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CHAPTER 5

Liberal International Theory: Common Threads, Divergent Strands¹

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In typologies of international relations theory, liberalism, realism, and marxism are often presented as the three dominant traditions of the twentieth century. Each of these traditions includes many variants which frequently overlap in complicated ways such that identifying their key features is a difficult and controversial task. This chapter analyzes the development of liberal international theory until World War II, reviews and organizes the multifaceted scholarship it has engendered in recent years, evaluates its potential for guiding international relations scholarship, and suggests avenues for future research.

There are good reasons for embarking on such a project. While contemporary marxist international theories reflect canons articulated in the writings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin and modern realist theories are rooted in the expositions of Hans Morgenthau (1967) and Kenneth Waltz (1979), a systematic presentation of liberal international theory is not offered in any well-known texts. Michael Doyle (1986: 1152) notes that "there is no canonical description

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of liberalism." And Arthur Stein (1990: 7, fn. 6) suggests that "liberalism is multifaceted, and what is or is not at its core can be disputed."

While these observations are certainly accurate, they do not mean that a clear and relatively comprehensive theory cannot be articulated. There is a rich literature, which spans three centuries, that most scholars associate with liberal international theory. Also, it is very important at this time that attention be given to this theoretical enterprise. Intense debates, accelerated by the end of the Cold War, suggest widespread dissatisfaction with realism and marxism and a growing belief that various trends may be affecting profoundly the nature of international relations. A number of the challengers have explicitly identified themselves with liberalism or neoliberalism, and they do, in fact, highlight theses that have their roots in liberal international theory as it evolved from the seventeenth to the early twentieth century (Morse, 1976; Beitz, 1979; Hoffmann, 1981, 1987; Doyle, 1983, 1986, 1992; Keohane, 1989a, 1989b; Moravcsik, 1992). In order to judge whether liberal international theory offers a viable alternative to the dominant variants of realism and marxism, it is important to explore its theoretical components and its coherence.

In establishing the distinctiveness of the core of liberal international theory it is valuable to recall the central features of realism and marxism. Realism contends that the international political system is composed of political entities (states in the contemporary world) that are concerned first and foremost with their own survival and/or the maximization of power. While the strategies that states employ can change in certain ways, the underlying concerns for survival under threatening conditions and for relative power positions do not. For example, Robert Gilpin (1981: 211) argues "that the nature of international relations has not changed fundamentally over the millennia" (see also Gilpin, 1986; Holsti, 1985; Donnelly, 1992; Forde, 1992). For realists, international relations are repetitive or cyclical.

Central to marxism is the claim that the mode of production determines the nature of social and political relations within political entities and among them. When a new mode of production develops, new classes arise, and a new class becomes dominant. Domestic and international politics are fundamentally about the struggle for wealth among economic classes. Marxism does, however, envisage that a final end state will emerge with the progress of industrial modernization and the advent of communism (Lenin, 1939; Baran, 1957; Wallerstein, 1974; variants discussed in Holsti, 1985, chap. 4; Gilpin, 1987, chaps. 1-2; Brown, 1992).

Liberal international theory has its roots in the development of liberal political theory in the seventeenth century. The major contributors until the mid-twentieth century were not international relations scholars, but political philosophers, political economists, and people generally interested in international affairs. While the theory was not set forth in a systematic fashion, a study of writers associated with the liberal international tradition indicates that it has several central theses.

The first thesis is that international relations are gradually being transformed such that they promote greater human freedom by establishing conditions of peace, prosperity, and justice. This attitude toward progress reflects a general liberal stance because, as John Gray (1986: x) writes, liberalism, apart from being individualist, egalitarian, and universalist, is "*meliorist* in its affirmation of the corrigibility and improvable of all social institutions and political arrangements." Pertinent specifically to international liberals, Michael Howard (1978: 11) observes that they "have faith in the power of human reason and human action so to change [the world] that the inner potential of all human beings can be more fully realized."

An aspect of the progressive outlook of most international liberals that deserves stressing is that it is not teleological; that is to say, it does not project the emergence of a particular historical end state in which humankind will realize perfect freedom. Liberals see progress occurring gradually and along different paths at different times, and they do not foresee a world of perfect freedom in which all have what they want without any serious conflicts with others. Gray (1986: 91) writes concerning the classical liberal tradition that its "conception of man as a rational and moral being is not associated with the doctrine of human perfectibility and it does not issue in any expectation that men will converge upon a single, shared view of the ends of life." He goes on to argue that

the classical liberals believed we will benefit from a continuing antagonism of ideas and proposals. Even when they harbored dark doubts as to the ultimate stability of free societies, the classical liberal remained convinced that our best hope of progress lies in releasing the spontaneous forces of society to develop in new, unthought of and sometimes conflicting directions.

For them, progress consisted not in the imposition on society of any rational plan, but rather in the many unpredictable forms of growth and advance which occur when human efforts are not bound by prevailing conceptions to follow a common direction. (Gray, 1986: 91)

Gray (1986: 90-93) accepts that there is a teleological strand of thought in some "liberals" that projects the evolution of humankind toward a very specific rational plan (based on a perfect harmony of interests), but he thinks that this actually violates the liberal notion of liberty. In other words, one part of the classical liberal understanding of progress is that attempts to define it in rigid terms should be regarded with skepticism—especially in an era such as our own when conditions are changing so rapidly.

Related to the above comments, most international liberals are not "idealists" in the sense that they believe that a perfect harmony of interests waits to be discovered, that the social and political obstacles to the rational and/or morally right are minimal, and that what obstacles exist are malleable or changeable. E. H. Carr (1946, especially parts 1 and 2) identifies some liberals as idealists. However, he exaggerates the mutuality of interests they portray, and in any case such idealist liberals are not common in the late twentieth

century. Along the lines of the comments of Gray quoted above, we would judge that true liberals focus on how states are able to harmonize their different conceptions of interests and not on perfect concord among nations. They also accept that discord and coercion have been and always will be parts of international life, but they believe as a part of their evolutionary perspective that mutualities of interests and noncoercive bargaining will become more prominent features of international life. The key for the empirical liberal theorist is to understand the balances between conflicting and mutual interests, coercive and noncoercive bargaining, and moral and self-interested concerns that can exist in particular stages of international history.

The second and third central theses of liberal international theory are analyzed in depth in subsequent sections and are presented very briefly here. The second thesis is that central to the realization of greater human freedom is the growth of international cooperation. Cooperation is needed to maximize the possible benefits and minimize the possible damages of interactions and interdependencies and to capture opportunities for realizing greater peace, welfare, and justice. The nature and strength of international cooperation that liberal theorists envisage in a particular era or over time vary, but they all see cooperation as central to progress in human freedom.

The third and last thesis is that international relations are being transformed by a process of modernization that was unleashed by the scientific revolution and reinforced by the intellectual revolution of liberalism; and it is promoting cooperation among nations and greater peace, welfare, and justice for humankind. This modernization process has at least five interactive and evolving components and should not be confused with the now widely discredited model of political development based on the European experience of democratization and industrialization, which was developed by comparative politics scholars in the 1960s. These core components are liberal democracy or republican government; international interdependence; cognitive progress; international sociological integration; and international institutions. Liberals suggest that the period since the late seventeenth century has constituted a historical watershed, a period during which a multifaceted process of modernization has introduced or enhanced the possibility of a dramatic improvement in the moral character and material welfare of humankind.

The following analysis of liberal international theory is divided into several sections. The first section provides a historical overview of the evolution of liberal international theory from the late seventeenth through the early twentieth century by focusing on the most important writers. Differences among the writers relate largely to the importance of different facets of the modernization process for international political change. There is a subsection at the end of this section that draws together the major themes of liberal international theory as it evolved over three centuries. The second section discusses recent writings that fall within the scope of liberal international theory. It is organized around those dimensions of the modernization process that promote greater international exchanges and cooperation—and consequently greater human

freedom. Both of these two sections seek to synthesize and summarize large bodies of literature, and therefore the writing is often quite detailed in its discussions. The concluding section reflects on some of the strengths and weaknesses of liberal international theory and future research directions.

THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL THEORY THROUGH WORLD WAR II

The late Middle Ages (1200–1500) witnessed the demise of the feudal system, the rise of a middle class, the failure of papal Christendom to exert political control throughout Europe, the beginnings of the Reformation, a renaissance of the republican and cultural traditions of antiquity, and the early approximations of the modern state (Strayer, 1970; Poggi, 1978). This tumultuous period was followed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by the scientific revolution and the gradual reconstruction of Europe into a system ordered on the basis of the sovereign state. It was during this era of important intellectual, economic, and political change that liberalism emerged to become the dominant political theory of modernity. Child of the Enlightenment, liberal theory expressed a deep, if at times guarded, optimism in the capacity of people to improve the moral and material conditions of their existence.

In general terms, liberalism is committed to the steady, if uneven, expansion of human freedom through various political and economic strategies, such as democratization and market capitalism, ascertained through reason and, in many cases, enhanced by technology. Although progress and freedom are rather abstract concepts, liberals have focused on pursuing these ends in very specific and concrete ways. The earliest liberal intellectuals sought to use an empiricist methodology developed in the natural sciences to determine a political theory that would organize and defend the aspirations of the emergent middle class for a defense of private property, a rationalized system of laws, and a voice in lawmaking, while still providing a basis for moral and ethical life consistent with deep-seated Christian values and beliefs. The history of its efforts could fill several volumes. For our purposes it is sufficient to identify two variants of liberalism which together significantly shaped its evolution.

The first variant, *laissez-faire* liberalism, conceptualized government, or the state, as a necessary evil that had to be sharply constrained in order to allow the private sector to flourish. Introduced by John Locke (1660) in the seventeenth century, it was later endorsed by Voltaire and Benjamin Constant (1988) in France and von Humboldt in Germany, among others. Their desire was for a rational government based on consent and limited to enforcing a minimal set of laws, adjudicating disputes, and defending property and individual rights, especially against foreign aggression. In this variant, moral and ethical principles were seen as independent of political processes, as in Locke's notion of an objective natural law against which positive law might be assessed.

