Working Paper 2002/7

Critical liberalism in international relations

JAMES L. RICHARDSON

Canberra, September 2002

Published by Department of International Relations
RSPAS
Australian National University
Canberra ACT 0200
Australia
Tel: +61 (2) 6125 2166
Fax: +61 (2) 6125 8010
Email: intrel@anu.edu.au
Web: http://rspas.anu.edu.au/ir

Cover by RTM Design.

Richardson, James L., 1933- .
Critical liberalism in international relations.

ISBN 0 7315 3122 1.

1. International relations. 2. Liberalism. I. Australian
National University. Dept. of International Relations.
II. Title. (Series : Working paper (Australian National
University. Dept. of International Relations) ; no. 2002/7).

327.101

© James L. Richardson

Department of International Relations

Working Papers

The Department's Working Paper series provides readers with access to current research on international relations. Reflecting the Department's intellectual profile, the series includes topics on the general theoretical and empirical study of international and global politics, the political dynamics and developments in the Asia–Pacific region, and the intersection between the two.

Publication as a 'Working Paper' does not preclude subsequent publiccation in scholarly journals or books, indeed it may facilitate publication by providing feedback from readers to authors.

Unless otherwise stated, publications of the Department of International Relations are presented without endorsement as contributions to the public record and debate. Authors are responsible for their own analysis and conclusions.

Abstract

A number of recent developments have prompted a revival of interest in liberal theories of international relations, among them the spread of democratic institutions, economic liberalisation and the increasing significance of international institutions in many aspects of life. This paper argues that liberal international relations theory, overimpressed by developments such as these, risks becoming an apologia for a narrow version of liberalism currently promoted by Western governments. The challenge of rethinking the meaning of liberalism in a 'globalising' world characterised by extreme economic inequality, social upheavals and the reassertion of cultural differences—and the questions whether and how liberal values can at all be realised in such a world—have been left to political theorists, whose struggles with these issues attract little interest in an international relations discipline still largely committed to the idea of a purely empirical social science. The paper suggests that a different, 'critical' conception of liberalism offers a way of relating pressing liberal normative concerns to empirical research, instead of seeking to keep the two entirely separate. It presents a critique of current liberal international relations theory and outlines an alternative approach.

Critical liberalism in international relations

JAMES L. RICHARDSON[1]

In 2001, I published a study, *Contending liberalisms in world politics*, which argued that liberalism has never been a unitary philosophy but that there has always been tension among the ideas and values which are seen as constituting the liberal tradition.[2] At the present time there is a vast distance between the radical liberalism of certain normative theorists and the elitist 'neoliberalism' of the international financial institutions and Western governments. The book drew attention to the significance of these differences for policy in a number of areas. In particular, radical liberals reject the increasing inequality and deprivation and the withdrawal from the public provision of basic services which are the hallmarks of neoliberalism, and see a link between these developments and the unprecedented levels of violence in many parts of the world. From this perspective the events of 11 September 2001 serve as a wakeup call. Even though these particular atrocities were not a direct consequence of poverty and deprivation, the dire economic and social conditions in much of the world, and the disowning of public responsibility for alleviating them, provide fertile ground for support of violence of many kinds.

International relations theory—more precisely, the main theoretical schools in the heartland of the discipline, the United States—is strangely silent concerning these issues. It does not address the conditions which prompt all manner of protest and violence, nor for that matter the efforts of contemporary political theorists to come to terms with the tensions and far-reaching changes in present day societies. Liberal international relations theorists celebrate the seeming realisation of certain traditional liberal goals—(relatively) free economic intercourse, the ascendancy of liberal democracy, and the pervasive activity of international institutions—but do

[1] Emeritus Professor, Australian National University. This paper has benefited from discussions with Ursula Vollerthun, a seminar on a related topic at the Institut für Interkulturelle und Internationale Studien, University of Bremen, and comments by the Department of International Relations' reader.

[2] James L. Richardson, *Contending liberalisms in world politics: Ideology and power* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2001).

not stop to inquire into the normative character of the ensuing (at least ostensibly) liberal order. Political theorists' struggles to rethink the practical meaning of liberalism in a world vastly changed from that of the doctrine's eighteenth century origins are disregarded by international relations theorists, except for a small band of 'normative theorists' consigned to the periphery of a discipline still committed to the idea of an empirical social science untainted by 'value judgements'.[3]

The book developed a critique of current liberal international relations theory, not with a view to its total rejection but rather to demonstrate the need for its thoroughgoing reformulation. The final chapter foreshadowed the kind of theoretical reorientation that this might entail. In particular, it would do away with the rigid separation between empirical and normative theory which, as in other social sciences, narrows down the scope of inquiry and renders scholars insensitive to the normative premises and consequences of their theories.[4] And liberal theory would not limit itself to demonstrating—contra the familiar arguments of the realist school—the feasibility of realising the traditional liberal idea of international order, but would address the question of the normative character of the order being promoted in the name of liberalism, and the related question, which version of liberalism was being implemented.

These suggestions form the starting point for the present paper, which will spell out the view of liberal international relations theory which is foreshadowed in the book. The first section takes a step back, asking 'why liberal theory?', and goes on to consider 'which liberal theory?'. Why, if one is not satisfied with the realist view of contemporary world politics, should one opt for liberal theory? It comes naturally to American theorists to perceive liberalism as *the* alternative to realism, but this is by no means evident to those outside the United States. It will be argued that liberal

3 The comment refers to the discipline in the United States. The American view remains extremely influential. In this respect the discipline in the UK constitutes a notable exception.

4 This does not imply that there is *no* distinction between empirical statements and normative 'value judgements'. There is a distinction, just as there is, for example, between the empirical and the logically necessary. But the normative cannot be excluded from the social sciences, any more than logical deduction. The language is never free from normative connotations; normative assumptions are never wholly absent from social-scientific inquiries; and the studies are embedded in larger philosophical/ideological traditions, as in epistemological traditions.

theory of a certain kind, here termed critical liberalism, does indeed offer a promising framework for understanding the changing character of contemporary world politics and for theorising about international order which addresses both normative and empirical issues. The second section examines the 'normative deficit' of contemporary liberal international relations theory—the weaknesses that stem from its exclusion of normative theorising—and draws attention to normative theories which a more adequate liberalism would need to take into account. The third section outlines a critical liberal perspective on research currently inspired by liberal theory and, more broadly, liberal approaches to international relations, drawing attention to issues to which critical liberalism would give greater emphasis and to new lines of inquiry which it would open up—a critical liberal 'research agenda'.

Before embarking on this discussion, however, there is a normative assumption which calls for clarification. The book does not question the traditional liberal ideal of a world in which liberal rights and freedoms are enjoyed by all. The prevailing Western discourse assumes that this 'universalist' ideal is legitimate and desirable, but this is challenged by those who regard it as a form of imperialism. The issue is most sharply defined in the debates on human rights: are they (as understood in the West) universally valid, or can other cultures claim equal legitimacy for different views of rights and obligations, based on quite different conceptions of social and political life? Liberal theorists cannot simply assume that a liberal world is desirable: unless they are willing to qualify their position, they need to offer a justification for it.

Some liberal theorists are edging away from the claim to universalism, but John Gray is atypical in explicitly abandoning it. Instead, he formulates a 'communitarian liberal' position: liberal ideas 'are not embodiments of universal principles ... but local understandings grounded in particular forms of common life'.[5] According to this view, liberal norms are appropriate and desirable in Western societies, where they are

5 John Gray, *Endgames: Questions in late modern political thought* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), p. 17.

embedded in the political culture, but not necessarily in societies whose culture gives rise to quite different social philosophies and ideals.

While this is a coherent response to the current questioning of liberal universalism, it amounts to a far-reaching break with the liberal tradition. It is very difficult for liberals not to maintain that it is (morally) desirable that liberal rights and freedoms be observed in other countries. This is more especially the case insofar as there are persons, and often movements, in most countries who share these values; cultures are not monolithic. Indeed, Gray himself earlier identified universalism—defined as belief in the moral unity of mankind—as one of the essential elements in liberal thought.[6]

There is currently no philosophical justification for liberalism which enjoys general acceptance among liberals themselves, and even if there were, this would be no reason for non-liberals to accept it.[7] For practical political purposes, however, there is no insuperable problem in endorsing liberalism as a universal ideal while acknowledging that others may legitimately support different ideals. This, after all, was the position of liberal movements for most of their history, except in the United States. And toleration of dissent—of 'difference'—with all the dilemmas that it entails, was part of the original liberal creed.

