the specific needs and values of each society.

Therefore, critiquing liberal democracy promotion serves to address genuine limitations and challenge the imposition of Western values, recognizing the need for adaptation and inclusivity in promoting effective democracy.

7. Limitations of International Institutions and Multilateralism

International institutions face challenges in adapting to global issues amidst rising nationalism. While some institutions express concern for their traditional form and recognition (Lowe and Neubauer, 2019), others aim to conceptualize and understand the complexity of dynamics that contribute to anti-globalism and nationalism (Lee, 2017). This adaptation requires a two-pronged approach. First, international institutions need to

demonstrate their relevance by addressing the very concerns that fuel nationalism, such as economic inequality and cultural homogenization. Second, they must embrace a more inclusive approach, incorporating diverse perspectives and experiences into their decision-making processes. By fostering a sense of shared ownership and responsibility, international institutions can regain legitimacy and navigate the complex landscape of a nationalistic world.

The backlash against globalization and the rise of nationalist movements in many wealthy nations put pressure on the international system (Bonifai *et al.*, 2022). However, international organizations have shown resilience and adaptability through successful resistance to control, unplanned expansion, and building networks (Schemeil, 2013).

This adaptability is crucial. International organizations can play a vital role in mitigating the negative effects of nationalism by fostering cooperation on issues that transcend national borders, such as climate change, pandemics, and global security threats. Furthermore, by promoting dialogue and mutual understanding between nations, they can help to bridge divides and create a more stable international order. Ultimately, the success of international organizations in the face of rising nationalism will depend on their ability to demonstrate their value in addressing the shared challenges of the 21st century.

The perception of legitimacy of international institutions is not solely driven by a state's voice but also by considerations of good governance. Institutional reforms that prioritize good governance are more likely to be rewarded with greater legitimacy. Therefore, while international institutions may face limitations, their ability to adapt and address global challenges depends on their resilience, exploration, and ability to prioritize good governance.

8. Security Dilemma and the Persistence of Conflict

The impact of domestic politics and leadership on security dilemmas is often overlooked. Strong leaders can exploit this dilemma for their gain, as they have control over party organization, policy development, and electoral campaigns (Alexiadou and O'Malley, 2021). However, they are also constrained by the international security system. While international factors such as the security environment, socialization, and economic dependence can moderate the effects of domestic coalition changes on foreign policy, the effects of domestic change on foreign policy are resilient (DiLorenzo and Rooney, 2020).

This complex interplay highlights the importance of understanding both domestic and international factors when analyzing security dilemmas. Leaders who prioritize short-term political gain over long-term security can exacerbate tensions and make cooperation difficult. Conversely, visionary leadership can foster trust, navigate competing interests, and promote peaceful solutions. Additionally, fostering strong democratic institutions and a well-informed citizenry can create a more stable foundation for foreign policy decision-making. Ultimately, recognizing the interplay between domestic politics and security dilemmas is crucial for promoting international cooperation and mitigating the risk of conflict.

Domestic vulnerabilities can also be a catalyst for security competition, particularly in weak states that lack internal legitimacy. When targeted states respond to minimize threats, their response may be perceived as a threat, leading to a security competition (Beckerman, 2022). This dynamic underscores the importance of international cooperation in addressing the root causes of state weakness, such as poverty, corruption, and human rights abuses. By providing targeted assistance and fostering good governance practices, the international community can help to create more stable and secure societies, ultimately reducing the risk of regional conflict. Additionally, promoting confidence-building measures and open communication channels between states can help to alleviate suspicions and prevent misinterpretations of defensive actions. Ultimately, a holistic approach that addresses both domestic vulnerabilities and international security competition is essential for maintaining a peaceful global order.

Overall, while domestic politics and leadership can influence security dilemmas, they are still subject to the constraints of the international security system. This interplay between domestic and international factors necessitates a nuanced understanding of the complex forces that shape security challenges in the 21st century.

9. Major Findings

The research has unveiled five significant findings that will be elaborated on in the subsequent section:

First, Liberal International Relations Theory (Liberal IR Theory) introduces a unique perspective on global politics, highlighting the impact of domestic and transnational social contexts on state behavior. This departure from the realist emphasis on power and state interests underscores the intricate interplay between societal factors and international dynamics.