All of these thinkers believed that under liberal regimes, the material and moral condition of people would improve steadily, principally due to the unconstrained economic and other activities of the private sector.

The second variant, democratic or interventionist liberalism, had less confidence in the progressive potential of the private sector and regarded the state more favorably, often characterizing it as a vehicle for education and the redistribution of wealth and power. Further, it tended to depict moral and ethical principles as properly determined by democratic practices. Its early advocates included Jean-Jacques Rousseau in France and later Matthew Arnold and T. H. Green in England and Friedrich Wilhelm in Germany. In contrast to their *laissez-faire* counterparts, supporters of this approach usually related progress explicitly to the level of democratization.

The proponents of these two variants of liberalism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries focused mainly on domestic politics. On the matter of international politics, the views of Locke and Rousseau dovetailed, recognizing that liberal values had very limited roles and that self-interest and power would reign. The qualifications are perhaps clearest in Locke (1960: 431–44) who, in his famous chapter "Of Conquest," for example, affirmed the relevance of natural law to limited spheres of international relations, arguing for strong moral and ethical obligations on the part of wealthy states to poor ones and victors in war to losers. In general, however, Locke (1960: 412) advocated "Prudence" in foreign policy and acting "for the advantage of the Commonwealth."

If one accepts Locke's fusion of empirical and normative claims, the prudent application of natural law to international relations makes sense. Rousseau (1962, 1978), however, was skeptical about natural law, choosing instead to relate moral and ethical principles to democratic practices, a strategy that clearly limits their applicability to the international realm. He argued, however, that a world of democratic states would be a peaceful world because its units would value self-sufficiency and adopt isolationist foreign policies. Rousseau (1962: 297) acknowledged that such a world did not exist and that consequently a state's "security . . . requires that it make itself more powerful than its neighbors." To overcome this, Rousseau considered the possibility of creating a security community, or "confederative republic," but he was not optimistic about such an outcome. As Christine Jane Carter (1987: 210) has argued, Rousseau concluded that "power rather than reason will continue to be the major determinant in international relations."

In spite of their brevity, Locke's and Rousseau's reflections on international relations identified salient themes that became central to liberal international theory: the relationship between democracy and peace, the possibility of achieving security through international organization, the salience of international moral and ethical principles, and the diminishing but ineradicable relevance of power relations and self-interest among both democratic and nondemocratic states. These themes were clarified, enhanced, and added to by later generations of liberal thinkers.

Late-eighteenth- and nineteenth-century liberals were more optimistic than their predecessors about progress in international relations. They often argued that war and aggression were maintained by aristocratic regimes and mercantilist economic policies and that peace and wealth could be promoted by democratization and free trade. The most comprehensive statement was prepared by Immanuel Kant (1957). He foresaw the possibility of world peace attained through the gradual emergence of republican states whose citizens would oppose wars because of the cost in lives and financial resources; "the spirit of commerce," which would promote cooperation and interdependence; and the growth of international or cosmopolitan law, which would give further support to peaceful and cooperative relations. Unifying these forces were an increasing sense of moral duty among humankind and a growing recognition of the progressive direction of historical change or "nature's mechanical course" (Hoffmann, 1987: 402). While Kant's commitment to progress in international relations is indisputable, his image of the ultimate form that universal peace would assume has been the subject of disagreement (Hurrell, 1990). Whether one reads in Kant a future world of cooperative states or some form of world government, it is clear that, like earlier liberals, he accepted a strong, but gradually diminishing, role for power relations and the use of force. He did, however, regard the balance of power as important to the maintenance of international order in the short term (Hinsley, 1963, chap. 4; Doyle, 1983, 1986; Gray, 1986, chap. 3; Hurrell, 1990: 189–90). Another late-eighteenth-century writer whose views are very close to those of Kant is the American Thomas Paine. He emphasized both the nature of governments (aristocratic or democratic) and the virtues of free trade in promoting international peace and welfare (Howard, 1978: 29–31; Wolfers and Martin, 1956, chap. 10).

While regime type, international law and organization, and commerce are integral and interactive components of liberal international theory, it was the concept of free trade that sparked the imagination of most liberal thinkers of this period. Adam Smith (1937; Gray, 1986: 24–25) laid the groundwork for this attitude in *The Wealth of Nations*, his famous defense of international commerce as the inevitable—and generally desirable—outcome of human history. In his *Plan for Universal and Perpetual Peace*, the British Utilitarian Jeremy Bentham (1937) argued that free trade would bring the greatest economic benefits to the greatest number of people and asserted that active trade relations would discourage war. Like Kant and Paine, however, Bentham believed that an energetic, commerce-oriented private sector presupposed some form of democracy.

In terms of the development of liberal international theory, Bentham and other Utilitarian thinkers are important for their appreciation of its robustness. This notion has been well expressed by Vittorio de Caprariis (1957: 305–6) who, writing in an otherwise unrelated context, warned against "the danger of making liberalism an immobile philosophy" and argued that liberalism must be regarded as the "progressive outlook of any age, as a perennial method for

solving concretely the problems of the century" (see also Wolfers and Martin, 1956, chap. 14; Hinsley, 1963, chap. 5; Howard, 1978: 34–35; Holsti, 1985: 27–29).

Following Smith and Bentham, liberal international theory in the nineteenth century contended that modern liberty, an outcome of democratization and reason, encouraged private citizens to focus on the accumulation of wealth. Through trade, humankind would be woven together by material interdependencies that would raise the costs of war and conflict, while rewarding fair cooperation and competition and indirectly generating macrolevel goods such as peace, prosperity, and, potentially, justice. For example, in *The Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, David Ricardo (1911: 114) claimed that free trade "binds together, by one common tie of interest and intercourse, the universal society of nations throughout the civilized world." Similarly, James Mill, John Stuart Mill, Richard Cobden, Benjamin Constant, and Herbert Spencer all agreed that (1) international prosperity, peace, and cooperation would be products of free trade; (2) because trade was conducted outside the public realm, a vital private sector was the site of the engine of human progress; and (3) this vitality depended in turn on the type of freedom enabled by modern democratic or republican government. Among these thinkers, Spencer (1969) adopted a rather unique position in that he viewed free trade in terms of Social Darwinism, a process that weeded out the weak, resulting in the general improvement of humankind (Hinsley, 1963, chaps. 5–7; Wolfers and Martin, 1956, chaps. 15–17; Howard, 1978, chap. 2).

In the early (prewar) twentieth century, liberal international theory received considerable attention from a variety of thinkers, most notably J. A. Hobson and Norman Angell. Hobson (1938) is well known for his book *Imperialism*, which identified commercial competition among European states in the non-European world as the major cause of international conflict. In making his argument, Hobson combined traditional liberal opposition to aristocratic regimes with socialist critiques of financial elites. He regarded national imperialist elites as alliances of aristocratic and business groups. Overcoming these alliances, and creating the conditions for progress in realizing broad cross-national interests, required the thorough democratization of states. In view of this, Hobson prescribed political reforms that would be conducive to peace. In keeping with the spirit of his age, he was also a supporter of free trade insofar as it created economic ties that deterred countries from going to war.

In *The Great Illusion*, Angell (1910) argued that dramatic transformations in production, transportation, and communication technologies had made national economies so interdependent that war could only be disruptive and costly to all. Although he appreciated that political ignorance and the political influence of special interests could lead states into war, he was persuaded that they could not gain from it, pointing, for example, to the burgeoning international network of national financial elites whose welfare depended on cooperation. Angell further contended that states could not achieve security by seeking military superiority over other countries. But unlike earlier liberals, Angell did not imply that desirable macrolevel outcomes would emerge

spontaneously with an increase in trade. Publics and politicians had to be educated, and peace required active international cooperation. Angell's concern for education recalls a theme of liberalism that earlier had received careful consideration by Locke and Rousseau, both of whom wrote treatises on education. His emphasis on interstate cooperation, an idea endorsed in principle by both Rousseau and Kant, presaged a shift in the agenda of liberal international theory that would become decisive after World War I (Baldwin, 1980; Miller, 1986; Navari, 1989; de Wilde, 1991, chap. 3).

During the interwar period, liberal international theory continued to stress the familiar themes of democratization, trade, and the high costs of war (Howard, 1978: 75; Wolfers and Martin, 1956, chap. 20). There was, however, a movement from Locke to Rousseau, from unflinching confidence in the private sector to a renewed sense of the need for strong international organizations to promote and guarantee peace. Hidemi Suganami (1989: 93, 79), in reviewing the views of the reformist writers of this era, remarks that they thought that "it was the absence of the machinery which could ensure the peaceful settlement of international disputes that had caused the catastrophe [of World War I]." He adds that "One of the consequences of this shattering experience was a tendency among the writers on world order to converge on one central theme: the introduction of the element of coercion into the international system" (on the prewar–postwar differences, see also Hinsley, 1963: 116; Hoffmann, 1987: 403–5).

Key interwar liberals who were strong advocates of international organization include Woodrow Wilson (Link, 1957; Schulte Northolt, 1991), Hobson, Ramsay Muir (1971; de Wilde, 1991, chap. 4), Alfred Zimmermann (1936; Markwell, 1986), Francis Delaisi (1925; de Wilde, 1991, chap. 5), and David Mitrany (1948, 1966). Of these Wilson is perhaps the best known, and this period frequently is referred to as "the Wilson era." Arthur Link (1957: 12–15) argues that Wilson's world view was shaped by his early commitments to Christian moral and ethical beliefs and democracy, and his sense that the United States had a moral mission in international relations. After World War I, he also became a strong advocate of international organization, especially in the form of a collective security mechanism that would make the "world safe for democracy." These various beliefs were aggregated in his famous Fourteen Points address, delivered to the U.S. Congress in 1918. Central to this address were Wilson's call to establish the League of Nations, remove barriers to free trade, and promote national self-determination. The belief that national self-determination would promote international peace is a variant of democratic liberalism and has its roots in Rousseau and later in nineteenth-century writers such as John Stuart Mill and Giuseppe Mazzini. On the basis of his liberal tenets, Wilson hoped to lay the foundations for a peaceful, prosperous, and just world order (Link, 1957: 102–3; on the U.S. liberal tradition, see Armstrong, 1993, chap. 2).