In the current international context this line of thought suggests that Western liberals may quite legitimately offer moral support to liberals elsewhere, but that governmental intervention on behalf of liberal norms is problematic. Moral support does not amount to a demand that liberal norms be implemented forthwith. In some circumstances this might be impracticable or imprudent: ineffective if coming from a weaker party, but a form of intervention if coming from a stronger party disposing of various forms of leverage. The legitimacy of intervention, and the circum-

6 John Gray, *Liberalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. x.

7 Political and philosophical differences are very considerable, even among American liberal theorists, and they are far greater when European liberals such as Isaiah Berlin are taken into account. For American liberalism, see Christopher Wolfe and John Hittinger, eds, *Liberalism at the crossroads: An introduction to contemporary liberal theory and its critics* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1994). For a critical exposition of Berlin's thought, see John Gray, *Isaiah Berlin* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).

stances which may justify it, are perennial issues of contention among liberals. Recent debate has focused on humanitarian intervention, but there are issues relating to social, economic and cultural intervention which merit far greater attention than they normally receive.[8] But these are questions for a different occasion: the point here is merely to signal the normative position from which the paper proceeds.

WHY LIBERAL THEORY, AND WHICH LIBERAL THEORY?

It is argued in *Contending liberalisms* that realism is inadequate as an overarching theory—or 'paradigm', as the term is used in the international relations discipline—for contemporary international politics.[9] It has little to offer concerning the potential for systemic change ('globalisation') nor the central causal dynamics of the present system. This is not to say that geopolitical conflict has been rendered irrelevant, but merely that it no longer dominates world politics. While for the American discipline this points to liberalism as the alternative paradigm, elsewhere a range of other options presents itself—such as constructivism, critical theory, or the English School's conception of international relations not in terms of a single paradigm but as constituted by debate among contending theoretical traditions.

It is not argued here that liberalism is superior to all of these. However, several reasons may be suggested for opting for liberal theory at the present time—not, it will be argued, as a paradigm, but as a framework within which the empirical and the normative may be fruitfully interrelated. First, as empirical theory it focuses on major dimensions of change in contemporary international relations which, when taken together, point to the likelihood that fundamental systemic change is under way. It is increasingly plausible to conclude that the balance of power system of the past few centuries, and the decisive role therein of

8 See, for example, David Williams and Tom Young, 'Governance, the World Bank and liberal theory', *Political Studies* 42(1) 1994, pp. 84–100.

9 For an earlier statement of the argument, see James L. Richardson, 'The end of geopolitics?', in Richard Leaver and James L. Richardson, eds, *Charting the post-Cold War order* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1993), pp. 39–50. See also Richardson, *Contending liberalisms*, pp. 10–12, 67–70 and 74–5.

hegemonic war, are being superseded. There are currently two versions of the system which may be taking its place. The most familiar is that it is dominated by a coalition of industrialised democracies, their economies increasingly interdependent, forming a 'security community' and utilising a variety of means, including a network of international institutions, to maintain their controlling position. An alternative view, not yet so fully developed in the international relations literature, is that it is essentially an imperial system, distinguished from previous empires precisely by its liberal character.[10]

Second, in contrast to the structural emphasis in most social science theory, liberalism offers a prospect of bringing structure and agency within a common focus. It is in the first instance a theory of agency, and some versions of liberal theory neglect structure. However, as the two conceptions of the present international system just noted make clear, structural change is a core concern of a historically grounded liberalism. Even so, liberal theory does not readily address questions such as whether there are structural prerequisites for the practical realisation of liberal values, and what these may be. Thus it is likely that it needs to be supplemented by other (structural) theories in a way that, by definition, a paradigm does not.

A third distinguishing feature of liberal theory is that it engages closely with the liberal discourse which permeates the public and governmental discussion of foreign policy. This has both advantages and risks for theorising. It ensures that the theorist enters the conceptual world of the actors themselves (a virtue that Hans Morgenthau claimed exclusively for realism);[11] but it holds the risk that the theorist becomes an apologist for the actors, a rationaliser of a particular order—a familiar criticism of realist theory. On balance, the critical interplay between the governmental discourse and liberal political thought provides a fruitful context for

10 For the first view see, for example, Barry Buzan and Richard Little, *International systems in world history: Remaking the study of international relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 313. For the second, G. John Ikenberry, 'Liberal hegemony and the future of American postwar order', in T.V. Paul and J.A. Hall, eds, *International order and the future of world politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 123–45.

11 Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among nations: The struggle for power and peace*, 4th edition (New York: Knopf, 1967), p. 5.

theorising.[12] It avoids the sterility of theory entirely divorced from political practice, and the 'outside' theoretical perspective permits the 'inside' governmental perspective to be viewed critically—essentially as ideology.

Today's governmental discourse highlights a number of longstanding liberal themes, each of which has prompted an extensive literature: the benefits of commerce (and more recently interdependence/globalisation); the spread of democracy; the need for effective international institutions; and the promotion of human rights. In their essentials these go back to the formative period of liberal thought in the eighteenth century. This time-honoured agenda has been greatly extended by contemporary normative theorists inquiring into the implications of liberal values in a vastly changed international context. This has led to the formulation of new concepts such as global distributive justice, human security and human development, while other liberal thinkers have been concerned with the claims of women and the persecuted and dispossessed—not solely liberal concerns, but claims which many liberals find compelling. However, governmental policies and the official discourse lag far behind these developments in liberal political theory and, sad to say, liberal empirical international relations theory remains close to the official discourse, little influenced by these developments in political thought.

This is not to say that liberal international relations theory simply reiterates old themes: it has indeed been modified since 1945, but only to take account of structural features of the international system which are highlighted in realist theory. The writings of Stanley Hoffmann and Robert Keohane illustrate two contrasting ways in which this has been done. Hoffmann qualifies his liberal normative theorising in the light of a realist analysis of the constraints imposed by international politics, while Keohane incorporates some central realist concepts into his version of liberal theory, which has been termed 'neoliberal institutionalism'.[13] The

12 Similarly, while realist formulas may sometimes be no more than rationalisations, 'classical' realist theory offers a broad framework for the evaluation of policy. The major theorists could well be termed critical realists.

13 This tension is a recurring theme in Hoffmann's discussion of foreign policy and in his normative study *Duties beyond borders: On the limits and possibilities of ethical international politics*

one approach retains a strong sense of the tensions between ideal and constraint, the other sets this aside in the search for common theoretical ground. The present discussion follows Hoffmann rather than Keohane: that is to say, it sees power structures as major constraints impeding the realisation of liberal values.

These, however, are very limited modifications of the traditional liberal approach. Liberal theory should also take account of constraints stemming from the international political economy, that is to say from the structure and dynamics of the capitalist system—a primary force for change in international politics. Arguably, if geopolitical conflict predominated during the Cold War, the driving force now comes from the economic domain, in particular from the leading actors in the private sector, multi-national corporations and financial institutions.[14] These 'global players' are far removed from the myriad anonymous actors subject to a beneficent 'hidden hand' which are depicted in the liberal economists' theory of the market; they are more akin to the 'cold monsters' of realist imagery. A system dominated by these actors presents major obstacles to the realisation of liberal values. Liberals need to take account of theories which illuminate this system, notably the neo-Gramscian theory developed by Robert Cox and a now considerable school.[15]

(Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1981). For Robert Keohane, see his 'Institutional theory and the realist challenge: After the Cold War', in David A. Baldwin, ed., *Neorealism and neoliberalism: The contemporary debate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 269–300, and his *International institutions and state power: Essays in international relations theory* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1989).

14 Does the war against terrorism require a revision of this judgement? It does not signal a return to traditional geopolitical conflict, but is more analogous to the early nineteenth century 'Holy Alliance' of the conservative powers, which sought to subordinate geopolitical rivalry to an overriding ideological purpose: the defeat of liberalism! From a liberal perspective the war on terrorism is misconceived: the adversary is ill-defined and almost infinitely open to political manipulation, and the 'war' diverts attention from the primary causes of violence and suffering at the present time.

15 Some of the main theoretical papers are reprinted in Stephen Gill, ed., *Gramsci, historical materialism and international relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). For more recent commentary and critique, see Randall D. Germain and Michael Kenny, 'Engaging Gramsci: International relations theory and the new Gramscians', *Review of International Studies* 24(1) 1998, pp. 3–21; Craig N. Murphy, 'Understanding IR: Understanding Gramsci', *Review of International Studies* 24(3) 1998, pp. 417–25; and Mark Rupert, '(Re-)engaging Gramsci: A response to Germain and Kenny', *Review of International Studies* 24(3) 1998, pp. 427–34.