Second, the relationship between economic interdependence and power imbalances in international relations reveals a multifaceted nature, encompassing both cooperative and conflictual dimensions. While economic interdependence can foster cooperation and deter conflict, disparities in power can also breed exploitation and instability. A comprehensive understanding of this intricate relationship is imperative for nurturing a more stable and equitable global order.

Third, advocating for liberal democracy as a universal model proves ineffective and can even backfire. Effective democracy promotion necessitates a nuanced approach that acknowledges local nuances, encourages the organic evolution of democratic institutions, and upholds fundamental values such as human rights and the rule of law.

Fourth, international institutions confront obstacles amid the resurgence of nationalism, yet they possess the capacity to surmount these challenges by adapting to address global issues and incorporating diverse perspectives. Those institutions that exhibit relevance and uphold principles of good governance are better positioned to navigate a landscape marked by nationalism.

Fifth, security dilemmas are shaped by a blend of domestic politics, leadership dynamics, and international factors. Understanding this intricate interplay is pivotal for fostering international collaboration and reducing the likelihood of conflict. Acknowledging the influence of domestic politics on security dilemmas is crucial for fostering international cooperation and averting potential conflicts, particularly in addressing the underlying causes of state fragility.

10. Discussion

The first point of the major findings arouse the question of whether Liberal IR Theory downplays the role of power in international relations by focusing solely on social contexts prompts a critical examination of the theory's foundational assumptions. At its core, Liberal IR Theory emphasizes the influence of domestic and transnational social contexts on state behavior, contrasting with the realist focus on power and state interests. However, this emphasis on social factors does not imply a neglect of power dynamics in international affairs.

Liberal IR Theory recognizes power as a central element in the study of international relations. Rather than disregarding power dynamics, the theory adopts a nuanced approach that integrates an understanding of power with societal influences on governmental decision-making processes. The discourse on governmental preference formation within liberal IR theory underscores the multifaceted interplay of interests, institutions, and ideas, including power dynamics, in shaping state behavior on the international stage.

Moreover, Liberal IR Theory does not operate in isolation from empirical realities. It acknowledges the complexities of power dynamics and their historical underpinnings, subjecting them to meticulous examination. By integrating insights from various disciplines, such as history, sociology, and political science, liberal IR theory offers a comprehensive framework for analyzing international relations that accounts for both power and social contexts.

In this light, the criticism that Liberal IR Theory neglects power dynamics in favor of social contexts is unfounded. Instead, the theory offers a nuanced perspective that incorporates both power and societal influences, providing a deeper understanding of the intricacies of international relations. By acknowledging the importance of power dynamics alongside social factors, liberal IR theory presents a compelling framework for addressing contemporary global challenges and empowering policymakers and scholars to navigate the complexities of our interconnected world with greater insight and efficacy.

From the other side, another question questions the answer of how Liberal IR Theory can effectively explain situations where domestic social contexts are weak or non-existent, such as in newly formed states, raises important considerations regarding the theory's applicability across diverse scenarios. Indeed, the theory's emphasis on liberal values and institutions may initially appear ill-suited to address the complex dynamics inherent in such contexts.

In newly formed states where domestic social contexts are still emerging or undergoing rapid transformation, traditional liberal principles may face significant challenges. The immediate priorities of these societies, such as establishing basic governance structures, ensuring security, and fostering economic development, may not align neatly with the liberal emphasis on individual rights and freedoms. Moreover, the absence of established institutions and norms may render the application of liberal ideals difficult in practice.

However, proponents of Liberal IR Theory argue that its principles retain relevance even in these challenging environments. While acknowledging the need for adaptation and contextualization, they contend that liberal values offer a vital framework for promoting good governance, nurturing democratic institutions, and safeguarding human rights—factors essential for the long-term stability and prosperity of newly formed states. Additionally, the theory's emphasis on the interplay between societal influences and governmental decision-making processes provides a nuanced lens through which to understand the complexities of state-building in diverse contexts.

By leveraging the core principles of Liberal IR Theory alongside an understanding of the specific socio-political dynamics at play, policymakers and scholars can navigate the challenges of state formation more effectively. This approach requires a willingness to adapt liberal principles to local realities while remaining committed to fundamental values such as democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. In doing so, Liberal IR Theory can offer valuable insights and guidance for promoting peace, stability, and progress in newly formed states and other contexts characterized by weak or non-existent domestic social contexts.

