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# POLITICS

UK GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS  
POLITICAL IDEAS  
GLOBAL POLITICS

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# 17

## Comparative theory

Comparative theory helps with understanding and predicting the behaviours of states in global politics. The two main theories are realism and liberalism. They have very different priorities and approaches to how nation states should interact with each other.

### Key term

**Realism** A theory of global politics based on the principle that nation states are the main actors in international relations and that conflict is more likely than cooperation.

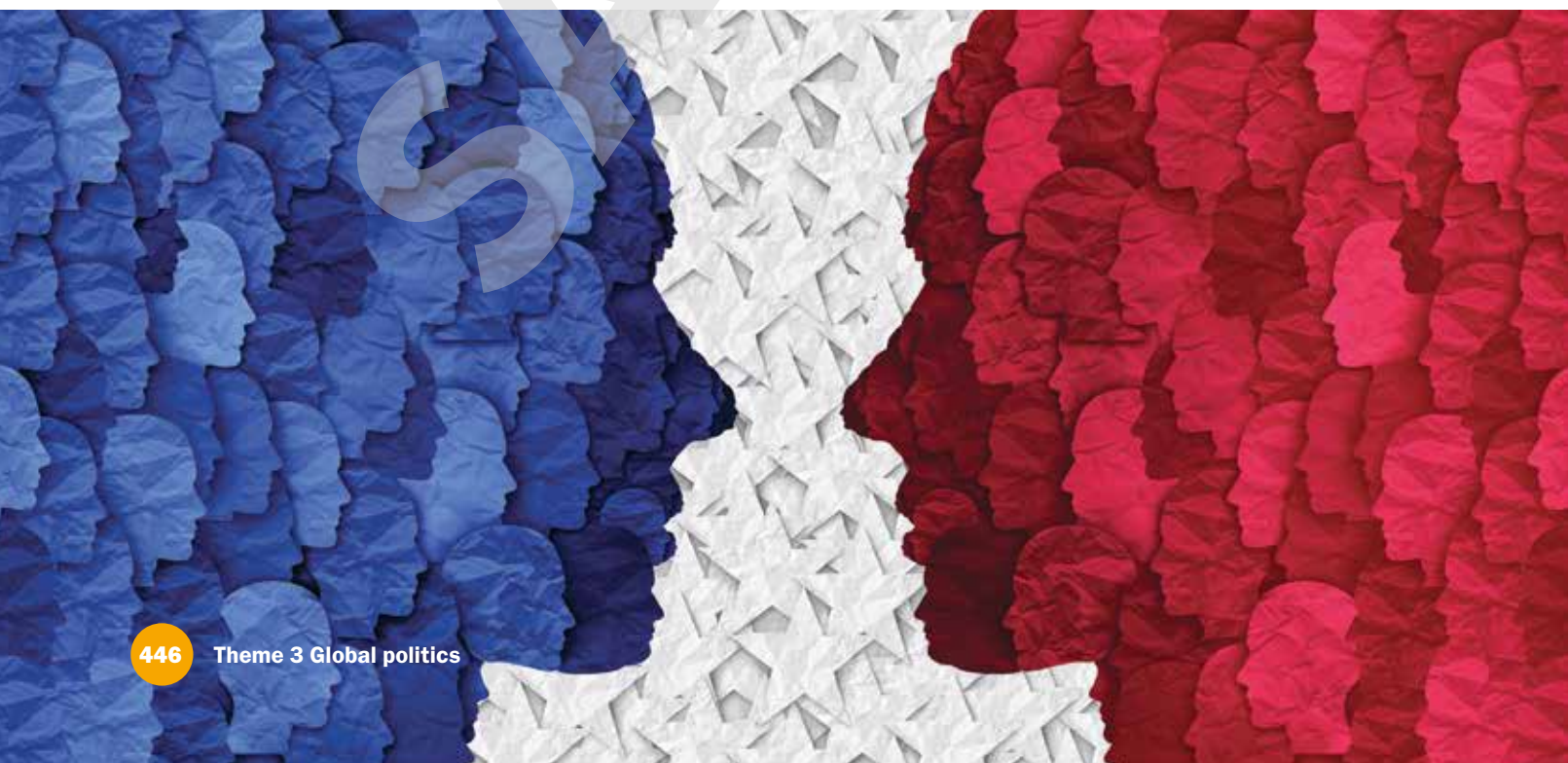
### Synoptic link

The compulsory 12-mark question on realism and liberalism requires candidates to 'discuss any relevant core political ideas'. Therefore, reference should be made to some of the ideas expressed in liberalism, conservatism and socialism (see Chapters 9, 10 and 11), and by key thinkers. For example, Thomas Hobbes' negative view of human beings aligns with a realist approach to international relations. Liberal thinkers like John Locke and John Stuart Mill have a much more positive view of humanity so can be used to support liberalism, as can the socialist thinkers Marx and Engels, who share a similarly positive view of human beings once freed from capitalist exploitation.

## Main ideas of realism

Realism and liberalism have very different priorities and approaches to how countries should interact with each other

**Realism** is a political theory rooted in Thomas Hobbes' dark view of human character and motivation. According to Hobbes, human beings are selfish and self-seeking and so mankind is motivated by 'a perpetual and restless desire of power after power, that ceaseth only in death'. Classical realism therefore is founded on the belief that since human beings are motivated solely by self-gain, nation states act in



the same way, continually seeking power and prestige at the expense of lesser states. As the American political theorist Hans Morgenthau put it, 'The social world is but a projection of human nature onto the collective plane'. State egoism therefore means that there will always be a struggle for influence between 'power-maximising' rival states.

Neo/structural realism adds that since nation states are sovereign as well as being self-seeking, international relations are inherently anarchic. This is because independent nation states will never accept the authority of any supranational institution able to compel their obedience. Consequently, there is always the risk of conflict since no institution of global governance has sufficient authority to ensure nation states act according to international law.