But the updating of liberal international relations theory needs to go further: in particular, to take account of the rethinking of liberalism in contemporary political theory, and in doing so to break with the separation between the empirical and the normative. Critical liberalism, as understood here, would proceed from a recognition of the plurality of liberal values and the tensions among them: for example, between freedom and equality, toleration and universalism, or property and equal rights.[16] Empirical theory and research would be guided by normative theory, which in turn would take account of empirical analysis of constraints and practicalities.

As we have seen, many of today's tensions among liberal values find expression in the clash between neoliberal and radical-liberal conceptions of contemporary international order. What distinguishes critical liberalism is not its particular standpoint in such controversies but its approach. It insists that the plurality of values be taken seriously, not dissolved by assumption or by arbitrary definition. Thus it rejects what Kenneth Minogue terms the liberal salvationist heresy, which results from one-sided commitment to a single value, disregarding the others. As Minogue expresses it, liberalism is normally a moderate, balanced doctrine, but 'is nonetheless a prolific generator of fanaticisms (when) one particular part of the liberal program ... has become obsessive and overriding'.[17]

Viewed historically, today's neoliberalism with its over-riding priority for economic freedom (understood in a certain way) is a typical salvationist heresy. Critical liberalism is not necessarily radical, even though in today's context, with power in the hands of single-minded neoliberal elites, those committed to a critical liberal approach are normally found in the radical camp. Isaiah Berlin, who developed his doctrine of value pluralism in a quite different context (essentially a critical liberal view, as understood here) was no radical—but nor was he a

[16] Most historians of liberalism refer to a multiplicity of values, for example, individual freedom, toleration, the private sphere, property, equal rights and opportunities, and a commitment to improvement, reform, reason and progress. Gray proposes four categories of values: individualism, egalitarianism, universalism and meliorism. Attempts to postulate a single over-riding value remain unconvincing. See Richardson, *Contending liberalisms*, pp. 17–20.

[17] Kenneth R. Minogue, *The liberal mind* (London: Methuen, 1963), pp. 66–7.

supporter of neoliberalism.[18] It is not conservatism or elitism which excludes neoliberals from critical liberalism, but their commitment to a single-value concept of liberalism.[19]

In arguing that normative theory should have an integral place in the discipline, this paper adopts an approach akin to that of the 'English School'.[20] However, it does not employ characteristic English School concepts such as international system, international society and world society. Nor does it advance any larger claims on behalf of the English School. While most scholars identified with that School adopt positions which may reasonably be termed liberal, there is no characteristic English School liberal theory. For better or worse, contemporary liberal international relations theory is a creation of the American discipline. It offers a substantial corpus of systematic theory, thus providing a nucleus for the extension/reformulation of liberal international relations theory proposed in the third section of the paper.

CONTEMPORARY LIBERAL INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

American empirical liberal international relations theory is notable for its fragmentation among different schools, each with its separate literature, the most prominent of which relate to democracy and peace, commercial liberalism/economic interdependence, and international institutions and

18 See, for example, Isaiah Berlin, *Four essays on liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969); and Gray, *Isaiah Berlin*.

19 This is most obvious in the case of polemical authors such as Milton Friedman, but even Friedrich Hayek, despite his extensive philosophical writings, is at pains to uphold a narrow doctrine, dismissing considerations that are important for other liberals. See, for example, his uncompromising rejection of the idea of social justice, in his *Law, legislation and liberty: A new statement of the liberal principles of justice and political economy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976).

20 Barry Buzan, 'The English School: An under-exploited resource in IR', *Review of International Studies* 27(3) 2001, pp. 477–88, takes the view that the centrality of normative theory is not an essential tenet of the English School's view of the discipline. This paper follows the traditional view that it is—as recently reaffirmed by Tim Dunne, *Inventing international society: A history of the English School* (London: Macmillan, 1998). See also Robert M.A. Crawford, 'Where have all the theorists gone? Gone to Britain, every one?', in Robert M.A. Crawford and Darryl S.L. Jarvis, eds, *International relations—Still an American social science? Toward diversity in international thought* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), pp. 221–42.

regimes.[21] The first of these highlights the significance of the absence of war between democratic states, the second the positive consequences of commerce and interdependence, and the third the increasing role of international institutions at the present time.

There is no reason to doubt that these developments tend to promote liberal values, but it is also clear that they do so very imperfectly. Adverse social, cultural and/or economic conditions may render formal democratic institutions virtually meaningless; trade and other forms of interdependence, and the institutions that regulate them, may be so skewed in favour of the wealthy at the expense of the impoverished that they negate liberal aspirations in the greater part of the world. Present levels of inequality, which have increased significantly during the past two decades, provide a setting as unconducive to the realisation of liberal values as that of seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe, when liberal ideals were first formulated. At that time there was no attempt to extend liberal rights and freedoms beyond the relatively well to do; the position is uncomfortably similar in today's global setting.

Empirical liberal theory lacks a framework for addressing these deficiencies. Like the official discourse, it is silent concerning power, justice and inequality. But theory that remains close to the official discourse risks becoming apologia. The starting point for critical liberalism, on the other hand, is its awareness of the massive contradictions between liberal aspirations and the reality of life in much of what used to be termed the Third World and even among the underprivileged in the West itself. Viewed in this perspective, empirical liberal theory's claims appear highly problematic. The arguments of each of the theoretical schools may be plausible when viewed narrowly in their own terms, but not when they are viewed in relation to a more demanding conception of liberal values. This becomes clear as the claims of each school are examined in turn.

21 As many as six such areas have been identified. For a discussion of the three noted here, see Robert O. Keohane, 'International liberalism reconsidered', in John Dunn, ed., *The economic limits to modern politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 165–94. See also Richardson, *Contending liberalisms*, pp. 71–85.

The first school, the democratic peace, has established impressive empirical support for the thesis that democracies do not go to war against one another.[22] The present issue is not the adequacy, or otherwise, of this claim and the theories that seek to explain it, but the question of its larger normative significance. Traditionally, liberals have seen war as an avoidable evil: evil not only because of the loss of life and suffering that it entails, but also because of the utter negation of liberal values; avoidable because in principle the world of states could be organised such that conflicts were resolved in the same, non-violent way as in liberal states, through bargaining and compromise.

Today, however, satisfaction over peace among the major states, most of them affluent democracies, is qualified by the realisation that, far from creating favourable conditions for peace in the rest of the world, the security community of the powerful is accompanied by unprecedented levels of internal war elsewhere, with appalling violence and massive denial of human rights and all other liberal values. However this may be explained, the situation itself is deeply disturbing. Liberalism has always been essentially cosmopolitan, holding out the prospect of improvement for all peoples, not just a favoured few. The benefits of peace among the rich and powerful are greatly to be welcomed, but there is no ground for liberal 'triumphalism' so long as they remain limited to the fortunate. Yet contemporary liberal theory on peace and security avoids confronting the situation of the disadvantaged, which poses the most intractable problems of the present.

Some theorists take note of this dichotomy to the extent of postulating a bifurcated world: on the one hand a peaceful liberal 'core' consisting of democracies and their associates, whose relations are governed by liberal norms; on the other hand a violent realist 'periphery' made up of unstable states prone to internal violence, whose relations are governed by naked power.[23] But such an image, with its implication that liberal theory applies

22 See, for example, Harvey Starr, *Anarchy, order, integration: How to manage interdependence* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), pp. 111–37; and Miriam Fendus Elman, 'The never-ending story: Democracy and peace', *International Studies Review* 1(3) 1999, pp. 87–103.

23 James M. Goldgeier and Michael McFaul, 'A tale of two worlds: Core and periphery in the post-Cold War era', *International Organization* 46(2) 1992, pp. 467–91. For a more nuanced account, see Buzan and Little, *International systems in world history*, pp. 353–6.

only to the relatively well off, is thoroughly unsatisfactory. It not only overlooks the many cases between the two extremes, but also the forces making for 'globalisation' and the extent to which the core shapes and constrains economic, military and even cultural conditions in the periphery. In characterising the dichotomy as 'global apartheid', some radical authors underline, and indeed accentuate, the responsibility of the core states for those conditions.[24] A realist might accept the dichotomy as unavoidable, but a liberal must look to the potential for remedying it, and cannot long remain satisfied with assurances that history, or the market, will eventually bring about whatever alleviation is possible. An analysis which limits itself to observing the dichotomy scarcely merits the name liberal.