In response to the second point in the findings, the question of if the text assumes that economic interdependence inherently leads to more cooperation prompts a critical examination of the complexities inherent in international economic relations. While the notion of economic interdependence fostering increased cooperation is widely discussed, it is essential to acknowledge the nuanced perspectives that challenge this assumption.

Scholars such as Levy and Mulligan offer compelling insights into how stronger states may strategically leverage their economic power to gain advantages in the international arena. Their analysis highlights the potential for great powers to use economic ties as a means to influence smaller states, sometimes resorting to militarized strategies to secure their interests. This perspective challenges the simplistic view that economic interdependence inevitably results in harmonious collaboration.

On the other hand, Peebles and Chica *et al.* argue that economic interdependence can indeed mitigate incentives for free-riding behavior among parties, thereby facilitating cooperation. However, they caution that the effectiveness of this mechanism depends on specific circumstances and economic exposures. Similarly, Cooper's examination of regional monetary cooperation suggests that the relationship between economic interdependence and cooperation is nuanced, with historical legacies exerting a significant influence.

Furthermore, Kahler and Kastner's research sheds light on how economic interdependence can serve as both a constraint and a tool for shaping foreign policy objectives. They emphasize the complex interplay between economic ties and geopolitical maneuvering, challenging the idea of economic interdependence as a panacea for fostering cooperation.

In light of these diverse perspectives, it is evident that the assumption of economic interdependence leading to increased cooperation is not universally accepted. Instead, a nuanced understanding is necessary, one that acknowledges the multifaceted ways in which economic ties can shape interstate relations. By embracing this nuanced approach, policymakers and scholars can develop more effective strategies for navigating the complexities of an interconnected global economy while considering the strategic uses of economic power by stronger states.

Finding a delicate balance between promoting core values such as human rights and respecting the autonomy of nations in choosing their political systems is not just a theoretical exercise; it's a practical imperative in today's interconnected world. This balance requires a nuanced understanding of both principles and a commitment to upholding them in a mutually reinforcing manner. This is the focus of the third point in the major findings.

At its core, autonomy embodies the principle of self-determination — an inherent right for individuals and nations to chart their own course without external interference. This principle is fundamental to democratic governance and is intertwined with the concept of human dignity. Respecting autonomy means acknowledging and safeguarding the rights of individuals and communities to make decisions that shape their lives and futures.

However, autonomy should not be seen as a shield for oppression or a justification for violating universal human rights. Rather, the promotion of core values like human rights serves as a guiding light, illuminating the path towards justice and equality for all individuals, regardless of national boundaries. Upholding human rights principles is not just a moral imperative but a legal one, enshrined in international law and reflected in the constitutions of nations worldwide.

To strike this delicate balance, it's essential to integrate human rights considerations into the fabric of governance at both national and transnational levels. Constitutional frameworks should embody and protect fundamental human rights, serving as a bulwark against authoritarianism and tyranny. Additionally, education plays a crucial role in fostering autonomy and nurturing a culture of respect for human rights. By empowering individuals with critical thinking skills and civic awareness, societies can cultivate a collective commitment to upholding human dignity and justice.

Moreover, achieving this balance requires dialogue and cooperation among nations, recognizing that the pursuit of autonomy and the promotion of human rights are not mutually exclusive goals. Rather, they are interconnected facets of a broader vision for a more just and equitable world. By embracing this holistic approach and committing to upholding both autonomy and human rights, we can build societies that honor individual agency while advancing the common good. In essence, the pursuit of this balance is not just a moral imperative but a pragmatic necessity for creating a better future for all.

Here come the question on the fourth point of how the international institutions can truly address global concerns in the face of nationalist governments that prioritize national interests is a pressing issue that demands careful consideration. The rise of nationalism presents a formidable challenge to the effectiveness of international cooperation, particularly in addressing urgent global challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic has starkly illustrated how nationalist agendas can impede collective efforts for equitable access to vaccines and other essential resources. Countries driven by nationalist priorities have prioritized their domestic populations, exacerbating global disparities and hindering coordinated responses to the crisis. This trend extends beyond public health crises, affecting areas such as environmental conservation and economic cooperation.