According to realism, then, nation states prioritise their national interests above anything else. Therefore, realist thinkers maintain that:

- nation states are the most important actors in global politics
- no other actor has the authority to control or limit the behaviour of nation states
- states should become as powerful as they can, to deter the potential aggression of other states
- since global relations are anarchic and there is 'no night watchman' (John Mearsheimer) to maintain order, nation states must prioritise their own security rather than rely on flawed institutions of global governance like the United Nations
- since the highest goal for a nation state is survival in a hostile anarchic world order, liberal principles like encouraging the spread of liberal democracy, human rights, free trade and the rule of law are irrelevant and potentially dangerously destabilising.

Realists believe that **international anarchy** means nation states must prioritise their own national interests and security, as there is no authority beyond states that can control or limit their behaviour. This means that states live in a 'self-help' world order, and must focus on maximising their security themselves. This can be achieved, for example, through increased military spending and by joining powerful military alliances. This can deter the potential aggression of other powers since they have no incentive to risk confrontation with such a powerful adversary. As the veteran realist political scientist John Mearsheimer puts it, 'In the anarchic world of international politics, it is better to be Godzilla than Bambi'. Realism therefore seeks to achieve a balance of power in which military strength is evenly distributed between states, so discouraging the use of force because the risks are too great.

However, realist thinkers face a **security dilemma** due to the military build-ups and alliance-building they recommend. A nation state maximising its security is likely to encourage potential adversaries to do the same. This then leads to arms races, which create suspicion and hostility, so that strategies designed to increase the security of a nation state may put it at greater risk. The inescapable security dilemma is therefore that the defensive actions states take may increase the likelihood of war.

### Key terms

#### **International anarchy**

The lack of any supranational authority above state level in global politics, meaning that states' behaviour cannot be controlled.

**Security dilemma** Nation states boost their military power because they feel they must protect themselves from threats. However, since all nation states act in the same way this leads to arms races and alliance building, meaning a state's defensive actions may have made it more vulnerable. That is the security dilemma.