The second school highlights the importance of free commerce and interdependence, both in enhancing wealth and in creating material incentives for the maintenance of peace. The question, however, is whether the benefits, which always entail some 'losers' even among the better off, are realised at all in the case of the more disadvantaged countries. The Western states, while insisting on access to the markets of the latter, notoriously restrict the import of their products, depriving them of income, in all probability, greater than their total receipts from 'aid'. However, even if the trading system worked fairly, it is not clear that the poorer countries would benefit. Where there are extreme inequalities in levels of development, the liberal assumption of the universal benefits from trade may be a myth: some may lack the wherewithal to participate. Interdependence, while reinforcing the security community of the rich and powerful, tends to deepen the gulf between rich and poor—exacerbating the adverse conditions noted above. Traditional liberal thought never envisaged such stark inequalities, and the issue receives little attention in contemporary international relations theory.[25]

It is true that international relations scholars do not, by and large, share their economist colleagues' enthusiasm for the untrammelled market, but

[24] For a discussion of this metaphor, see Richard Falk, *Predatory globalization: A critique* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), pp. 13–17.

[25] Until recently the issue received greater attention in the UK than in the US. See, for example, Andrew Hurrell and Ngaire Woods, eds, *Inequality, globalization and world politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). See also note 40 below.

accord an important role to international institutions in the economic domain, as well as in relation to security. The interests of the third, institutional strand in liberal theory include the conditions under which international cooperation is possible (typically analysed by means of game-theoretic models), studies of the way in which institutions affect the behaviour of states, and the working of international regimes.[26] The normative discussion of regimes, however, is infrequent;[27] the normative evaluation of the 'order' which the regimes seek to maintain is not seen as falling within the ambit of 'mainstream' international political economy.[28]

This task is assigned to normative theory which, as we have seen, has become artificially separated from empirical theory. Today's normative theorists address a broad range of concerns, including those of critical liberalism; indeed, certain of their debates provide a starting point for the formulation of a critical liberal position. The boundaries between liberalism and other schools of contemporary political thought are not clearly defined, because in a liberal culture they share considerable common ground. In some respects normative international relations theory reads as an extension of political theory, that is to say, the distinctive ideas which have been debated since the striking revival of political theory in the years following the publication of John Rawls's *A theory of justice* in 1971.[29] In other respects, however, it is a more direct response to developments in world politics.

Theorising on global distributive justice—to take one major area of contemporary normative theory—can be viewed in both contexts: a response to the salience of North–South issues in the 1970s, and also a

26 See, for example, Peter J. Katzenstein, Robert O. Keohane and Stephen D. Krasner, '*International Organization* and the study of world politics', *International Organization* 52(4) 1998, pp. 645–85.

27 For an exception, see Robert O. Keohane, *After hegemony: Cooperation and discord in the world political economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 247–57; nonetheless, Keohane refrains from developing the conclusions which his analysis appears to suggest.

28 Susan Strange, '*Cave: Hic dragones*: A critique of regime analysis', *International Organization* 36(2) 1982, pp. 479–96; the critique has lost none of its relevance.

29 John Rawls, *A theory of justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971); and Will Kymlicka, *Contemporary political philosophy: An introduction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

debate conducted in the idiom of contemporary political theory.[30] The issue itself is new: it could arise only when the level of economic development and interdependence brought the question of redistribution on a global scale into the realm of the practicable. One extreme position is taken up by Rawlsian theorist Charles Beitz who, contrary to Rawls himself, extends into international relations the Rawlsian principle that inequalities are justified only if they benefit the most disadvantaged.[31] If this were translated into practice, however, it would require a program so far from the practicable that it is often seen as little more than an intellectual exercise. Potentially more influential is the utilitarian argument that the gains from achieving a reasonable level of subsistence for all should count for more than the marginal losses that such a redistribution would entail for the affluent. Another position which corresponds to a widespread ethical intuition is Onora O'Neill's differentiation of obligations towards members of nearer and more distant communities.[32] Ranged against all these are theorists who deny flatly that justice entails redistribution: libertarians such as Robert Nozick, for whom the state has no right to use taxation to redistribute income, or 'classical' liberals such as Friedrich Hayek, for whom social justice is a concept void of meaning.[33]

The issue area of human rights—a second important focus of theorising—is closer to immediate policy concerns. Placed firmly on the international agenda in reaction to their massive violation by Nazi Germany, human rights became embroiled in Cold War polemics until the Carter administration sought to give them a new priority, inadvertently exposing the pressures which militate against a consistent human rights

30 See, for example, Chris Brown, *International relations theory: New normative approaches* (Brighton: Harvester/Wheatsheaf, 1992), pp. 155–92; and Janna Thompson, *Justice and world order: A philosophical inquiry* (London: Routledge, 1992).

31 Charles R. Beitz, *Political theory and international relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

32 Onora O'Neill, *Bounds of justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

33 Robert Nozick, *Anarchy, state and utopia* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1974); and Friedrich Hayek, *Law, legislation and liberty: A new statement of the liberal principles of justice and political economy*, Vol. 2, *The mirage of social justice* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976).

diplomacy. The ensuing controversy prompted theorising about the content of human rights (should economic, social and cultural rights be accorded the same standing as civil and political rights?) and the justification of human rights claims (are rights universal or culturally contingent?). These debates brought out tensions present just below the surface in liberal thought.

In particular, liberals have been divided over whether human rights extend beyond the classical civil and political rights. Those influenced by the social liberalism of the middle decades of the twentieth century had no doubt of the validity of economic and social rights—without which civil and political rights can become purely formal. One significant response to the new salience of North–South issues in the 1970s was Henry Shue's singling out of subsistence rights as meriting equal priority with the core civil and political rights—a powerful rejoinder to those who had sought to discredit economic and social rights on the basis of the more extravagant claims that have unwisely been included in the relevant international agreements.[34] The subsequent neglect of Shue's thesis provides a telling indication of governmental priorities in the ensuing decades.

These are not the only areas of recent normative liberal international relations theory: another issue which prompted wide-ranging debates is the justification for humanitarian intervention. Many aspects of the new theorising are synthesised in the publications of the World Order Models Project, which looks to an order based on radical-liberal principles which are constantly invoked in the rhetoric of Western governments, only to be disregarded in practice.[35] Certain other types of theory overlap with liberalism—most notably feminist theory. There are feminists of many different ideological persuasions, yet the demand for an end to gender discrimination is eminently liberal. Insofar as women are more disadvantaged than men in most socioeconomic situations, a feminist perspective sharpens the perception of the issues raised by radical liberals. But

34 Henry Shue, *Basic rights: Subsistence, affluence and American foreign policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

35 For an overview, see Richard Falk, *The promise of world order: Essays in normative international relations* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987), pp. 1–33.

feminist thought extends well beyond liberalism, and indeed beyond the normal agenda of political theory.

It is not surprising that the revival of normative theory at the periphery of the international relations discipline has had no perceptible influence on political practice. The dichotomy between empirical and normative theory has prevented the discipline—that is to say, the American discipline and those who take their lead from it—from addressing in any effective way the issues posed by the attempt to construct an international order along neoliberal lines. It is true that there is little explicit support within the discipline for neoliberal doctrine, but there is tacit support in that empirical theorists of all schools depict the present order, to the extent that it is liberal, as benign—a world of peaceful democracies, of beneficial economic intercourse and of liberal norms and regimes. They convey no sense of the difficulty of preserving liberal values in today's global setting. Critical liberalism, on the other hand, would highlight the normative deficits of the neoliberal project and would encourage the search for more acceptable alternatives, notwithstanding the formidable obstacles that are all too evident. The next section examines the kind of reorientation of liberal international relations theory which this would require.

CRITICAL LIBERALISM: NEW LINES OF INQUIRY

Critical liberalism does not present a new theory as such, but rather a framework within which both normative and empirical issues, and their inter-relationship, may be addressed systematically. Among the central normative questions would be: to what extent does the contemporary order make it possible to realise the multiple values that constitute the liberal tradition, and what would need to be changed in order to do so more adequately? Should liberal ideals be rethought in the light of contemporary developments, and if so, in what way? And given that the liberal vision cannot be realised in its entirety, which priorities are especially urgent? Empirically, what are the main constraints which impede the realisation of liberal values? To what extent have some of them been weakened (for example, the constraints of 'power politics', highlighted by realist theory) while others may have become stronger (such as those imposed by the present configuration of capitalism)? More concretely, how may liberal values be realised in a world characterised by widespread violence and civil war, profound cultural differences, extreme

economic inequality, an unprecedented uprooting of peoples, and increasing ecological constraints?