Although after World War I Hobson continued to believe that it was trade and democracy that created the conditions for peace, he also began to argue that strong international institutions were necessary (Wolfers and Martin,

1956, chap. 19; Long, 1991). Similarly, Muir believed that growing international interdependence was inevitable and would have to be managed through international organization. Additionally, he identified the spread of Western culture as an important force in promoting peace, prosperity, and justice. He regarded "European civilization as the best conceivable," and he defined "progress . . . in terms of liberalism" (de Wilde, 1991: 99–101).

While today this may appear parochial, it signals a more general liberal commitment to some form of international culture. Zimmern stressed the centrality of democracy and public education in the evolution of a more humane world and regarded the League of Nations as an important step toward world peace and prosperity. D. J. Markwell (1986: 283) captures a key feature of the attitude of these thinkers in his comment, "What is most striking about [Alfred Zimmern's] *The League of Nations and the Rule of Law* is the underlying belief that progress is possible in international relations and might already be far advanced."

Francis Delaisi's thought prefigured Mitrany's well-known theory of functionalism, which he developed largely during World War II (de Wilde, 1991: 138). Both regarded nationalism and sovereignty as the fertile soil of international conflict and war. Both argued for an initial separation of high and low politics, believing that the unhampered pursuit of economic welfare would knit states together in peaceful relations. And both endorsed the creation of specialized international economic organizations to guide and manage this process. In his work, Mitrany further developed the implications of these positions in his theory of functionalism. He argued that cooperation was easier to achieve in technical areas, and once successful, it would spill over into other areas, gradually embedding states in a network of cooperative mechanisms that would make war highly unlikely, if not impossible. Over time, Mitrany believed there would also be an adjustment in loyalties, such that international values would vie successfully with national ones. Mitrany's functionalism was extremely influential in the 1950s and 1960s, inspiring many of the international integration theorists.

The emergence of "welfare internationalism" among writers such as Mitrany and Delaisi together with the general advocacy of stronger international organizations marks an important change in the outlook of international liberalism. Whereas in the nineteenth century there was a widespread belief that *laissez-faire* economic practices and the spread of democracy would on their own produce public goods such as peace, prosperity, and justice, post-World War I liberals argued that this process also required substantial and focused intergovernmental cooperation. Some writers, such as Mitrany, regarded intergovernmental cooperation as a step toward full global integration; others were less willing to make such dramatic predictions. (One sees a similar tension in the writings of Kant [Hurrell, 1990]). In any case, a belief in the immediate need for, and extensive potential benefits of, strong international institutions has become increasingly central to the liberal world view (Suganami, 1989, chap. 6).

The evolution of liberal international theory in its first three hundred years reveals a set of themes that have proven robust, continually adapting to new circumstances to offer new insights into international relations. Although the relative importance of these themes has shifted over time, their interrelationships have been recognized by each new generation of thinkers.

An Overview of Liberal International Theory

Having reviewed some of the major writers associated with liberal international theory from the seventeenth century through World War II, it is valuable to summarize the central theses of the theory before moving on to look at postwar scholarship in the next section.

(1) Since the late eighteenth century, liberals have believed that international relations are evolving (or probably will evolve) gradually and irregularly along lines that will promote *greater human freedom* conceived in terms of increases in physical security, material welfare, and opportunities for free expression and political influence (i.e., human rights). Reflecting on the evolution of liberal scholarship, Robert Keohane (1989a: 174) writes that "liberalism believes in at least the possibility of cumulative progress, whereas realism assumes that history is not progressive."

(2) International liberals believe that peace, welfare, and justice are realized significantly through *international cooperation*, although they differ on the nature and strength of the cooperation that is likely to occur. Cooperation can include an acceptance of moral norms, adherence to international law, or collaboration through international organizations. While Kant was an important early exponent of this position, it did not become a central thesis in the thinking of the great majority of all liberals until after World War I.

(3) Liberals believe that peace, welfare, justice, and cooperation are being driven by a number of interdependent forces that we view as aspects of *the process of modernization*. Beginning in the late eighteenth century, liberals were aware that the scientific revolution and the liberal intellectual revolution were promoting a profound transformation in international relations. Liberals would agree with Karl Deutsch (1969: 190) that "The whole thrust of the technological development of our time pushes beyond wars and beyond the economic fences of nation-states" (on the modernization process and its impacts, see Morse, 1976; Fukuyama, 1992; Zacher, 1992). The key components of the process are liberal democracy, interdependencies (commercial and military), cognitive progress, international sociological integration, and international institutions. These components of the process of modernization are not stressed by all pre-World War II liberal writers. In fact, military interdependence and sociological integration only began to emerge as important in the twentieth century. Also, many of the early writers, particularly the Utilitarians, did not highlight international institutions beyond a general acceptance of the norm of economic openness and some minimal laws to facilitate

commerce. The elements that existed in the thought of almost all international liberals from the eighteenth through the mid-twentieth century are liberal democracy, a growth in economic transactions and interdependence, and the expansion in humankind's knowledge and reasoning capacities.

In addition to the three general theses of liberal international theory, it is valuable to draw out from the writings of liberal theorists the underlying assumptions on issues such as the nature of international actors, actors' interests, the determinants of interests, and the determinants of international outcomes. It is important to try to define them in order to better understand the rationales for the previously stated assertions, to assist in identifying liberal theorists, to allow comparisons with other theories such as realism and marxism, and to facilitate the development of liberal international theory. This last issue is very important: In order to make projections and offer theoretical explanations of specific phenomena it is necessary to define actors, interests, the forces shaping interests, and the forces shaping outcomes. The assumptions are, in fact, very general—in part because liberal theory must accommodate a historical evolutionary process. They are presented below with some corroborative citations to contemporary literature (for good general analyses, see Doyle, 1983, 1986; Keohane, 1989a; Moravcsik, 1992; Smith, 1992).

(1) Liberal international theory's conceptualization of progress in terms of human freedom and the importance attributed to liberal democracy, free trade, cognitive changes, communications, and moral norms all indicate that liberals regard *individual human beings as the primary international actors*. Liberals view states as the most important collective actors in our present era, but they are seen as *pluralistic actors* whose interests and policies are determined by bargaining among groups and elections. A propos of this point Robert Keohane (1989a: 172) comments that "liberalism is an approach to the analysis of social reality that begins with individuals as the relevant actors" and "seeks to understand how organizations composed of aggregations of individuals interact."

(2) Liberals view the interests of states as *multiple and changing and both self-interested and other-regarding* (Hoffmann, 1960: 31, 185; Grieco, 1988; Stein, 1990, chap. 1; Smith, 1992). The interests of states (or priorities among interests) are viewed as changing because liberals see individuals' values and the power relations among interest groups evolving over time. Also, most liberals regard states' policies as other-regarding to some extent since they believe that the growth of liberal democracy increases people's concern for other humans. These ideas can be traced back to Locke, Rousseau, and Kant. With regard to specific interests, liberals accept that state survival and autonomy are important—at least in our contemporary era—but they are viewed as secondary interests to the primary interests of individuals (on the importance of state autonomy to realists, see Gilpin, 1987: 34; Grieco, 1988 and 1991: 14). Certainly over the long run, liberals see states as increasingly supportive of peace, welfare, and justice, but exploitative interests (including power over others as an end in itself) are unlikely ever to disappear.

(3) Liberals believe that *human and state interests are shaped by a wide variety of domestic and international conditions*. Ultimately they are determined by bargaining power among interest groups, but these groups' definitions of their interests are affected by a host of factors. At the domestic level they include the nature of the economic and political systems, economic interactions, and personal values; at the international level there are technological capabilities that allow states to affect each other in different ways, patterns of interactions and interdependencies, transnational sociological patterns, knowledge, and international institutions. The predominant collective actors—states—are embedded in both their own societies and the international system, and their interests and policies are affected by conditions in both arenas. Such a complex perspective flows from the writings of most of the major liberal writers (for a recent synthetic view of international factors, see Buzan, Jones, and Little, 1993). Specifically on the matter of institutions and political hierarchy in the international system, liberals have not been and are not comfortable with a simple conception of the system as anarchical. While explicit analyses of this issue are recent, the growth of international institutions was, in fact, very important to Kant's image of the international system's evolution. Contrary to realists, contemporary liberals think that the network of international institutions is too pervasive and influential not to integrate it into an overall conception of the international system (Waltz, 1979: 88–92, 102–28; Grieco, 1988; Keohane, 1989b: 1, 6; Miller and Vincent, 1990; Milner, 1991).

(4) *The relative influence of patterns of interests and coercion on international outcomes evolves over time—with the impact of patterns of interests growing*. In the early stages of modernization, coercion based on power relations has an important influence, but as liberal democracies, interdependencies, knowledge, international social ties, and international institutions grow, noncoercive bargaining and international patterns of interests have an increasing impact. (Moravcsik [1992] posits that for liberals patterns of interest always predominate; we believe that for liberals their impact is dependent on the state of modernization.)

Specifically on the matter of *cooperation*, liberals do not think that the existence of a hegemonic power is necessary for cooperation; rather, *mutual interests can sustain* international regimes. Pertinent to this, Oran Young (1989: 200) writes

There is nothing in theories of bargaining or negotiation as such to justify the conclusion that a hegemony is needed to produce agreement, so long as a contract zone or a zone of agreement exists. On the contrary, the usual assumption embedded in such theories is that rational actors will find a way to realize feasible joint gains. (See also Keohane, 1984)

The main reasons for liberals' expectations of increased cooperation based on mutual interests are that mutualities of interests will grow with increased

interdependencies and the spread of democratic values; states and other actors will be better able to understand their common interests with improved knowledge and communications; states are less worried about the prospect that cooperating partners will cheat because of improvements in monitoring (international organizations, technological advances); and states are less worried that relative gains can be turned into coercive power because of the increasing reluctance to use coercion (Lipson, 1984; Grieco, 1988; Keohane, 1999b; Stein, 1990, chap. 1; Snidal, 1991; Powell, 1991; Cornett and Caporaso, 1992; Baldwin, 1993).

