

4 CHAPTER

Theory of Liberalism

Key thinkers: John Locke, John Burton, J.P. Swell, Paul Taylor, Joseph Nye, Christopher Mitchell, Robert Keohane, Michael Doyre, Karl Deutsch

After reading the chapter, the reader will be able to develop an analytical understanding on the following:

- Idea of Human Behaviour
- Foundation of Liberalism in International Relations and Classical Liberalism
- Four different types of Schools of Liberalism
- Real life Case Study of Liberalism–US Invasion of Iraq

IDEA OF HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

The central explanation of Liberalism is that man has cognitive capabilities to think and undertake reasoning. Accordingly, it is understood that man acts upon self-interest only upto a point as his basic urge is to cooperate. In fact, it will not be wrong to assert that, for the assumptions of liberalism, man is a cooperative animal. Man wants to cooperate for the welfare of others and also for his own intellectual stimulation.

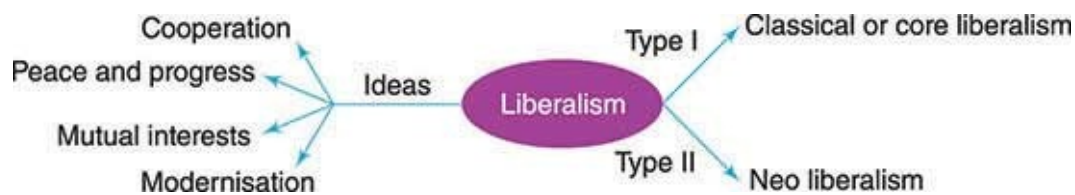
FOUNDATION OF LIBERALISM IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND CLASSICAL LIBERALISM

If we apply the idea of Liberalism in IR, we find that the concept of the nation state is premised on cooperation. Liberals are of the philosophical opinion that the state is not merely an instrument of war (as realists would suggest) all the time. They say that the evolution of the state is based upon a well-founded social contract between the individuals and the state itself. The state is composed of individuals. The individuals have capacity to think and the intentionality of that thought is aimed at cooperation with others.

The state, as per the social contract, needs to ensure conditions for the growth of the individual. This is possible if one state cooperates with another state. If all the states cooperate for each other's welfare, there will be peace. The states have to cooperate with other states because, as per the social contract, they have to work for the welfare of individuals within the state, which is deemed impossible if the states remain in a continuous state of warfare and instability. If the state has to create conditions conducive for growth of individuals, it can do so by cooperating with others. This interaction one state undertakes with other state will be based on mutual interest. This interaction can also be facilitated by international organisations. The overall analysis of such interaction leading to cooperation on mutual interests will foster peace. As the interaction between the

states will deepen, it will lead to interdependency of the states. As the states become interdependent, if a situation of conflict arises, the states will resolve them peacefully and would not opt for war as they would realise that mutual interest and welfare of the people is more important than the ensuing conflict to settle issues. As the states would modernise, the cooperation would increase and chances of war would decrease. Thus, one can clearly outline now that the core of Liberalism revolves around human cognition, freedom cooperation, peace, progress, mutual interest, modernisation and liberal democracy.

All these core principles are also well established in the thought of scholars advocating for core liberalism. However, there is a sub-school known as Neo-Liberalism which also accepts all the principles of core Liberalism but is less optimistic about cooperation as envisaged by core liberals. They are neo-liberals in the sense that they go a little beyond man and advocate cooperation on little larger scale:



Neo Liberalism is the school of Liberalism that originated in the time period between 1780 to 1850. This was the time when industrial revolution began and rapidly progressed. The new bunch of scholars emerged on the scene during this period. These scholars were deeply moved by the progress mankind was making at the industrial level. These scholars began to appreciate human capabilities. A wave of enlightenment began as the scholars took appreciation of human cognition. The age of reason asserted that humans have ability to reason and are at the very centre stage of the entire civilisation and universe. This gave birth to the ideas of more progress and a cooperative spirit amongst mankind. This time period also saw cementing of the idea of Classical Realism. The school of Realism is basically explained through four different types.

TYPE A – INTERDEPENDENCY THEORY

Here, the dominating principle mainly takes flight from Classical Realism. The idea at the heart of this theory is that, as societies interact, the interaction gradually happens on the basis of shared mutual interest. This interaction leads to interdependence amongst states. This interdependence gradually emerges so strongly that at times of conflict, states prefer reaching resolutions more peacefully rather than going for outright war. In 1970, two scholars, namely Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, aptly articulated this reasoning in their complex interdependence theory. They said as the societies modernise, it will lead to greater integration amongst societies. This will put societies on the path of interdependence amongst each other. In case a conflict may arise, the society will resort to negotiations through non-military skills than war. The societies will strive to make peace due to mutual interest and interdependency. Such cooperation will lead to a conflict free world.

TYPE B – INSTITUTIONAL LIBERAL MECHANISM

As the name clearly suggests, the focus, in this case, is on institutional mechanisms as tools for achieving mutual cooperation. As per this type, international organisations are platforms for states to interact and as states interact on this platform, the institution fosters

cooperation amongst them. The main reason why a state may resort to interaction at an institutional level is that a state may fear non-compliance. Thus, it feels that intervention at an international institution will foster cooperation and the institutional mechanism may foster compliance. Even if the states are unwilling at first, gradually, through shared goals and achievements, they should steadily become more and more compliant of international laws and dispute resolution can be embarked upon peacefully through these platforms.