This amounts to a vast agenda, within which the present fragmented strands of liberal theory could find their place. Such a reconceptualisation and extension of liberal theory does not amount to a new paradigm: it is not a single overarching theory, and needs to be supplemented by other theories. But it makes possible a systematic interweaving of normative theory and empirical theory and research, including policy-oriented research. Empirical theory as developed by the present schools would be seen as postulating law-like regularities of varying generality. Each of the strands discussed above would form only part of a wider issue area. The democratic peace would be part of the issue area concerned with security peace/order and violence; economic liberalisation, part of that concerned with interdependence/globalisation/inequality and justice; and institutions would be discussed in terms of representativeness ('democratisation') as well as management. These larger issue areas are not self-contained, but overlap: for example, order and security require some consideration of legitimacy/justice, and also of appropriate institutions. In order to make clearer the nature of the critical liberal approach it is convenient to classify theory and research under these three headings, noting especially issues which have been neglected. A fuller discussion could be expected to extend the list of issue areas.

Peace and security

This vast issue area, the traditional core agenda of international relations, is frequently seen as divided between realism and liberalism. Realism provides the framework for conventional security studies, liberalism for 'alternative' approaches such as peace research. The former, crudely speaking, is concerned with maintaining order through coercion, the latter with resolving the underlying conflicts by organising political life such that they can be managed peacefully.

Traditionally, liberal thought on security did not limit itself to democratisation and the creation of appropriate international institutions. A further liberal assumption—that a durable international order must satisfy certain requirements of justice—came into focus in the debates over the Treaty of Versailles. More recently peace research, albeit with little explicit reference to liberal theory, developed new applications of the

liberal approach to conflict: for example, Cold War strategies which provided alternatives to the purely coercive (deterrence) and a variety of specific means for resolving or mitigating conflict.

Liberalism does not offer a ready-made theory to explain today's levels of violence in the non-Western world, nor of ethnic conflict in particular, but does offer a framework for thinking about causes, norms and procedures. High on the list of general conditions making for violent conflict would be perceived injustice: not inequality as such, but levels of inequality that are perceived as illegitimate or as resulting from unfair discrimination. Economic disruption or a worsening of already adverse conditions, in the context of increasing global awareness of conditions elsewhere, are readily seen as arousing a sense of injustice. Where violence is directed internally, as against rival ethnic groups, this may be because it is only here that the disadvantaged see any immediate prospect of improving their lot, and opportunistic leaders see benefit in inciting local animosities.

In such situations it is pointless to prescribe liberal norms simplistically, but liberal thought offers instructive guidelines in relation to conflicts where any resolution depends on striking a balance among competing claims, not simply applying certain fixed principles. Depending on the particular situation, minority rights or representation, general rules against discrimination, cultural autonomy or in extreme cases self-determination may offer a basis for accommodation. Economic support is often seen (and not only by liberals) as enhancing the chances of acceptance of any settlement. Likewise, there is nothing exclusively liberal about theorising on the practical questions of mediation, negotiation and implementation of agreements, even though much of this agenda, and the extensive experience of the United Nations in these areas, are derived from the liberal approach to international relations. Clearly, in all these areas there is scope for developing and refining theories based on the liberal approach to conflict, and thus contributing to constructive policy thinking.

Do the events of 11 September 2001 require these propositions to be reconsidered? Arguably, notwithstanding the horrific nature of the atrocities, initial reactions greatly overstated the novelty of the challenge. The familiar tension between realist and liberal approaches could soon be discerned.

Certain governments seized on the war on terrorism as an opportunity to pursue purely coercive strategies against internal 'terrorist' adversaries. Liberals called for attending to the underlying causes of support for terrorist movements. Bearing in mind the lack of an agreed definition of terrorism, they warned against hasty generalisation: especially where 'terrorists' enjoyed widespread support, purely coercive responses were likely to prove counter-productive. September 11 presented new problems for policy makers, intelligence organisations and specialists in security studies but not, at the more general level, for international relations theory.[36]

Looking beyond the adaptation of the traditional liberal approach to new circumstances, does current liberal theory have anything new to offer in relation to security? One topic which is coming into focus is the significance of cultural differences, an issue which burst into prominence with the publication in 1993 of Samuel Huntington's 'clash of civilisations' thesis, but which had long been a concern of the English School.[37] Huntington prompted debate on whether civilisational relations are primarily conflictual, the English School on whether cultural differences preclude agreement on basic principles of international order. They may leave room for pragmatic agreements, but do they rule out an order based on shared values and norms? There is no clearly defined liberal position in the ensuing debates, but commentators of liberal persuasion tend to see cooperation as much as conflict among cultures and deny that they are monolithic or unchanging, perceiving instead a degree of cultural interpenetration and even shared values. As we have seen, confidence in liberal universalism has been shaken, but there are also attempts to reformulate it.

Engaging with these issues brings a new dimension into liberal security thinking. There is a new awareness of the issue of cultural imperialism. Whether a distinctively Western political philosophy can offer acceptable norms for a global political culture (underpinning an international order) is one of the major questions of the age. Or can liberalism be reformulated

36 There has been a longstanding interest in unconventional threats in security studies, albeit a minority interest. At a more general theoretical level the subject of non-state actors has been attracting increasing interest, most recently in the context of globalisation, where the concept of the network is coming into vogue.

37 Samuel P. Huntington, 'The clash of civilizations?', *Foreign Affairs* 72(3) 1993, pp. 22–49.

to render it less 'Western'? Can there be a cosmopolitanism which leaves room for cultural normative differences?[38] There is as yet no classic reformulation of liberal doctrine on this set of issues.

A second area of theorising, not initially presented as liberal yet a quintessentially liberal idea, is the concept of human security. This crystallised in the course of radical critiques of traditional state-centred security thinking, in response to the questions: security of what, from what? The concept postulates that the individual is the ultimate point of reference. Security is understood not just in relation to external military force but against all manner of threats to human life, freedom and well-being—including, for example, threats to the personal security of women. This radical extension of the security agenda is, needless to say, contested, but can be seen as the logical culmination of liberal security thinking, a perspective which inter alia brings human rights squarely on to the security agenda instead of being seen as unrelated, and potentially inimical to security concerns.[39] In some sense a revival of the 'utopian' strand in liberalism, the ideal of human security may be seen as a reminder of the aspirations which have always been present in liberal thought, a corrective to the narrow preoccupations of much of what now bears the liberal label.

Not surprisingly, peace and security is a heterogeneous issue area in which the short and long term, the urgent and the aspirational, need to be distinguished but may not be wholly separable. Developments in world politics and in political theory have posed new questions and brought out new aspects of some old ones. There is no lack of issues that call for deeper theoretical analysis. There is also the question whether, for all its diversity, this issue area can be presented in a more unified, systematic

[38] Martha C. Nussbaum, *Women and human development: The capabilities approach* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), argues for 'a form of universalism that is sensitive to pluralism and cultural difference' (p. 8). See also Bhikhu Parekh, 'Non-ethnocentric universalism', in Tim Dunne and Nicholas J. Wheeler, eds, *Human rights in global politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 128–59; the issue of universalism is a recurring theme in this work.

[39] For a recent overview, see Edward Newman, 'Human security and constructivism', *International Studies Perspectives* 2(3) 2001, pp. 239–51. For a feminist perspective, J. Ann Tickner, *Gendering world politics: Issues and approaches in the post-Cold War era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), pp. 36–64.

manner than its separate literatures would suggest: in other words, can there be a liberal theory of peace and security at the present time, as distinct from many specific theories within a broad liberal approach?

Commerce and justice

It is not surprising, given the strength of the liberal tradition equating free commerce with peace and prosperity, that liberal international relations scholars welcome the intensification of economic interdependence which is often identified with globalisation. While mildly dissenting from their economist colleagues' unqualified enthusiasm for the market, they have not seriously challenged their commitment to all-round economic liberalisation. In effect, the issue area of commercial liberalism has been left to the economists—and the neoliberal ideologues.

There is now increasing awareness that this was a mistake. After two decades of the neoliberal ascendancy—vigorously promoted by the politically influential sector of the economics profession—it is becoming impossible to overlook the inequalities and tensions generated by the neoliberal version of globalisation, and the increasing neglect of those at the margins of subsistence. The wave of anti-globalisation protests beginning in Seattle in November 1999 served as a 'wakeup call'. It is now a commonplace that while globalisation has seen the enrichment of the already wealthy, for many it has entailed severe disruption and hardship—a worsening of the conditions of life for those already in the direst circumstances. The major Western governments, the G-7, have paid no more than lip-service to redressing this situation: ever-declining resources are allocated to the 'relief of poverty' in the aid-dependent countries. September 11 brought a new sense of urgency to the public discussion of these issues, but for the governments they remain in the realm of rhetoric—purely 'declaratory policy'.