Pre-World War II international liberals did not analyze when states seek relative as opposed to absolute gains in their international bargaining in the same way that realist international relations scholars have explored the issue over the past decade (Baldwin, 1993). However, it would have been logical for the early liberals to argue that states are concerned with relative gains only in those conditions where the relative gains are likely to be turned against them in future bargaining situations. Also, since the proclivity of states to use coercion decreases with the growth of democracy, interdependencies, and international institutions, states should become less worried with relative gains over time.

It should, however, be stressed that liberals are very interested in tracking over time where, how, and why coercive power, especially military power, is important. Liberals are not, or should not be, ostriches when it comes to the study of power. To quote Judith Shklar: "No liberal ever forgets that governments are coercive" (quoted in Keohane, 1989a: 194). On the other hand, international liberals are prone to see the situations that will mitigate against the use of coercive diplomacy as emerging faster and more strongly than is, in fact, often the case. This is, more often than not, the source of the accusation that liberals are idealists (Carr, 1946).

THE STRANDS OF CONTEMPORARY LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL THEORY

As is clear from the preceding section, the common threads of liberal international theory (apart from several assumptions) include beliefs in progress conceived in terms of greater human freedom, the importance of cooperation to progress, and a process of scientific and intellectual modernization as the driving force behind cooperation and human progress. The key strands of the theory refer to the components of the modernization process. While this section focuses on these strands, it is desirable to discuss briefly postwar liberals' thinking about progress because it differs from that of most prewar writers.

The most striking change in attitude is that confidence in progress has been more qualified in the postwar period. Prior to World War II most liberal writers had a reasonably strong belief in the growing, albeit gradual,

realization of human freedom. In the postwar period the reluctance of most nonrealist and nonmarxist scholars to commit themselves to the liberal notion of progress has been grounded in a number of considerations. Liberals have not wanted to be branded as idealists as were many interwar liberals; the international events of this century (including two world wars and the Cold War) have made them wary about being too optimistic, and, in keeping with the ethos of contemporary social science, many have felt more comfortable explaining than predicting.

With the exception of David Mitrany (1966), who was largely a product of the interwar period, most scholars who have predicted "progress" have confined their claims to specific issue-areas. For example, John Mueller (1989) has predicted the end of major wars, and a variety of other scholars have been optimistic about international economic cooperation or European integration. With regard to the overall evolution of international politics, even Francis Fukuyama (1992) questions whether liberal democracy and hence international comity will be able to survive without coexisting "irrational" belief systems and with the constant challenge of reconciling people's competitive urges with the egalitarian norms of a democratic society. While a high level of optimism concerning the evolution of world politics has been rare, a growing number of scholars think that it is *possible* that international relations are evolving so as to improve the condition of humankind. A very good statement of this perspective was voiced by Stanley Hoffmann (1981: 8):

To be liberal does not mean necessarily to believe in progress, it means only to believe in a (limited and reversible) perfectibility of man and society, and particularly in the possibility of devising institutions based on consent, that will make society more humane and more just, and the citizens' lot better.

A comparable point was made by Robert Keohane (1989b: 11), who wrote that liberalism "rests on a belief in at least the possibility of cumulative progress in human affairs." He went on to remark, "For me, politics is open-ended and potentially progressive, rather than bleakly cyclical." For liberals, the possibility of progress is constant but its realization (and hence their level of optimism) vary over time and space.

The rest of this chapter focuses on postwar writings on the six well-developed strands of liberal international theory. Some of our labels are taken from existing literature (Nye, 1988; Keohane, 1989a), and some are new. They are:

- Republican liberalism
- Interdependence liberalism
- 1. Commercial liberalism
- 2. Military liberalism
- Cognitive liberalism
- Sociological liberalism
- Institutional liberalism

A new component of the modernization process that is generating mutual interests in international cooperation has emerged in recent decades—ecological interdependence. Future studies of liberal international theory should include *ecological liberalism* as a distinctive strand.

Before discussing the literature relevant to each strand, it is important to make several points.

- The strands of liberalism are not competing. They are all facets of a larger dynamic of international change and are often closely interrelated. Individual researchers focus on certain factors, but, if asked, they would probably view other aspects of modernization as having some influence on international progress.
- The different components of modernization both generate mutual interests and facilitate cooperation. However, certain factors tend to be *generators* or *facilitators*. In particular, republican and interdependence liberalism are basically generators of mutual interests, whereas cognitive, sociological, and institutional liberalism tend to be facilitators of cooperation.
- It is inappropriate to label all contributors to the explanation of international cooperation as supporters of liberal theory. It is likely that they are at least implicit adherents, but often they have not committed themselves to a particular stance.

Republican Liberalism

During most of the postwar era there was little academic interest in the thesis that democracies promote international peace and cooperation, although it was a common theme of Western politicians. This changed decidedly in the 1980s largely due to two articles by Michael Doyle (1983, 1986). According to Doyle, while democratic states do go to war, they rarely, if ever, go to war with each other; a claim well-supported by the record of the past two centuries. Doyle (1986: 1156) concludes that "liberal states have indeed established a separate peace—but only among themselves," a claim that has received wide support in the field (see also Maoz and Abdoladli, 1989; Ember, Ember, and Russett, 1992; Lake, 1992; Maoz and Russett, 1992, for a criticism, see Cohen, 1992). This liberal peace is grounded in the existence of an international moral community in which governments accept the standards of mutual respect and peaceful resolution of differences that exist among individuals within their societies (Doyle, 1986: 1160; Schweller, 1992: 245–46; Gilbert, 1992: 10). In the words of Zeev Maoz and Bruce Russett (1992: 5), "The norms of regulated political competition, compromise solutions to political conflicts, and peaceful transfer of power are externalized by democracies in their dealing with other national actors in world politics."

In addition to the above ethics-based explanation, scholars have identified various nonethical considerations that might underlie the peaceful and cooperative proclivities of democratic states:

- The majority of the population who bear the brunt of the costs of war is unlikely to support parties and leaders who are interested in launching wars (Doyle, 1986: 1160; Gilbert, 1992; Schweller, 1992). Related to this, political parties in a democracy are prone to appeal to middle-of-the-road voters who are likely to be risk-averse (Snyder, 1990: 18–19; and 1991: 49–52), and the fragmentation of interest groups makes it very difficult to put together a coalition supportive of imperialism and war (Schweller, 1992: 244–45; Maoz and Russett, 1992: 7).
- The openness or transparency of democratic states reduces possibilities of misjudging the activities and intentions of such states (reducing the fear of cheating and enhancing a willingness to cooperate), and it prevents "war-causing national misperceptions—militarist myths, hyper-nationalist myths, or elite arguments for 'social imperial' wars" (Van Evera, 1990–1991: 27; Kupchan and Kupchan, 1991: 148).
- Democratic states have a lower capability than authoritarian states to extract rents from their citizens for ventures such as imperial expansion. Consequently, they regard peaceful trade as a more reliable route to the accumulation of wealth than war (Lake, 1992).
- Echoing Adam Smith, democratic states are oriented to economic welfare and international commerce rather than military glory. Modern democratic states focus on maximizing wealth, and economic success is vital for the legitimization of their governments. This leads to foreign policies supportive of collective security and mutually beneficial commerce (Doyle, 1986; Schweller, 1992; Kupchan and Kupchan, 1991; Morse, 1976; Rosecrance, 1986).

A recent addition to republican liberalism is the argument that liberal democracies not only form a "zone of peace" but also constitute a "zone of law." They allow more private transnational economic interactions than do groupings that include nondemocratic states; they permit myriad agreements involving bureaucratic units and private actors; and they charge their courts with the responsibility for deciding on the law that should be applicable to private disputes. Anne-Marie Burley (1992: 7) states that "relations among liberal states include a *type* of legal relations much less likely to be found in relations between liberal and nonliberal states: *transnational legal relations monitored and enforced by domestic courts*."

The growing support for republican liberalism is the most striking development in liberal international theory in the postwar period. While the thesis concerning the prospects for greater international peace and comity rests on the growth of liberal democratic governments, it is still a very important empirical finding. The relevant studies that have been published since the early 1980s have breathed more life into liberal international theory than any other body of scholarly writings. A logical next step for liberals is to explore the impact of the process of democratization on the international relations of non-Western countries.

Commercial Liberalism

Following the scientific revolution, a variety of technological innovations significantly increased the opportunities for mutual gains through economic exchange. Unlike realists, liberals have regarded the consequences of trade—interdependence and autonomy-limiting cooperation—in positive terms. According to Edward Morse (1976: 116): "In liberal thought, interdependence became a goal of foreign policy that should be implemented with global industrialization and that should result in a framework in which natural harmony of interests among nations could unfold" (see also Gilpin, 1987, chap. 1). What liberals envisage transforming the international system and promoting greater peace, welfare, and justice is what Barry Buzan calls "interaction capacity" or the physical ability of states to affect each other in military, economic, and other ways. Buzan (Buzan, Little, and Jones, 1993: 78) states that "The proponents of interdependence and world society are essentially supporting the systemic hypothesis that high interaction capacity profoundly conditions the logic of political structure. . . . In other words, when the volume, speed, range and reliability of interaction become sufficiently high, they might begin systematically (and systemically) to override the deep structural effects of anarchy." Buzan's position is consistent with a set of causal relationships central to liberal thought: Scientific/technological progress produces increased international exchanges because of people's desire for greater economic welfare; growing exchanges produce growing interdependence; and greater interdependence pressures states into international cooperation to enhance the gains and minimize the losses from new economic relationships.

