

MJC 7, Semester 4

Liberalism in International Relations

Introduction

Liberalism is a theoretical approach in International Relations that emphasizes the role of cooperation, institutions, and individual rights in promoting peace and stability.

Liberals argue that states are not solely driven by self-interest and security concerns, but also by a desire to promote economic interdependence, democracy, and human rights.

Key Assumptions

1. Human Nature: Liberals believe that human beings are capable of cooperation, altruism, and moral behavior.
2. International Institutions: Liberals argue that international institutions, such as the United Nations, can play a crucial role in promoting cooperation and preventing conflict.
3. Economic Interdependence: Liberals believe that economic interdependence can promote peace and stability by increasing the costs of war and promoting cooperation.

Key Proponents

1. Immanuel Kant: Kant's Perpetual Peace (1795) is a seminal work that laid the foundations for Liberal thought in International Relations.
2. Joseph Nye: Nye's Bound to Lead (1990) is a influential work that explores the role of soft power in international relations.
3. Robert Keohane: Keohane's After Hegemony (1984) is a seminal work that explores the role of international institutions in promoting cooperation.

Key Concepts

1. Democratic Peace Theory:

Liberals argue that democracies are less likely to go to war with each other.

2. Economic Interdependence:

Liberals believe that economic interdependence can promote peace and stability.

3. International Regimes: Liberals argue that international regimes, such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), can promote cooperation and prevent conflict.

Critiques and Limitations

1. Overemphasis on Institutions:

Liberals have been criticized for their overemphasis on international

institutions and their neglect of other factors that influence international relations.

2. Failure to Account for Power: Liberals have been criticized for their failure to account for the role of power in international relations.

Conclusion

Liberalism remains a influential theory in International Relations, offering insights into the role of cooperation, institutions, and individual rights in promoting peace and stability. While it has its limitations, Liberalism continues to shape our understanding of international relations and inform

policy debates.