Nonetheless, issues relating to justice and the 'new inequality' have gained a new salience in the international relations discipline.[40] The

40 See, for example, Craig N. Murphy, 'Political consequences of the new inequality', *International Studies Quarterly* 45(3) 2001, pp. 347–56; Richard Higgott, 'Contested globalization: The changing context and normative challenges', *Review of International Studies* 26(Special Issue) 2000, pp. 131–53; and Jan Aart Scholte, *Globalization: A critical introduction* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000). The special anniversary issue to mark the 75th year of the journal *International Affairs*

climate has become more favourable to the theorists of global distributive justice, who may be said to have occupied the normative high ground at a time when their message found no resonance—the decades of the neoliberal ascendancy. The normative defence of neoliberalism had been surprisingly thin. Nozick's extreme individualism had never been plausible in the international context, while Hayek's denial that questions of justice could be raised in market relationships was reminiscent of the realist denial that ethics has any place in international relations, the refutation of which is the necessary preliminary to normative international relations theory. Contemporary economics is for the most part normatively inarticulate, and the early neoliberal claim that the self-regulating market would benefit all parties was never plausible except to true believers.[41]

Support for the neoliberal ideology was never so much intellectual as political: from powerful corporate and financial interests, from political leaders for whom it offered simple solutions and applause from influential quarters, and from economist bureaucrats who gained a new ascendancy in policy making. Neoliberalism also derived important support from its congruence with American political culture, which has remained resistant to social liberalism.

Notwithstanding their philosophical differences, the liberal theorists of global distributive justice concur in seeing the current extremes of inequality as unacceptable, because of their practical consequences—a view which is reinforced by those human rights theorists for whom the right to subsistence, like the right to life itself, is a prerequisite for the enjoyment of all other rights and freedoms. There is a great deal of room for moving in the direction of greater justice and freedom before the theoretical disputes would acquire practical relevance. For theorists of subsistence rights it is important that this concept be accepted instead of the vaguely defined 'alleviation of poverty' preferred by Western

was devoted to justice in the world economy; for an overview, see Nicholas Rengger, 'Justice in the world economy: Global or international or both?', *International Affairs* 75(3) 1999, pp. 469–71.

41 This normative inarticulateness is acknowledged by economists themselves; see Richardson, *Contending liberalisms*, p. 161. The work of Amartya Sen constitutes a notable exception.

governments and the World Bank. Subsistence rights can be spelled out in very specific terms, such as the availability of adequate food and clean water. Alleviating poverty is an open-ended formula which commits governments to nothing. The term ‘subsistence rights’ points to deprivation of a different order from the relative poverty now widespread in Western societies, which the official discourse glosses over. For radical liberals this issue is a normative priority, and presents for the time being not theoretical issues but practical problems: to devise feasible policies and even more to win political support for a policy change that would require a combination of pressure from below and a change in decision makers’ ideological orientation.

Beyond these promptings to policy-oriented research, there are challenges to liberal theorising in political economy. The most fundamental would be to obtain a closer understanding of the structural constraints which have thus far rendered the radical vision ineffectual—in other words, the sources of support for neoliberalism, including the interplay between the structural and the ideological. A second kind of project would be an inquiry into the limits of commercial liberalism: under what conditions is ‘free’ economic intercourse indeed beneficial to all parties, and when not? The inquiry would not be limited to economic considerations such as the ‘market imperfections’ acknowledged in economics, but would address political, social and cultural conditions and their inter-relationship with the economic. A third might be the reappraisal of development studies in the light of liberal normative theory—a topic on which Amartya Sen has made a pioneering contribution which invites scrutiny and following up.

International institutions and regimes

A focus on justice would bring back the long neglected societal perspective to the study of international institutions, complementing the managerial perspective, whose implicit normative criteria amount to efficiency in carrying out prescribed tasks. Regimes would be assessed for their societal effects, especially on the conditions of the globally disadvantaged: not only in allocating costs and benefits but also in opening

up or foreclosing opportunities and empowering or disempowering the underprivileged.[42]

This would require a major change of emphasis in the study of international institutions. As in economics, empirical modelling has been overemphasised at the expense of critical normative analysis which, inter alia, would require close study of the working of specific institutions, which in recent years has been left largely to journalists.[43] While academic research cannot emulate the immediacy of good journalism, it can deepen the normative understanding of institutions and in doing so prompt specialised research along different lines from those suggested by empirical theory or by immediate political concerns. The study of key institutions such as the World Trade Organization or the World Bank would need to be complemented by the study of specific regimes (for example, those relating to food, water or health), where the interaction between public and private actors raises questions of equity especially acutely. Such studies might, for example, seek to establish the essential characteristics of programs guided by a justice orientation, and the extent of the changes in current practice that would be entailed.

Present institutional studies are not free from the traditional liberal downplaying of the significance of power. The consequences of inequalities in power are better understood in the international security domain than in the political–economic—perhaps reflecting the power-blindness of the economics discipline, perhaps the neglect of the societal perspective. The classical political questions—who benefits, who suffers, and who prevails?—are seldom addressed; the issues are seen as technical and managerial. The study of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) is beginning to remedy this deficiency, but a broader refocusing of international political economy is overdue.

42 For the capabilities approach see Amartya Sen, *Development as freedom* (New York: Knopf, 1999); and Nussbaum, *Women and human development*.

43 See, for example, Catherine Caufield, *Masters of illusion: The World Bank and the poverty of nations* (London: Macmillan, 1997).

The demand for the democratisation of international institutions raises issues of power, as well as conceptual and normative issues.[44] In the case of the international financial institutions, for example, it is easier to conceive of their becoming more representative than anything amounting to democratisation. Complementary approaches therefore need to be explored. For example, while the representative credentials of NGOs may be questionable, their involvement in 'dialogue' with the major institutions has the benefit of exposing closed decision making circles to public debate.[45] And the anti-globalisation protests have done more than numerous expert critiques to restore to the political agenda North–South issues long silenced in the neoliberal discourse. It has become clear that meaningful democratisation must develop from below in a variety of ways, and must involve not just expert networks but also local communities.[46]

Genuine democratisation would have major consequences for the flagging project of 'development', where there is no lack of alternatives to the failed neoliberal orthodoxies, but a lack of institutions with the mandate and resources to implement any of them. A revival of the international commitment to the development of the many disadvantaged countries not yet in a position to compete in the global market would require not only greater resources but also a new strategy, which in turn in all probability would require that the task not be entrusted to the present institutions, the World Bank/International Monetary Fund partnership, but to a new institution, or to an existing body such as the UN Development Program with a new mandate. However, if such a program is to be something more than just another 'top-down' strategy imposed from outside, it will need to be flexible enough to be adjusted to local conditions. Democratisation, in the sense of local participation, could hold

44 The principal theorist in this area is David Held. See his *Democracy and the global order: From the modern state to cosmopolitan governance* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).

45 See, for example, Robert O'Brien, Anne Marie Goetz, Jan Aart Scholte and Marc Williams, *Contesting global governance: Multilateral economic institutions and global social movements* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

46 That is to say, it is necessary to revive a tradition—participatory democracy—for which the prevailing 'Schumpeterian' democracy promoted by the West has no place. See Richardson, *Contending liberalisms*, pp. 129–31, 134.

the key to the effectiveness of any future international development endeavour.

CONCLUSION

This paper has proposed a reformulation of liberal international relations theory which would have major repercussions for the discipline. It has argued that, while liberalism offers a promising framework for the study of contemporary international relations, existing liberal theory is unable to realise this potential. This can be ascribed to the narrowness of its focus and its insistence on a total separation between the empirical and the normative.

Critical liberalism offers a broad framework within which these deficiencies could be overcome. The existing separate 'islands' of empirical theory would be located within larger issue areas in which normative theory and empirical theory and research would be inter-related. In confronting the issues raised by the attempt to construct a neoliberal international order, critical liberalism would repair one of the more remarkable omissions in contemporary international relations theory. More generally, the critical liberal framework invites theorists to engage more constructively with liberal practice, deepening the analysis behind policy thinking; and at the theoretical level it opens up new possibilities—for establishing linkages among separate theoretical literatures and for identifying issues at present neglected in the discipline.