In the postwar period the belief that international economic interdependence would grow and would assure international peace has not been as pronounced as in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. One reason for this cautious attitude is that there were very modest economic relations between East and West during the Cold War. The end of the Cold War has opened up the possibility for closer economic ties, but whether a highly integrated global trading system will develop is problematic.

There have been important examples of increasing economic interdependence and a more pervasive and stable peace, but they have generally been limited to regions. Both the growing integration of the European Union and the long-standing economic ties within the Western alliance system have been regarded as important deterrents to political and military conflict in the West. However, these developments have not been widely regarded as promising an end to international wars. A recent statement representative of this position is that "the current interdependent international political economy may have inhibited—or at least has not encouraged—widespread resort to force" (Keohane, 1989a: 189; for negative, positive, and noncommittal views, see Herz, 1950: 172–76; Morse, 1976; Buzan, 1984; Ferguson and Mansbach, 1988: 208). On the other hand, there are some positive trends concerning the relationship between economic interdependence and peace. Robert Jervis

(1991–1992: 56) has recently commented on the potentially stabilizing international impact of the European Union, which is likely to demand peaceful behavior as a price for access to its market.

While few contemporary commercial liberals focus on the relationship between economic interdependence and the incidence of wars, many focus on economic interdependence as the basis for prosperity and cooperation. One argument put forward by many scholars is that international cooperation to maintain openness and control the adverse effects of greater liberalization is important to assure global economic welfare (Cooper, 1968, 1972; Morse, 1976; Ruggie, 1983; Rosecrance, 1986; Keohane and Nye, 1989; Webb, 1991). To quote Richard Cooper (1972: 179), "The growing interdependence of the world economy creates pressures for common policies, and hence for procedures whereby countries discuss and coordinate actions that hitherto were regarded as being of domestic concern exclusively." On the same issue, John Ruggie (1983) argues that modern states have accepted international regimes based on "embedded liberalism," which seeks to balance the benefits of liberalization with the right of states to take "safeguard" actions to protect domestic welfare goals. Some commercial liberals concentrate on regional economic integration. A significant aspect of their analysis concerns how modern economies of scale pressure states to coordinate their policies in creating larger markets. Without being part of a larger market, it is difficult for states to provide their populations with the same level of welfare that other industrialized states are giving their citizens. While there was a lull in academic theorizing in this field in the 1970s and 1980s, movements in the expansion of the European Union and elsewhere have provoked latent scholarly optimism (Lindberg and Scheingold, 1971; Haas, 1970, 1975b, 1976; Wallace, 1990; Moravcsik, 1991; Tranholm-Mikkelsen, 1991).

An important argument of some economic liberals is that states are losing a degree of control over their economies because of growing interdependence, strong international regimes, and the activities of multinational firms. They project a world in which there are both stronger formal intergovernmental institutions and an informal sharing of governance between state and private commercial organizations. On the ability of modern industrial states to develop economic policies free of international constraints, Morse (1976: 97) writes that "No amount of political will can recreate a world where independence and autonomy can be obtained, except perhaps at costs that no governments are willing to incur because losses in wealth that would accompany increased autonomy would handicap the legitimacy of those governments in the eyes of their citizens." A particular twist to this loss-of-control or sovereignty-at-bay argument is that multinational corporations are increasingly managing international economic relations and possibly creating the basis for a more politically integrated international community (Vernon, 1971; Rosenau, 1980; Ohmae, 1990).

A particular analytical approach within contemporary commercial liberalism has been labeled a "functional" or a "contractual approach" to international

cooperation. But a more appropriate title might be a market correction approach (Keohane, 1984, chaps. 5-6, and 1990: 744-53; Haggard and Simmons, 1987: 506-9; Zacher, 1990). It affirms the neoclassical assertion that under certain market conditions (generally referred to as "market failures"), states have mutual interests in creating regimes because collaboration and regulation can enhance the global welfare pie. In the words of James Caporaso (1993: 452), "Market failure provides a major theoretical entry point between economics and politics." Market failures include imperfect information, transaction costs, barriers to the flow of goods and services, collusion, natural monopoly, public goods, scarce common property resources, and externalities.

While scholars who focus on market failures in the study of international political economy do not have to be international liberals, most of them are since they tend to posit important mutualities of interest and the likelihood of cooperation. They do not think that distributional problems will usually undermine cooperation when the regimes in question will yield absolute gains for all or the great majority of states (for debate, see Baldwin, 1993). It is true, as Stephan Haggard and Beth Simmons (1987: 506) comment, that a functional or market correction approach is better at identifying when regimes will be demanded than when they will be supplied. However, any insights into those conditions that lead a large majority of states to anticipate absolute gains from cooperation provide insights that other theoretical approaches have not been able to offer.

In a discussion of theories of international economic relations, Peter Gourevitch (1978: 911) comments that international relations scholars have to recognize that "Interdependence is an old reality, as is anarchy. The argument ought to be about how interdependent-anarchic situations differ, not whether they are new." Commercial liberals, who Gourevitch divides into the liberal development school and the transnational relations/modernization/interdependence school, would not object to this general judgment. However, they would assert that the long-term historical trend is toward greater interdependence and stronger regimes to manage these interdependencies for the good of national populations.

Military Liberalism

A dramatic innovation in liberal scholarship in recent decades, and especially the last decade, is the emergence of military liberalism as one of the most important strands in liberal international theory. It makes two general arguments: (1) military technology and interdependencies are creating greater mutualities of interest in peace and cooperation, and (2) a reduction in the threat of military violence facilitates international economic cooperation.

The costs of war in terms of death and destruction have been an incentive for forms of international security cooperation for millennia. However, such cooperation has been infrequent, and when it has occurred, it has usually

broken down. Perhaps the most successful example of great-power collaboration until the nuclear revolution was the Concert of Europe during the half century after the Napoleonic Wars (Jervis, 1983: 178-87; Holsti, 1992). There was, however, no sense that collaboration was required because warfare had become intolerably destructive. It took the carnage of World War I to bring forth declarations that the destructiveness of armed conflict had made war unthinkable for rational statespersons (Carr, 1946; Fussell, 1975; Howard, 1978: 52-84; for twentieth century, see Bloch, 1991). Although John Mueller (1988, 1989) contends that the nineteenth century and the twentieth century through World War II saw an increasing revision toward "conventional" war that would have prevented a major war after 1945, his argument is not widely supported (Dupuy, 1980; Jervis, 1988a: 84-87).

The revolution in nuclear weapons technology, coupled with the stability in superpower relations and then the end of the Cold War, has given military liberalism a major surge in popularity among security analysts, although many so-called liberal theorists would shy away from the "liberal" label. Numerous writers have noted the irrationality and moral depravity inherent in the use of nuclear weapons and have called for either their abolition or non-use. But, more important, there have also been a growing number of scholars who have commented on the evolution of a nuclear war-prevention regime, which has become a de facto great-power war-prevention regime. The underlying theme of these writers is captured by the title of Mueller's (1989) book *Retreat from Doomday: The Obsolescence of Major War*.

The beginnings of postwar military liberalism can be traced to Bernard Brodie's (1946) book *The Absolute Weapon* in which he argues that the only real purpose of nuclear weapons is deterrence. Another landmark was John Herz's (1959) *International Politics in the Atomic Age* in which he declares, "Now that power can destroy power from center to center everything is different." Herz thought that the territorial state was doomed by its new permeability although he did not predict specific changes in global political regimes. In an article published in the late 1950s, he wrote that the nation-state

is giving way to a permeability which tends to obliterate the very meaning of unit and unity, power and power relations, sovereignty and independence. The possibility of "hydrogenization" merely rendered the traditional defense structure of nations obsolete through the power to by-pass the shell protecting a two-dimensional territory and thus to destroy — vertically, as it were — even the most powerful ones. Paradoxically, utmost strength now coincides in the same unit with utmost vulnerability, absolute power with utter impotence. (1957: 476)

In the 1960s, Herz (1976, chap. 8) modified his position on the survivability of the nation-state in the nuclear era precisely because of the emergent stability in nuclear deterrence, which was grounded in a desire to prevent horren-

dous losses of life and an explicit and tacit cooperation between the super-powers.

While many international relations scholars in the 1960s observed various specific forms of cooperation to stabilize security relations, it was not until the 1980s (especially after the dramatic changes in the Soviet Union) that scholarly consensus began to evolve from one optimistic about the stability of deterrence to one that posited the existence of a nuclear war/great-power war-prevention regime. In the late 1970s and early 1980s there was a recognition of elements of stability in strategic relations, but these relations were generally not seen as based on a long-term acceptance of norms and rules. However, by the late eighties and early nineties there were assertions that at least the developed world had become an area committed to the prevention of major warfare. One of the best statements concerning such a regime came from the diplomatic historian John Lewis Gaddis (1986), who identified various rules of the game for war avoidance (see also George, Farley, and Dalling, 1988; Weber, 1990, 1992; Rittberger, 1990; Breslauer and Tetlock, 1991; and Adler, 1991b).

Perhaps the best example of the evolution in thinking toward what we have called military liberalism is found in the writings of Robert Jervis (1978, 1983, 1988, 1989, 1991–1992) between 1978 and 1992. For Jervis there have been a number of factors that have contributed to mutual interests in war prevention in the industrialized world and the evolution of a great-power regime, but unquestionably the cornerstone of the new security regime is the existence of nuclear weaponry. He noted:

What is new about this world with nuclear weapons (or, to be more precise, mutual second-strike that is successful enough to prevent retaliation from the other) is not overkill, but mutual kill—the side that is “losing” the war as judged by various measures of military capability can inflict as much damage on the “winner” as the “winner” can on the “loser.” (1989: 5)

On this issue Kal Holsti (1991: 287, 333) wrote, “An actor cannot use such weapons in the Clausewitzian instrumental sense of war. . . . To say that any political value is worth national self-immolation and probably the destruction of modern civilization makes no sense.” He goes on to comment: “The greatest threat to the security of the modern industrial state is not a particular adversary but nuclear war and perhaps even some forms of conventional war” (see also Booth, 1991).

