

## **Liberalism**

- Grotius (17<sup>th</sup>), Kant (18<sup>th</sup>), Wilson (20<sup>th</sup>)
- Humans are basically good, rational, and capable of improving their lot. Injustice, aggression, and war are not inevitable but products of inadequate or corrupt social institutions or of misunderstanding among leaders.
- Aim to expand human freedom.
- Cooperation is possible and will increase because of “learning” from interactions.
- Individuals are primary actors. States are pluralistic actors affected by elections, domestic bargaining, moral principles, etc.
- Functionalism/International Regimes/Public Goods

## **Neoliberalism/Liberal Institutionalism**

- States are unitary, rational, self-interested actors – but interdependent.
- Institutions offer a framework, bargaining context, protect against cheating, and facilitate transparency – credible commitments and lower transaction costs.

## **Realism/Neorealism**

- Machiavelli (15-16<sup>th</sup>) and Thomas Hobbes (late 16<sup>th</sup>)
- Hans Morgenthau (*Politics Among Nations* 1967)/Kenneth Waltz (*Theory of International Politics* 1979)
- Individuals are power-seeking and act in a rational way to protect their own interests.
- States, as unitary actors pursuing maximum security and power, are primary entities in international politics.
- Absence of authority (anarchy) and the distribution of capabilities (power) structure relations: a state of relentless security competition.
- States are interested primarily in relative (not absolute) gains.
- International institutions are no more than a sum of their members, a tool of states.
- Rational Choice (IOs exist because they facilitate self-interested cooperation)/Hegemonic Stability

**J. Mearscheimer**

**“The False Promise of International Institutions”**

Institutions: “A set of rules that stipulate the ways in which states should cooperate with each other” (8).

Norms are standards of behavior defined in terms of rights and obligations (Krasner/Mearsch.) or standards of appropriate state behavior upon which rules are based.

“Realists and institutionalists particularly disagree about whether institutions markedly affect the prospects for international stability...Realists maintain that institutions are basically a reflection of the distributions of power in the world...They are based on the self-interested calculations of the great powers, and they have no independent effect on state behavior.” (7)

**Realism's five assumptions** about the international system:

- 1) anarchy – states independent political units with no higher authority
- 2) states inherently possess offensive military capability (are a threat to each other)
- 3) states can never be certain of others' intentions (no trust)
- 4) central motive of a state is survival
- 5) states think strategically about survival / are rational but also fallible

“When taken together...these five assumptions can create incentives for states to think and sometimes to behave aggressively.” (11)

- 1) states fear each other
- 2) each sees itself as vulnerable and alone / self-interest and self-help / temporary alliances of convenience
- 3) states try to maximize their power position over other states (greater military advantage = more security)

States are therefore “both offensively-oriented and defensively-oriented. They think about conquest themselves, and they balance against aggressors; this inexorably leads to a world of constant security competition, with the possibility of war always in the background.” (12)

## **Cooperation and IOs**

Cooperation is difficult to achieve and sustain – relative gains considerations and fear of cheating.

Institutional rules “reflect state calculations of self-interest based primarily on the international distributions of power”.

(Lib. Institutionalists)

Institutions are rooted in realities of power and interest, but matter together with power (control effects of power and interests).

Worst-case scenario assumptions are not absolutely necessary

If states are rational and they create and invest in institutions - but institutions do not matter or do anything states could not do themselves, then why?