Department of International Relations

PUBLICATIONS

Send all orders to:
RSPAS Publishing (PICS)
Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies
The Australian National University
Canberra ACT 0200 Australia
Phone: +61 2 6125 3269 Fax: +61 2 6125 9975
E-mail: jo.bushby@anu.edu.au
Web: http://rspas-bookshop.anu.edu.au

KEYNOTES

01 **The Day the World Changed? Terrorism and World Order**,
by Stuart Harris, William Maley, Richard Price, Christian Reus-Smit and Amin Saikal

02 **Refugees and the Myth of the Borderless World,**
by William Maley, Alan Dupont, Jean-Pierre Fonteyne, Greg Fry, James Jupp, and Thuy Do

WORKING PAPERS

WP2002/7 **Critical Liberalism in International Relations**,
by James L. Richardson

WP2002/6 **Bringing Legitimacy Back in to Neo-Weberian State Theory and International Relations,** by Leonard Seabrooke

WP2002/5 **Corruption is Bad: Normative Dimensions of the Anti-Corruption Movement**, by Mlada Bukovansky

WP2002/4 **Lost at Sea: Australia in the Turbulence of World Politics**,
by Christian Reus-Smit

WP2002/3 **Normative Progress and Pathological Practices: The Modern State and Identity Politics**, by Heather Rae

WP2002/2 **Obligation and the Political Authority of International Law**,
by Christian Reus-Smit

WP2002/1 **Engendering International Relations: What Difference Does Second-generation Feminism Make?,** by Jacqui True

WP2001/4 **Hegemony, Not Anarchy: Why China and Japan are Not Balancing US Unipolar Power**, by Peter Van Ness

WP2001/3 **Threat Perception and Developmental States in Northeast Asia**, by Tianbiao Zhu

WP2001/2 **Political Crises in Northeast Asia: An Anatomy of the Taiwan and Korean Crises**, by Stuart Harris

WP2001/1 **Relating Global Tensions: Modern Tribalism and Postmodern Nationalism**, by Paul James

WP2000/4 **The English School in China: A Story of How Ideas Travel and are Transplanted**, by Yongjin Zhang

WP2000/3 **Death of Distance or Tyranny of Distance? The Internet, Deterritorialisation, and the Anti-Globalisation Movement in Australia**, by Ann Capling and Kim Richard Nossal

WP2000/2 **Globalisation and Security in East Asia**, by Peter Van Ness

WP2000/1 **Managing the US Base Issue in Okinawa: A Test for Japanese Democracy**, by Aurelia George Mulgan

WP1999/5 **Internationalisation: What Scholars Make of It?,** by Natasha Hamilton-Hart

WP1999/4 **The Asian Regional Response to its Economic Crisis and the Global Implications**, by Stuart Harris

WP1999/3 **ASEAN and the Southeast Asian 'Haze': Challenging the Prevailing Modes of Regional Engagement**, by James Cotton

WP1999/2 **Australia and Nuclear Arms Control as 'Good International Citizenship'**, by Marianne Hanson

WP1999/1 **South Pacific Security and Global Change: The New Agenda,** by Greg Fry

WP1998/3 **The Rise of an Environmental Superpower? Evaluating Japanese Environmental Aid to Southeast Asia,** by Peter Dauvergne

WP1998/2 **Environmental Insecurity, Forest Management, and State Responses in Southeast Asia,** by Peter Dauvergne

WP1998/1 **The ASEAN Regional Forum. A Model for Cooperative Security in the Middle East?**, by Michael Leifer

WP1997/8 **From Paternalism to Partnership: Australia's Relations with ASEAN**, by John Ravenhill

WP1997/7 **Globalisation and deforestation in the Asia–Pacific**, by Peter Dauvergne

WP1997/6 **Corporate Power in the Forests of the Solomon Islands**, by Peter Dauvergne

WP1997/5 **From Island Factory to Asian Centre: Democracy and Deregulation in Taiwan**, by Gregory W. Noble

WP1997/4 **The Foreign Policy of the Hawke–Keating Governments: An Interim Review**, by James L. Richardson

WP1997/3 **Hedley Bull and International Security**, by Samuel M. Makinda

WP1997/2 **Island Disputes in Northeast Asia**, by Andrew Mack

WP1997/1 **Nuclear 'Breakout': Risks and Possible Responses**, by Andrew Mack

WP1996/9 **The Rajin-Sonbong Free Trade Zone Experiment: North Korea in Pursuit of New International Linkages**, by James Cotton

WP1996/8 **The Declining Probability or War Thesis: How Relevant for the Asia–Pacific?**, by James L. Richardson

WP1996/7 **The China–Japan Relationship and Asia–Pacific Regional Security**, by Stuart Harris

WP1996/6 **You Just Don't Understand: Troubled Engagements Between Feminists and IR Theorists**, by J. Ann Tickner

WP1996/5 **Framing the Islands: Knowledge and Power in Changing Australian Images of 'The South Pacific'**, by Greg Fry

WP1996/4 **The Constructivist Turn: Critical Theory After the Cold War**, by Chris Reus-Smit

WP1996/3 **Why Democracies Don't Fight Each Other: Democracy and Integration**, by Harvey Starr

WP1996/2 **The New Peacekeepers and the New Peacekeeping**, by Trevor Findlay

WP1996/1 **Ameliorating the Security Dilemma: Structural and Perceptual Approaches to Strategic Reform**, by Andrew Butfoy

WP1995/10 **Contending Liberalisms: Past and Present**, by James L. Richardson

WP1995/9 **Industry Policy in East Asia: A Literature Review**, by Heather Smith

WP1995/8 **Recasting Common Security**, by Andy Butfoy

WP1995/7 **Russian Policy Towards the 'Near Abroad': The Discourse of Hierarchy,** by Wynne Russell

WP1995/6 **Culture, Relativism and Democracy: Political Myths About 'Asia' and the 'West',** by Stephanie Lawson

WP1995/5 **The World Trade Organisation—Throwing the Baby Out With the Bath Water**? by P.A. Gordon

WP1995/4 **The Neo-Classical Ascendancy: The Australian Economic Policy Community and Northeast Asian Economic Growth**, by Trevor Matthews and John Ravenhill

WP1995/3 **In Search of a New Identity: Revival of Traditional Politics and Modernisation in Post-Kim Il Sung North Korea**, by Alexandre Y. Mansourov

WP1995/2 **Implications of Taiwan–Chinese Relations for Australia**, by Stuart Harris

WP1995/1 **New Light on the Russo–Japanese Territorial Dispute**, by Kimie Hara

WP1994/10 **China's Public Order Crisis and Its Strategic Implications**, by Greg Austin

WP1994/9 **Nuclear Endgame on the Korean Peninsula**, by Andrew Mack

WP1994/8 **Human Rights and Cultural Specificity: The Case of Papua New Guinea**, by Michael Jacobsen

WP1994/7 **'Climbing Back onto the Map?': The South Pacific Forum and the New Development Orthodoxy**, by Greg Fry

WP1994/6 **The Asia–Pacific: Geopolitical Cauldron or Regional Community?,** by James L. Richardson

WP1994/5 **North Korea's Nuclear Program: the Options are Shrinking**, by Andrew Mack

WP1994/4 **Policy Networks and Economic Cooperation: Policy Coordination in the Asia–Pacific Region**, by Stuart Harris

WP1994/3 **Australia's Regional Security Environment**, by Stuart Harris

WP1994/2 **The Future of Asia–Pacific Security Studies in Australia**, by Pauline Kerr and Andrew Mack

WP1994/1 **Inter-Civilisation Conflict: A Critique of the Huntington Thesis**, by Jacinta O'Hagan

WP1993/10 **Nuclear-Free Zones in the 1990s**, by Andrew Mack

WP1993/9 **Australian Security in the 1990s**, by Andrew Mack

WP1993/8 **Concepts of Security in the Post-Cold War**, by Andrew Mack

WP1993/7 **An American New World Order?**, by James L. Richardson

WP1993/6 **The Return of Practical Reason**, by Hayward R. Alker, Jr.