It is instructive to consider briefly what leading proponents of realism and neorealism say about these military developments. Hans J. Morgenthau (1966: 9, 11) remarked, “Modern technology has rendered the nation state obsolete as a principle of political organization; for the nation state is no longer able to perform what is the elementary function of any political organization: to protect the lives of its members and their way of life.” He added that “nationalism as a principle of political organization is not only obsolete; but

in the nuclear age it is also self-destructive.” Kenneth Waltz (1990: 733) wrote that “Although the possibility of war remains, nuclear weapons have drastically reduced the probability of its being fought by the states that have them. . . . Waging war has more and more become the privilege of poor and weak states.” Increasingly, the position of realist writers overlaps with liberal thought: Military interdependence leads to cooperation designed to assure peace and protect human life.

The claim that military developments affect international economic cooperation is familiar throughout international relations scholarship. A central thrust of hegemonic stability theory (whether in its realist version or its collective-goods liberal version) is that a military hegemon promotes economic cooperation through the use of carrots and sticks (Gilpin, 1975; Keohane, 1984; Snidal, 1985; Gowa, 1989; Webb and Krasner, 1989). In the future the influence of the nuclear stalemate and great-power security cooperation on economic relations could be similar to the impact of a military hegemon in that they will greatly reduce concerns about relative gains from economic cooperation. But the cooperation is likely to be more durable and to reflect liberal concerns to protect human life and welfare. These perspectives are reflected in a comment by Jervis (1991–1992: 51) that “Both the fear of dependence and concern about relative gains are less when states expect to remain at peace with each other” (see also Powell, 1991). Contrary to past trends in thinking about international relations, a primary generator of mutual interests and cooperation among nations may now be military interdependencies. Further, these increased interdependencies are probably a significant facilitator of economic, as well as security, regimes.

Cognitive Liberalism

An interest in education, reason, and knowledge is not the preserve of either modern or liberal thinkers. Thucydides (1954: 48) intended his study of the Peloponnesian War to serve a didactic purpose, noting that “It will be enough for me . . . if these words of mine are judged useful by those who want to understand clearly the events which happened in the past and which (human nature being what it is) will . . . be repeated in the future.” During the Renaissance numerous writers wrote how-to books for rulers that explained the international political world, the most famous of which is Machiavelli’s *The Prince*.

Enlightenment liberalism, however, went considerably further in its claims, suggesting that cognitive factors could have a decisive effect on the very nature of international relations. Locke and Rousseau wrote treatises on education aimed at improving the state from below by producing virtuous citizens, a strategy that would ultimately affect the nature of the international system. Kant argued that “the ultimate end of education . . . [is] to promote the realization of the peaceful international state as the embodiment of human

perfection" (Price, 1967: 237). By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many thinkers afforded education, reasoning, and knowledge a central role in their discussions of progress in international relations, including John Stuart Mill (1947), Hobson (1938; see Long, 1991), Zimmern (1936; see Markwell, 1986) and Arnold Toynbee (see Brewin, 1992).

In large measure, the above scholars were concerned with the relationship between democracy and education. From an international perspective, democracy was good; to succeed, citizens of democracies required a high level of education. But in practice foreign policy is often made without significant public participation (Henkin, 1990; Nincic, 1992). In our era scholars have begun to explore cognitive factors as important influences on policymakers' perceptions of common interests, strategies for realizing these interests, and values. One variant of this scholarship concerns how states are socialized into the norms and rules of the interstate system—an issue of particular concern to the international society school (Armstrong, 1993, especially chap. 1 and the conclusion). Pertinent to this general issue, Nye (1988: 238) has commented that "One of the most thought-provoking questions in international relations is how states learn." One might restate the question in more general terms: How do actors in international relations reason, learn, and utilize knowledge?

Answering this question has not proven easy. An early postwar effort was mounted by the functionalist and neofunctionalist schools. David Mitrany (1948, 1966) suggested that scientific and technical experts could understand mutualities of interests among countries in "technical" issue-areas and that if they assumed important decision-making roles within international organizations, there would soon develop an expanding web of international cooperation that would transform the international system. His theory rested on the ability to differentiate between technical and political issues and on the existence of common interests among peoples in the vast range of technical issues. These assumptions were viewed skeptically by many political observers (Haas, 1958, 1964: 1–50; Claude, 1964, chap. 17), but others sought to incorporate some of Mitrany's insights into a more pragmatic theory, now referred to as *neofunctionalism*. Focusing on regional patterns of integration, its proponents argued that technical experts, especially if linked to important interest groups, were a moderately influential force in furthering international integration (Haas, 1958; Lindberg and Scheingold, 1971). The neoclassical assertion that regulation can benefit all or most parties in situations of "market failure" can be seen as compatible with the functionalist tradition.

Recently, Ernst Haas (1990: 3) has investigated how international organizations respond to new knowledge by changing—or failing to change—"the definition of the problem to be solved." He concludes that over the past four centuries, scientific knowledge and the scientific method have led to a better understanding of the complex and interdependent nature of the human condition that is reflected in the policies of international organizations. Because of

this, "the successful reform of international organization is a step in the moral evolution of the human species" (Haas, 1990: 193). Although Haas rejects the label "liberal," his position is compatible with a longstanding liberal belief in the possibility of material and moral progress through the accumulation of knowledge and improvements in learning.

In a book dedicated to Haas, Emanuel Adler, Beverly Crawford, and Jack Donnelly (1991: 28) state that "For Haas, the real test of progress is whether disagreement among actors (over goals or means) is bridged with the help of more new knowledge and shared meanings and whether actors come to a more complex understanding of the issues as a result" (see Haas, 1975a, 1980, 1983, 1990; and Haas, Williams, and Bahai, 1977). Their analyses stress the importance of the knowledge generated by modern science in compelling international actors to identify problems in the same way, to appreciate their interdependent and complex nature, and to recognize the desirability of collaborative solutions. They conclude that

Perceptions of interdependence can change decision makers' calculations about the usefulness of unilateral action in states' international relations. It can trigger the creation of shared values, meanings, rights, and obligations. And it can modify the calculations by which states choose to exercise their power. Within the anarchic condition, then, interdependence can pave the way for a redefinition of states' interests in ways that can embrace human interests. (1991: 38)

This trend has received cautious support from Peter Haas (1990, 1992) in his work on the role of epistemic communities in bringing specialized knowledge into the policy-making process to promote cooperative outcomes. He and his collaborators have produced very focused studies on the success of epistemic communities in furthering international collaboration in specific issue-areas. Both competing explanations and the extent to which epistemic communities may be limited to influencing certain issue-areas are questions that require further research. Haas himself has been cautious in making generalizations about this process.

How reason, learning, and knowledge may shape the values and interests of actors, change priorities, conduce toward cooperative solutions, and ultimately affect the nature of international relations is an area that is intuitively persuasive but highly elusive as a scholarly enterprise. Work has ranged from the very general, but poorly substantiated, claims of scholars such as Mitrany to the far more narrowly focused assertions of people such as Haas. In light of the rapid escalation of information technologies, debates on our reliance on scientific knowledge, and the massive transfer of knowledge from North to South, liberal investigations into the postmodern problematic of knowledge–power relations are likely to be an increasingly fruitful area for future research.

Sociological Liberalism

A diverse group of liberal international theorists are concerned with the impact of nongovernmental aspects of international society—communications, organizational linkages, and patterns of cultural homogeneity—on states' abilities to discern mutual interests and to cooperate with regard to them. We will call these writers "sociological liberals," a term coined by Joseph Nye (1988: 246), although he focused on transnational relations. Two bodies of literature that have been particularly concerned with these sociological factors in recent years are those on political integration and transnational relations.

The scholar who has focused most on the influence of communications flows and cultural patterns is Karl Deutsch (1953, 1957, 1964, 1966). In his 1953 study Deutsch highlighted how communications flows influence cultures, people's sense of political identity, and international political integration. He defined a political community as one that "consists of people who have learned to communicate with each other and to understand each other well beyond the mere interchange of goods and services" (1953: 65). For Deutsch, the organization of the world into nation-states reflects the "uneven distribution of overlapping clusters of communications facilities" (1953: 50). However, evolving patterns of communication hold out hope that people may come to better understand "the essential unity of their fate on this planet" and consequently that "the age of nationalism and of the growth of nations may recede into its proper historical perspective" (1953: 166).

In a 1957 coauthored study on security integration, Deutsch distinguishes between pluralistic and amalgamated security communities—the latter possessing governmental structures. He relates their development to communication patterns and cultural homogeneity (especially the compatibility of main values). Not only does cultural homogeneity lead to a "we-feeling," but it creates a "mutual predictability of behavior" that eliminates "the characteristic fears of all the alleged treacherousness, secretiveness, or unpredictability of 'foreigners'" (1957: 56–57). Deutsch further acknowledges the impact of transnational and intergovernmental organizations, noting that their main value in the integration process may be that they encourage habits of communication (Deutsch, 1957: 189). Finally, in his discussion of the emergence of a pluralistic community in the contemporary North Atlantic area, where he stresses societal consensus on constitutionalism, democracy, and a modified capitalist economy, Deutsch (1957: 179) also mentions a "new political attitude which may mean a decisive break with the past: the new realization that *wars* are almost certain to be totally destructive for all parties to a conflict."

Neofunctionalist scholars of regional integration have focused on somewhat different sociological factors, particularly the emergence of transnational organizations and patterns of homogeneity. They have not been as concerned with communications patterns as was Deutsch, and they have tended to focus on interactions among elites whereas Deutsch was concerned with entire societies. Also, neofunctionalists have placed considerable importance on the

roles of intergovernmental institutions in facilitating the influence of transnational groups. Still, their focus on transnational societal characteristics and transnational groups makes them important contributors to sociological liberalism (Haas, 1958, 1970, 1976; Lindberg and Scheingold, 1971).

