The Liberal Perspective

I. Assumptions and Approach
II. Liberal Idealism
III. Neoliberal Institutionalism
IV. Problems with the Liberal Perspective
I. Assumptions & Approach

• Non-State actors are important in IR
• States are not unitary actors
• States are not fully rational actors
• Agenda of IR more than just security
• Security dilemma not as overwhelming or pervasive as Realists contend
II. Liberal Idealism

• **Problem**: Power politics leading to WW I
  – Alliances
  – Secret Treaties
  – Arms Races

• **Human nature essentially good**

• **Problems (i.e., wars) from poor governance, not evil people (or nations)**

• **Solution**: Create effective multilateral institutions to achieve collective security
Liberal Idealist Reforms

• Woodrow Wilson’s ‘Fourteen Points’
  – International Institutions (i.e., League of Nations)
  – International Law (e.g., Kellogg-Briand Pact 1928)
  – Disarmament
  – National Self-Determination
  – General Rejection of Balance of Power Politics

• Failed because it could not prevent Second World War!
III. Neoliberal Institutionalism

• Anomalies to Realist perspective (i.e., Peace in Europe)

• Factors mitigating the security dilemma...
  - International Organizations
  - Trade/Interaction
  - Common Values/Goals and International Regimes
    • International Regime = a set of principles, norms and rules governing behavior within a specified issue area (NOTE: slightly different from Nau)

• Leads to ‘positive sum’ IR not based solely on power!
Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, “Realism and Complex Interdependence”

- Under Complex Interdependence:
  - 1. Multiple channels connect societies
  - 2. Absence of hierarchy among issues
  - 3. Military force less important

- Q: What evidence (writing in late 1970s) leads them to question the realist viewpoint?

- Q: Does complex interdependence apply globally?

- "We do not argue, however, that complex interdependence faithfully reflects world reality. Quite the contrary: both it and the realist portrait are ideal types." p. 45
Summary of Liberalism

• Anarchy and the security dilemma, but...
• International organizations, economic interdependence, common ideals ALTER the calculations of states within that anarchic framework
• All serves to increase trust and cooperation between states, creating a POSITIVE CYCLE of peace and stability
IV. Problems with the Liberal Perspective

- The persistence of conflict under interdependence
- The limitations of international institutions
- The stubborn health of nationalism and separateness

These guys can only do so much…