TYPE C – SOCIOLOGICAL LIBERALISM

This type of Liberalism says that the study of IR should not be restricted to just the study of the nation states and relations between them. It takes a much broader view to assert that IR should be concerned with multiple actors like studies of different people, groups, civil society organisations, and so forth. Sociological Liberalism asserts that within a state, all these multiple actors also interact and cooperate. This emphasises the plural character of international dialogues and also lends the same pluralism to the understanding and expounding of Liberalism. In the era of globalisation, the interaction in a state happens amongst multiple transnational's actors and this interaction tremendously increases integration.

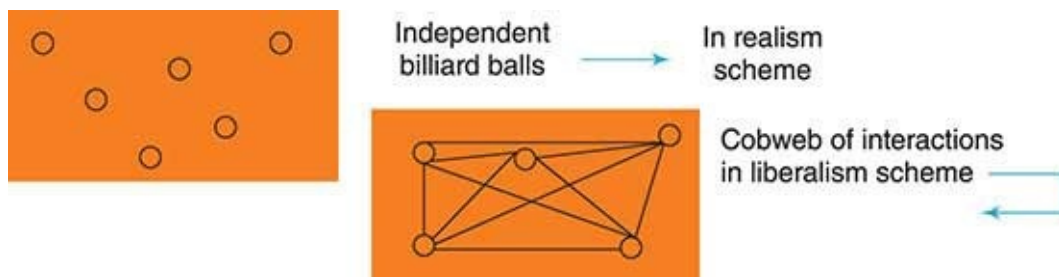
A scholar by the name Karl Deutsch has contributed to Sociological Liberalism by undertaking a study of the impact of rising communication and transaction (CNT) between peoples and societies. He says that those societies that may interact more (where more interaction could be, for instance, due to tourism between the two states, trade between them or movement of labour), may undertake more transactions amongst each other and this incremental rise in communication and transaction between them will lead to more unification. As the societies unify, when in conflict, they shall resort to peaceful ways of conflict resolution than war, as transactions and communications between states have caused such cooperation and neither state will be willing to easily sacrifice these beneficial modalities of exchange.

TYPE D – REPUBLICAN LIBERALISM

The basic core of Republican Liberalism is that democracy and Liberalism can combine together to create a peaceful global environment. This theory explains that those societies which are democratic are more transparent and open and are based on the rule of law. In these societies, the decision making is done more openly, in a transparent manner and the states are deemed to be law abiding. But do democracies fight wars? The answer is, at once, both yes and no. They don't fight wars amongst themselves at all. But they do see dictatorial regimes as a threat. The reason they see dictatorial regimes as a threat is because in these regimes, there is no transparency in decision making. Secondly, in these regimes, a dictator may resort to deception, thus making democracies more vulnerable to dictators and their political whimsicalities. In this kind of a situation, democracies may take resort to replacing these dictator regimes and replacing them with parties amenable to their policies and the international statutes to bring about nation building and promote democracy, failing which, they may even go so far as to install puppet governments so that long term peace may be achieved in the region. Unfortunately, this may not always have the desired results, leading to more conflicts and global unrest in some cases (refer to the ensuing case studies in this chapter).

Thus, as per the study of four types of Neo-Liberalism, we can clearly articulate that broadly, the theory talks about globalism and the world order. According to neo-liberals, it is the interaction amongst the states that establishes the world order and not the balance of power. The world does witness global problems which could crop up in the shape of global warming, drug trafficking, black money, and so on. These are problems which individual countries cannot solve. They require cooperation as states' own resources are too limited to enable them to solve these problems on their own. The only solution for the states is to interact amongst themselves. As they interact and coordinate, they strive to establish a global consensus to cooperate and solve the problems. A global consensus, however, is only possible if the states apply prioritisation of their demands first and secondly, undertake a process of transparent decision making in a democratic set-up to achieve consensus on the aforementioned priorities.

In 1972, a scholar named John Burton summarised the difference between Realism and Liberalism through his billiard ball model. While Realism is envisaged as an arena of relatively independent state actors (such as self-controlled units in an enclosed space, like balls on a billiard table), Liberalism is a complex mosaic of multiple actors causing deep interactions, integrations and cooperations.



REAL LIFE CASE STUDY OF LIBERALISM—US INVASION OF IRAQ

This case is well explained through the Republican Liberalism typology of Neo-Liberalism. Here, a democracy establishes the (apparent or perceived) threat of a dictatorial society as a dictator may resort to deception and non-transparency. US developed a fear that Iraq, under dictatorial rule, could be a threat to its sovereignty. Iraq under Saddam Husain, had used chemical weapons in the first Gulf War. The fear that Iraq was in possession of weapons of mass destruction grew relentlessly as time progressed. It was believed that Iraq, being a dictatorial country, would resort to deception of the inspectors of IAEA. This fear compelled US to invade Iraq to remove the dictator and secure peace. The post-war Iraq saw promotion of democracy and exercise of nation building in Iraq. However, in the long term, it has led to an increased unrest on a regional scale, with several patches of territory in Iraq compromised due to factional dispute; while on the global scale, it has contributed to the steady rise infanaticism and terrorism.