A strand of the sociological liberal literature that has received considerable attention since the 1970s concerns transnational relations (Keohane and Nye, 1971, 1974; Burton, 1972; Rosenau, 1980; Willets, 1982; Taylor, 1984). This concern is in part an offshoot of integration theory and also overlaps the writings on multinational corporations discussed in the section on commercial liberalism. One of its central claims is that states are losing ground in international relations to nonstate actors, but more important for the purposes of this chapter is that it posits that nongovernmental actors are able to cooperate across state lines. Democratic states find it difficult to control cooperation among nongovernmental groups, which, in fact, often pressure governments to accept cooperative ventures.

The growth in international communications and transnational actors, the rising interest in the impact of cultural patterns, and the globalization of business and industry are trends that are likely to make the concerns of sociological liberals important areas for future research. However, since changes in these factors tend to be gradual and their influence difficult to discern, research on sociological integration is not likely to have the dramatic impact on academic thinking that research on some of the other strands will.

Institutional Liberalism

While the body of international institutions that promotes liberal values is a central dependent variable of liberal scholarship, it is also seen by liberals as an important independent variable that affects the likelihood of further cooperation. Such institutions take a variety of forms ranging from transnational values or belief systems to substantive regimes to international organizations.

The relevance of transnational moral values for liberal theorists goes back to Locke and Kant, and concern with their importance has been increasing in the present era (Nardin and Mapel, 1992; Matthew, forthcoming). In a recent review of theories of multilateralism, James Caporaso (1992: 630) comments that neorealism "underestimates the extent to which cooperation depends on a prior set of unacknowledged claims about the embeddedness of cooperation habits, shared values, and taken-for-granted rules."

One approach that combines the importance of both societal values and general regulatory regimes is what has been called Grotianism, the international society school, or the English school. It contends that there is an international society of states held together by at least a minimal set of rules and formal institutions that are based on common interests and values. Within the international society school there is a "pluralist" position—states accept

certain norms and laws for the mutual protection of sovereignty and the facilitation of commerce—and a “solidarist” position—states accept norms and rules to realize common values that go beyond self-preservation and sovereignty. According to Grotius, these values are derived from natural law.

Today a more widely accepted position is Martin Wight's claim that these propositions flow from the dominant Western civilization. Of the two major British proponents of the international society school, Hedley Bull is generally regarded as representing the pluralist position while, at least in some of his writings, Martin Wight's views suggest a solidarist outlook (Bull, 1966a, 1966b, 1976, 1977a; Wight, 1966, 1977; Bull, Kingsbury, and Roberts, 1990; Miller and Vincent, 1990; Cutler, 1991; Jackson, 1991; Armstrong, 1993). Barry Buzan (1993) suggests that this distinction may be misleading for some purposes, pointing out that it is impossible for there to be a significant expansion of “international society” without some commensurate growth in “global society.” In other words, the development of international institutions or regimes requires a commensurate increase in shared values and beliefs.

Given the bifurcation that exists within the English school, one might question how well it falls within international liberalism. While a minimal pluralist stance would probably best be defined as a form of realism, the general evolution of this approach has closely followed liberal themes. Arguments set out by one of its foremost contemporary proponents, Adam Watson, are telling in this regard. Watson's (1992) recent book, *The Evolution of International Society*, documents the global expansion of the European state system and the development of important international norms and rules. He grounds these developments in familiar liberal territory: technological innovation, the growth of international economic and security interdependencies, shared ethical values, and the spillover effects of preexisting international institutions. Watson's work confirms James Mayall's (1990: 148) comment that “The modifications and additions to the original conception of international society stem from the acceptance of new principles. They are all derived, in the first instance, from liberal theory.”

The impact of transnational moral values on the evolution of cooperative regimes is addressed in a variety of specific studies. An interesting analysis by Ethan Nadelman concerns the emergence of international prohibition regimes with regard to piracy, slavery, treatment of fugitives, drug trafficking, and the killing of certain animals, which he attributes to the moral sensibilities (and power) of the European nations and the United States. He writes that

Moral and emotional factors related to neither political nor economic advantage but instead involving religious beliefs, humanitarian sentiments, faith in universalism, compassion, conscience, paternalism, fear, prejudice, and the compulsion to proselytize can and do play important roles in the creation and the evolution of international regimes. (Nadelman 1990: 480)

The most substantial literature examines the transnational moral and ethical basis of human rights regimes (Vincent, 1986; Donnelly, 1981, 1986; Forsythe,

1991; for a general discussion, see Jones, 1991). A potentially supportive literature is emerging on the impact of moral and ethical value systems on the decline of war and the rise of war-prevention regimes (Mueller, 1989; Ray, 1989). Shared values have also been viewed as undergirding the growth of the European Union—a point that is observed by neofunctionalists as well as by more historically oriented scholars (Hay, 1968; Lindberg and Scheingold, 1971). It should also not be overlooked that many international legal scholars regard international law as having its own inherent morality. Adherence to law is a good in and of itself. Its relevance to human freedom and progress is implicit in Terry Nardin's (1992: 27) comment that “States that repudiate the authority of international law remove themselves from international society, which is the closest that the international system can approach to a civil order, and withdraw into barbarism.”

Writers have tended to see the impact of transnational values on regimes as growing with the increase of interdependence and communications as well as with the growth of a global civilization. Beverly Crawford (1991: 447, 449) divides international relations theories between those that do and those that do not predict human progress, and central to the former is the strengthening of common values through the growth of interdependence. She observes that “interdependence . . . can create shared values, meanings, rights, and obligations” and that “within the anarchic condition, interdependence can pave the way for a redefinition of states' interests in ways that can embrace human interests.” This point was previously considered in the writings of Karl Deutsch (Puchala, 1981). In a similar vein, a theme of James Rosenau's *Turbulence in World Politics* (1990) is that the rise of the “global citizen” possessing cosmopolitan values and new patterns of cooperation is related to the complex and growing pattern of transactions among states (see also Linklater, 1982).

An interesting and important strand of thinking related to the impact of belief systems and general regimes has been called “reflectivism” or “constructivism.” It posits that there is a mutually causal relationship between general values or regimes, on the one hand, and the nature of actors and their interests, on the other (Ruggie and Kratochwil, 1986; Wendt, 1987, 1992; Keohane, 1988; Kratochwil, 1989). In discussing the reflectivist school, Haggard (1991: 404, 413–15) states that it seeks “to identify common norms, principles, and knowledge that orient action across states” and that “the norms that shape actor preferences themselves constitute an investigable structure.” John Ruggie (1986) makes the point in his critique of neorealism that it ignores changes in the values or intersubjective understandings that distinguish international systems. He supports his stance by analyzing the transition from the medieval to the modern international system.

While the importance of norms and belief systems has been stressed by many scholars, the aspect of international institutionalism that has attracted the most attention among liberal scholars has been the roles of international organizations and the prescriptive regimes in which they are embedded. As a recent study observes: “The liberal tradition is replete with schemes to

bolster international law [and] to create new international organizations" (Smith, 1992: 215). The faith in the ability of international organizations to reshape international politics has not been as great as it was in the interwar period, but there has been a very rich scholarship in the area (Krasner, 1983; Keohane, 1984, 1989b, 1993; Ruggie and Kratochwil, 1986; Karns and Mingst, 1990; Zacher, 1993; Ruggie, 1990). There are a number of theses in what has been called the institutionalist approach. Institutions enhance cooperation by improving the quality of information, reducing transactions costs, facilitating tradeoffs among issue-areas, facilitating enforcement of accords, and enhancing states' ethical concerns. On this latter issue Keohane (1984: 257) notes:

Empathy by the advantaged [for the disadvantaged] may be more likely to develop in the context of well-functioning international institutions than in an international state of nature that approximates Hobbes' "war of all against all." Closer approximation to the ideals of cosmopolitan morality is therefore more likely to be promoted by modifying current international regimes than by abandoning them and attempting to start all over.

Other roles of international institutions noted by some liberals are that they can promote new political loyalties (a broadening and strengthening of a community "we-feeling") and a growth in international governance. David Mitrany (1948, 1966) argued that within the context of regular international meetings, participants better understand common interests, learn the benefits of international cooperation, and gradually develop new political loyalties. These developments then spark additional cooperation. When Ernst Haas and others used Mitrany's spillover thesis as a backdrop for their studies on regional integration, the limits and possibilities of institutional impacts on political loyalties and integration became refined—and claims became more modest (Haas, 1970, 1976; Lindberg and Scheingold, 1971). Along these lines, Alexander Wendt (1992: 417), in a discussion of the European Community, argues that "A strong liberal or constructivist analysis of this problem would suggest four decades of cooperation may have transformed a positive interdependence of outcomes into a collective 'European identity' in terms of which states increasingly define their 'self'-interests." It is likely that both developments within the European Community and the growth of global regimes will promote a continued expansion of scholarship on institutional liberalism.

In reflecting on postwar writings on the six strands of liberal theory (and the emergence of a seventh—ecological interdependence), it is noteworthy that there was little important liberal scholarship during the post-1945 decade when the Cold War was developing. Then, from the mid-1950s through the 1970s, most liberal writings were concerned with sociological, cognitive, institutional, and economic questions, and even then the analyses tended to be limited to regional groupings or the Western alliance system. It was at this time that the United States, in cooperation with its European allies, was putting a clearly liberal normative stamp on the international institutions, nongovernmental networks, and national political systems of the noncommu-

nist world (Ruggie, 1992), and academic analyses were influenced by these trends. On the other hand, while within the Western world there was a growing image of liberal interdependence, outside of that sphere there was an acceptance of *realpolitik*. Almost no international relations specialists identified themselves as liberals. The resolution of the Cuban missile crisis and the détente of the late 1960s and the early 1970s led to some interest in global security cooperation, but it was very limited. (One liberal globalist of the 1950s and 1960s was Dag Hammarskjöld [Zacher, 1970].)