WP1993/5 **Gaddis' Lacuna: Foreign Policy Analysis and the End of the Cold War**, by Valerie Hudson

WP1993/4 **The Environment and Sustainable Development: An Australian Social Science Perspective**, by Stuart Harris

WP1993/3 **Environmental Regulation, Economic Growth and International Competitiveness**, by Stuart Harris

WP1993/2 **Strategic Trade Policy: The East Asian Experience**, by Trevor Matthews and John Ravenhill

WP1993/1 **The Practice of Common Security: China's Borders with Russia and India**, by Gary Klintworth

WP1992/10 **Arms Proliferation in the Asia–Pacific: Causes and Prospects for Control**, by Andrew Mack

WP1992/9 **Nuclear Dilemmas: Korean Security in the 1990s**, by Andrew Mack

WP1992/8 **The Case For a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone in Northeast Asia**, by Andrew Mack

WP1992/7 **The Gulf War and Australian Political Culture**, by James L. Richardson

WP1992/6 **The Economic Aspects of Pacific Security**, by Stuart Harris

WP1992/5 **Moving Target—Korea's Nuclear Proliferation Potential**, by Peter Hayes

WP1992/4 **Federalism and Australian Foreign Policy**, by Stuart Harris

WP1992/3 **New Hierarchies in East Asia: The Post-Plaza Division of Labour**, by Mitchell Bernard and John Ravenhill

WP1992/2 **Questions About a Post-Cold War International Order**, by J.L. Richardson

WP1992/1 **After the Cold War and the Gulf War: Prospects for Security in the Asia–Pacific**, by Andrew Mack

WP1991/10 **The Korean Nuclear Issue**, by Song Young Sun

WP1991/9 **Implementing Foreign Policy: The Environmental Challenge**, by Stuart Harris

WP1991/8 **Australia and the South Pacific: From 'Strategic Denial' to 'Constructive Commitment'**, by Greg Fry

WP1991/7 **'Civil Society' and Nationalism in North Korea: Foundations for Political Change?,** by James Cotton

WP1991/6 **The Drawbacks of the Detached View: Russia, the USSR and the Pacific**, by Artem Rudnitskiy

WP1991/5 **China as a Third World State: Foreign Policy and Official National Identity**, by Peter Van Ness

WP1991/4 **Foreign Policy Analysis, International Relations Theory, and Social Theory: Critique and Reconstruction**, by Ian Bell

WP1991/3 **Continuity and Change in Cooperative International Regimes: The Politics of the Recent Environment Debate in Antarctica**, by Lorraine M. Elliott

WP1991/2 **Middle Powers and International Sanctions: Generic Theory Reconsidered**, by Kim Richard Nossal

WP1991/1 **International Trade, Ecologically Sustainable Development and the GATT**, by Stuart Harris

WP1990/10 **The Influence of the United Nations on the Antarctic System: a Source of Erosion or Cohesion?,** by Stuart Harris

WP1990/9 **The Limits to Liberalisation in Industrialising Asia: Three Views of the State**, by James Cotton

WP1990/8 **Informal Theories of Rationality**, by James L. Richardson

WP1990/7 **Peacekeeping in the South Pacific: Some Questions for Prior Consideration**, by Greg Fry

WP1990/6 **The Politics of Baltic Nationalisms**, by William Maley

WP1990/5 **Is Unilateral Trade Liberalisation the Answer?,** by Trevor Matthews and John Ravenhill

WP1990/4 **India in Southwest Asia**, by Amin Saikal

WP1990/3 **The Environmental Challenge: The New International Agenda**, by Stuart Harris

WP1990/2 **The Soviet Far East**, by Geoff Jukes

WP1990/1 **Middle Power Leadership and Coalition Building: The Cairns Croup and the Uruguay Round**, by Andrew Fenton Cooper and Richard A. Higgott

WP1989/5 **Economic Change in the International System Implications for Australia's Prospects**, by Stuart Harris

WP1989/4 **Analysing the Impact of International Sanctions on China**, by Peter Van Ness

WP1989/3 **The Politics of Reassurance: Egypt and the Arab World, 1977–1987**, by Ralph King

WP1989/2 **Agricultural Trade and Australian Foreign Policy in the 1990s**, by Stuart Harris

WP1989/1 **The Changing Central Balance and Australian Policy**, by Coral Bell

STUDIES IN WORLD AFFAIRS

Ethics and Foreign Policy, edited by Paul Keal

Korea Under Roh Tae-woo: Democratisation, Northern Policy, and Inter-Korean Relations, edited by James Cotton

1. **Asian–Pacific Security After the Cold War**, edited by T.B. Millar and James Walter
2. **The Post-Cold War Order: Diagnoses and Prognoses**, edited by Richard Leaver and James L. Richardson
3. **Dependent Ally: A Study in Australian Foreign Policy**, 3rd ed., by Coral Bell
4. **A Peaceful Ocean? Maritime Security in the Pacific in the Post-Cold War Era**, edited by Andrew Mack
5. **Asian Flashpoint: Security and the Korean Peninsula**, edited by Andrew Mack
6. **Taiwan in the Asia–Pacific in the 1990s**, edited by Gary Klintworth

7. **Pacific Cooperation: Building Economic and Security Regimes in the Asia–Pacific**, edited by Andrew Mack and John Ravenhill
8. **The Gulf War: Critical Perspectives**, edited by Michael McKinley
9. **Search for Security: The Political Economy of Australia's Postwar Foreign and Defence Policy**, by David Lee
10. **The New Agenda for Global Security, *Cooperating for Peace* and Beyond**, edited by Stephanie Lawson
11. **Presumptive Engagement: Australia's Asia–Pacific Security Policy in the 1990s**, by Desmond Ball and Pauline Kerr
12. **Discourses of Danger and Dread Frontiers: Australian Defence and Security Thinking After the Cold War**, edited by Graeme Cheeseman and Robert Bruce
13. **Pacific Rim Development: Integration and Globalisation in the Asia–Pacific Economy**, edited by Peter J. Rimmer
14. **Evatt to Evans: The Labor Tradition in Australian Foreign Policy**, edited by David Lee and Christopher Waters
15. **Cambodia—From Red to Blue: Australia's Initiative for Peace**, by Ken Berry
16. **Asia–Pacific Security: The Economics–Politics Nexus**, edited by Stuart Harris and Andrew Mack
17. **China's Ocean Frontier: International Law, Military Force and National Development**, by Greg Austin
18. **Weak and Strong States in Asia–Pacific Societies**, edited by Peter Dauvergne
19. **Australian Outlook: a History of the Australian Institute of International Affairs**, by J.D. Legge
20. **Transforming Asian Socialism: China and Vietnam Compared**, by Anita Chan, Benedict J. Tria Kerkvliet, and Jonathan Unger
21. **The Politics of Nuclear Non-Proliferation**, edited by Carl Ungerer and Marianne Hanson

CANBERRA STUDIES IN WORLD AFFAIRS

CS21 **Politics, Diplomacy and Islam: Four Case Studies**, edited by Coral Bell

CS22 **The Changing Pacific: Four Case Studies**, edited by Coral Bell

CS23 **New Directions in International Relations? Australian Perspectives**, edited by Richard Higgott

CS24 **Australia and the Multinationals: A Study of Power and Bargaining in the 1980s**, by Neil Renwick

CS25 **Refugees in the Modern World**, edited by Amin Saikal

CS27 **Northeast Asian Challenge: Debating the Garnaut Report**, edited by J.L. Richardson

CS28 **The ANZUS Documents**, edited by Alan Burnett with Thomas-Durell Young and Christine Wilson

CS29 **Human Rights in the Asia–Pacific Region**, edited by John Girling

CS30 **International Relations: Global and Australian Perspectives on an Evolving Discipline**, edited by Richard Higgott and J.L. Richardson

AUSTRALIAN FOREIGN POLICY PAPERS

Australia's Alliance Options: Prospect and Retrospect in a World of Change, by Coral Bell

Coping With Washington: Players, Conventions and Strategies, by Davis Bobrow

The European Community in Context, by John Groom

Australia's Human Rights Diplomacy, by Ian Russell, Peter Van Ness and Beng-Huat Chua

Selling Mirages: The Politics of Arms Trading, by Graeme Cheeseman

The Search for Substance: Australia–India Relations into the Nineties and Beyond, by Sandy Gordon

Protecting the Antarctic Environment: Australia and the Minerals Convention, by Lorraine Elliott

Australia's Taiwan Policy 1942–1992, by Gary Klintworth

Australia and the New World Order: Evatt in San Francisco, 1945, by W.J. Hudson

The Beijing Massacre: Australian Responses, by Kim Richard Nossal

The Pacific Patrol Boat Project: A Case Study of Australian Defence Cooperation, by Anthony Bergin

A Select Bibliography of Australia's Foreign Relations, 1975–1992, compiled by Pauline Kerr, David Sullivan and Robin Ward

Australia's Evolving American Relationship: Interests, Processes and Prospects for Australian Influence, by Henry S. Albinski