Moreover, nationalist attitudes can lead to a disregard for international protocols and agreements, undermining the foundation of trust and cooperation upon which international institutions rely. Instances of governments flouting global health recommendations or prioritizing short-term national interests over long-term global sustainability are emblematic of this challenge.

Despite these obstacles, it is essential to recognize the potential of international institutions to address global concerns, even in the face of nationalist opposition. These institutions serve as vital platforms for dialogue, coordination, and collective action, offering mechanisms for overcoming the limitations of narrow national interests.

To effectively navigate the challenges posed by nationalist governments, it is crucial to reaffirm and strengthen the principles of multilateralism and shared responsibility. This entails holding nationalist governments accountable for their actions on the global stage and promoting inclusive decision-making processes that prioritize the common good over narrow national interests.

Furthermore, efforts to address global challenges must be grounded in a recognition of the interconnected nature of today's world. Nationalist agendas may prioritize short-term gains, but they ultimately fail to address the long-term consequences of global crises such as climate change, pandemics, and economic instability.

In conclusion, while nationalist governments pose significant obstacles to international cooperation, the potential of international institutions to address global concerns remains undiminished. By reaffirming our commitment to multilateralism, holding nationalist governments accountable, and promoting inclusive decision-making processes, we can overcome these challenges and build a more equitable and sustainable world for future generations.

At last, the interplay between domestic and international factors in shaping security dilemmas poses a formidable challenge for leaders seeking to mitigate conflict. In navigating this complex landscape, the extent of individual leaders' agency in promoting peace warrants careful examination. This idea comes out the fifth finding.

Firstly, leaders often contend with internal pressures that can constrain their ability to pursue peaceful solutions. Political factions, interest groups, and nationalist sentiments may exert significant influence, making compromise and diplomacy challenging. A leader's decisions may be shaped by the need to maintain political support or appease influential constituencies, limiting their scope for pursuing long-term peace strategies.

Secondly, the international security environment presents additional constraints on leaders' agency. Entrenched historical grievances, complex alliance systems, and geopolitical rivalries can complicate efforts to foster cooperation and resolve conflicts. Even leaders committed to peace may find their options constrained by the actions and interests of other nations, further limiting their ability to effect change.

Thirdly, internal challenges within a state, such as poverty, corruption, and ethnic tensions, can create fertile ground for conflict. Addressing these underlying issues requires sustained effort and resources, and individual leaders may face significant obstacles in implementing meaningful reforms within their own countries.

Despite these challenges, individual leaders still possess the potential to make a positive impact in mitigating conflict. Visionary leadership that prioritizes long-term security over short-term political gain can be transformative. By fostering trust, building bridges with other nations, and actively promoting dialogue and cooperation, leaders can create an environment conducive to peace.

Furthermore, investing in strong democratic institutions and promoting civic engagement can help build resilience against conflict and foster a culture of peace within societies. Leaders who empower their citizens to participate in decision-making processes and uphold the principles of justice and equality contribute to the foundation of lasting peace.

Moreover, international cooperation and alliances play a crucial role in expanding leaders' capacity to address security dilemmas. By forging partnerships with like-minded nations and leveraging collective resources and expertise, leaders can amplify their impact and address global challenges more effectively.

In conclusion, while leaders may face significant constraints in mitigating conflict, their agency remains a potent force for positive change. By navigating internal and external pressures with foresight and courage, leaders can contribute to the promotion of peace and security in a complex and interconnected world.

11. Conclusion

This study addressed criticisms of Liberal IR Theory, demonstrating its value in understanding international relations. The theory integrates power dynamics with social factors, offering a comprehensive perspective on state behavior. While challenges exist in applying it to newly formed states, its core principles promoting good governance and human rights remain relevant. The link between economic interdependence and cooperation is complex, requiring a nuanced understanding. Liberal IR Theory advocates for a delicate balance between respecting national autonomy and upholding human rights. Despite nationalist opposition, international institutions hold the potential to address global concerns. Finally, while leaders face constraints, their agency in promoting peace through visionary leadership and international cooperation remains significant.

In conclusion, Liberal IR Theory, with its focus on both power and social context, provides valuable insights for policymakers and scholars. By acknowledging its limitations and fostering ongoing dialogue, the theory can continue to evolve and contribute to building a more just and peaceful international order.

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