Liberal scholarship experienced two dramatic shifts in emphasis in the 1980s. First, there was the recrudescence of republican liberalism in the form of the "democracies do not fight each other" school. Second, beginning in the mid-1980s and exploding during and after the disintegration of the socialist bloc in the late 1980s, military interdependence became a central strand of international liberalism in terms of its projected impact on international relations. The increasing skepticism of realists' claims concerning the prevalence of relative gains in international bargaining is one manifestation of this intellectual shift (Baldwin, 1993). If the nuclear revolution abetted by the end of the Cold War leads to a great-power war-prevention regime (and possibly a mitigation of war in the Third World), we are witnessing a true transformation in both international relations and the credibility of liberal international theory. Of course, technological and political changes could always undermine the favorable trends and intellectual reorientation of recent years.

A final point that deserves highlighting is that all of these strands of liberal international theory are ultimately about enhancing the security, prosperity, and human rights of individuals. While analyses often focus on state interests and interstate interactions, the lens through which they are evaluated by liberals is how they affect the material and moral conditions of people.

CONCLUSION

This study originated with the recognition that there is no article or book that describes liberal international theory in a systematic way, provides an overview of its evolution, and links current scholarship with the theoretical core of the older literature. The preceding analysis has sought to accomplish these tasks, although it is still possible to agree with Arthur Stein (1990: 7, fn. 6) that the core elements of liberalism are disputable. Still, many international theorists would probably agree with our conceptualization of liberalism's common threads and divergent strands. Sharp differences are likely to emerge on the questions of how people and states define and redefine progress, the relative importance of the components of modernization, and the extent to which these components or strands engender or facilitate forms of cooperation conducive to progress. This concluding section provides brief comments on the major aspects of the theory and suggests future research directions relating

to these aspects. It then addresses several major issues or criticisms that are relevant to the theory as a whole.

One aspect of the theory that has not been discussed at length in this chapter concerns the *assumptions*. Indeed, compared to realists and marxists, liberals spend little time clarifying assumptions. However, the future development of the theory rests on clearly describing actors, interests, and the factors that shape actors, interests, and outcomes. For liberals the nature of these phenomena are historically contingent, and therefore conceptualizations of them must be revised constantly according to the era and issue-area under study. For example, pluralistic states can vary in important ways, and their characteristics can influence how and why they cooperate (Milner, 1992). At times liberal international theory looks like "thick description" because of the richness of the world that liberals see, but well-organized analysis and generalizations are possible. To stress the point made above, liberal scholars should try to clarify their assumptions on key matters at the beginning of their studies and should reflect on them at the end.

In very general terms, liberals argue that, by applying reason to its moral and material problems, humankind can gradually increase the freedom each individual has to pursue his or her conception of the good life. At the level of international relations, liberals have linked this general aspiration to the promotion of peace, prosperity, and justice through various forms of cooperation. *Progress* occurs when international cooperation increases. Liberals, however, rarely have been utopian—they regard progress as a gradual and uneven process. Some liberals were victims of heady optimism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but this has become muted in the postwar era. While it would be misleading to suggest that contemporary liberals have returned to the restrained and even negative outlooks of Locke and Rousseau, today they tend to see progress in terms of possibility rather than certainty. There is even some musing that the steady erosion of the Christian mythology on which liberalism was constructed could seriously undermine it in the long run (Fukuyama, 1992, chaps. 28 and 31).

There is, however, an embryonic reevaluation of progress taking shape within the liberal camp that can be labeled post-Enlightenment liberalism. It has been stimulated by ecological crises, new trends in gender relations, and even the weakening of religion. It is concerned in particular with controlling the effects of technological innovation, rethinking the nature of competitive and hierarchical relations in society, and revalorizing the need for spiritual roots. This reevaluation may provide an excellent case study of how and why people's and states' interests change. In any case, people's redefinition of progress should be at the center of the liberal research agenda as it was in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when advocates of *laissez-faire* and state intervention engaged in fervent debates. It is, of course, closely tied to understandings of people's interests and the factors that influence their transformation.

This chapter has argued that the various strands of liberal international theory represent distinct but interrelated aspects of an evolving *process* of

modernization. Three of these strands can be regarded as the backbone of a traditional liberal understanding of progress in international relations: republican liberalism, commercial liberalism, and institutional liberalism. The other three—military liberalism, cognitive liberalism, and sociological liberalism—are largely products of the twentieth century. As noted above, a seventh strand is emerging and likely to have a major impact on liberal international theory in the decades ahead—ecological liberalism. As scholars and policymakers seek to unravel the many implications for international relations of a multitude of ecological interdependencies in order to identify viable strategies for progress, many of the values and assumptions vested in other aspects of the modernization process are likely to be challenged and gradually revised.

All of the strands of liberal international theory deserve considerable attention by academic researchers. However, liberal democracy and military interdependence are likely to be the crucial generators of mutual interests in cooperation, and therefore they should be at the center of the research agenda. The implications of economic interdependence for peace, welfare, and justice have been problematic in the past, but on the whole commercial ties seem to have had positive effects. A great deal of research should be conducted on contemporary international economic interactions, given questions about their past effects, especially at the level of global distribution, and their current and future impact on the world environment. Of the three strands that are mainly facilitators of cooperation (cognitive development, sociological integration, and institutional growth), research on the former two is less developed than it is on the other strands, and a significant increase in research is called for. Of central importance are the influence of increasing knowledge on changes in values and the influence of communications and patterns of cultural homogeneity on the process of international cooperation. International institutions have been and will rightfully continue to be at the center of liberal scholarship. Analyzing the impacts of institutions on the growth in cooperation is very difficult, and intellectually inventive studies are needed.

Having discussed theoretical assumptions, progress, and the driving forces of modernization, it is important to consider two interrelated criticisms that are sometimes leveled at liberal international theory: It is too general and complex to provide a good understanding of international relations or a clear research agenda, and it cannot stand on its own and must be amalgamated with other theories to achieve a complete understanding of international politics. On the matter of the *generality* of its assumptions, the main riposte is that any evolutionary theory must leave room for changes in actors, interests, and underlying causal forces in international relations. Researchers working on certain problems in particular time periods must supply the specific content. At the same time, a recognition that collective actors such as states must be understood in terms of their constituent groups does orient researchers in ways that other theories do not. Likewise, an understanding that actor interests and international outcomes are shaped by a particular set of variables does structure theoretical investigations. The *complexity* of the causal processes does, of course, undermine theoretical parsimony, but if the world is

not simple, thinking it is simple does not enhance intellectual understanding. In fact, both realist and marxist theoretical writings have generally become much more complex because the scholars have found that their initial parsimonious outlooks could not account for certain developments. Jack Donnelly (1992) notes the many qualifications or "hedges" that realist writers introduce into their analyses; in so doing they take into consideration those factors that liberals say should be included in the basic theoretical structure. (Of relevance is the "structural realism" of Buzan, Jones, and Little [1993].) Liberals believe that international relations scholars have to accept complexity but should try to structure it as clearly as they can.

A final issue is, *Can liberal international theory stand on its own* as a comprehensive theoretical framework, or must it be integrated with other theories to develop such a framework? Relevant to this point Keohane (1989a: 175) remarks that "Liberalism does not purport to provide a complete account of international relations. On the contrary, most contemporary liberals seem to accept large portions of both marxist and realist explanations." This comment assumes that liberal international theory is only concerned with what promotes "progress" and not what sustains coercion, exploitation, and injustice. Of course, the two cannot and should not be separated. Locke and Rousseau were pessimistic about realizing liberal principles on the international scene in their era and discussed why this was the case. And Kant saw the balance of power as the central mechanism of international order in the late eighteenth century while believing that the forces of modernization would create a much more cooperative and just world over the long run. For international liberals, world politics is about evolution, and they should be concerned with all dimensions of that evolution. If liberals integrate insights from other theories into their analyses, their theoretical positions do not become less liberal as long as they adhere to the central assumptions of liberal international theory. At the core what makes international relations scholars liberals is that they think that international politics is about the changing interests of the inhabitants of states (or other entities) and that the underlying forces of change are creating opportunities for increased cooperation and a greater realization of peace, welfare, and justice. The historian Michael Howard (1978: 11) has written that such a definition would encompass most political thinkers in Britain and the United States. Perhaps international relations scholars have not recognized the central theoretical paradigm that guides scholarship in their field.

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CHAPTER 6

Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism

JOSEPH M. GRIECO

Realism has dominated international relations theory at least since World War II.¹ For realists, international anarchy fosters competition and conflict among states and inhibits their willingness to cooperate even when they share common interests. Realist theory also argues that international institutions are unable to mitigate anarchy's constraining effects on interstate cooperation. Realism, then, presents a pessimistic analysis of the prospects for international cooperation and of the capabilities of international institutions.

The major challenger to realism has been what I shall call liberal institutionalism. Prior to the current decade, it appeared in three successive presentations: functionalist integration theory in the 1940s and early 1950s, neofunctionalist regional integration theory in the 1950s and 1960s, and interdependence theory in the 1970s.² All three versions rejected realism's propositions about states and its gloomy understanding of world politics. Most significantly, they argued that international institutions can help states cooperate. Thus, compared to realism, these earlier versions of liberal institutionalism offered a more hopeful prognosis for international cooperation and a more optimistic assessment of the capacity of institutions to help states achieve it.

¹ Major realist works include E. H. Carr (1964), Hans J. Morganthau (1973), Raymond Aron (1966), Kenneth N. Waltz (1959, 1979), and Robert Gilpin (1975, 1981).

² On functionalism, see David Mitrany (1966) and Ernst B. Haas (1964). On neofunctionalism, see Haas (1958, 1968: 149-76) and Joseph S. Nye Jr. (1971: 192-231). On interdependence theory, see Richard C. Cooper (1972), Edward S. Morse (1970), and Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye Jr. (1977).