## In focus

### Russia and Ukraine

After the end of the Cold War, NATO continued to add new members from states previously allied to the Soviet Union. There were attempts to improve dialogue between Russia and NATO, but Russia still frequently said that NATO was a national security threat.

NATO continued its military defensive operations in Western Europe and expanded its military action beyond Europe (e.g. in Afghanistan and Libya). Russia, too, continued to expand its military action in conflicts in the region (e.g. in Georgia) and beyond in Syria.

In 2014, Russia invaded Crimea and annexed the region from Ukraine. In 2022, Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine after demanding that Ukraine declare neutrality and pledge not to join NATO. As Ukraine remained committed to



joining NATO, Russia made the decision to invade in February 2022, leading to a war between the two nations. Both Russia and NATO have tried to carefully match their military power, without successfully eliminating the other as a security threat.

### Stretch and challenge

The ancient Athenian historian Thucydides explains the motivation for Athens' decision to create and maintain its empire in the fifth century BC.

*'The nature of the case first compelled us to advance our empire to its present height; fear being our principal motive, though honour and self-interest came in afterwards. And at last, when almost all hated us, when some had already revolted and had been subdued, when you had ceased to be the friends that you once were, and had become objects of suspicion and dislike, it appeared no longer safe to give up our empire; especially as all who left us would fall to you. And no one can quarrel with a people for making, in matters of tremendous risk, the best provision that it can for its self-interest . . . And it is not we who set the example, for it has always been the law that the weaker should be subject to the stronger.'*

- 1 Summarise why Athens felt its empire was necessary.
- 2 In what ways does Thucydides present a realist interpretation for the motivation of states?
- 3 Explain ways in which realism motivates the behaviour of nation states today.

## Main ideas of liberalism

**Liberalism** is rooted in a much more optimistic view of human nature. According to John Locke, human beings are rational and cooperative. Therefore, it is possible to have much more favourable outcomes in international relations because nation states are not hard-wired to be aggressive and can rationally choose to work together to resolve collective dilemmas.

### Key term

**Liberalism** A theory of global politics in which states can cooperate effectively with each other and non-state actors to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes. The encouragement of free trade, liberal democracy and human rights are key elements of liberalism.

In contrast to realists, liberals do not regard the nation state as the main player in international relations. Instead, they favour a polycentric view of global politics in which nation states cooperate with each other and with non-state actors in institutions of regional and global governance. This then establishes a 'complex web of interdependence' (Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye), which creates so much positive connectivity between nation states that conflict becomes unnecessary and irrational. Liberals therefore favour institutions of global governance, like the United Nations, and regional bodies, like the European Union, since they challenge the potential for state egoism by highlighting the mutual benefits of collaboration.

Globally complex issues such as climate change or poverty reduction can only be resolved through cooperation, and positive collective outcomes mean that nation states achieve much more for themselves through working together than by simply protecting their own interests. Ultimately, liberals advocate world government since this would establish a complete harmony of interests based on mutual respect and cooperation.

Also, liberalism has a sense of moral purpose that realism lacks. According to Locke, human beings possess natural rights. Thus, whereas realism's only objective is the preservation of the nation state, liberalism seeks to advance democracy, free trade and human rights to ensure that human beings live in peace but also dignity. Liberals also have a powerful commitment to our shared humanity and so favour humanitarian interventions on the principle that we have an obligation 'to save strangers'. Within socialism, too, there is an optimistic faith in our positive humanity. For example, in 1844 Karl Marx praised 'the brotherhood of man' as a 'fact of life'.

According to liberalism:

- Human nature is rational and cooperative rather than aggressive and egotistical. Human beings do seek the best outcomes for themselves but can do this according to shared endeavour rather than simply maximising their security and autonomy.
- Conflict is not inevitable because nation states can make the rational decision to cooperate rather than aggressively seek power.
- International organisations and the international rule of law provide a framework for states to resolve collective dilemmas together.
- Human rights, free trade and liberal democracy encourage cooperation and reduce the risk of nation states acting aggressively. Their expansion should therefore be encouraged.
- Globalisation and regionalism provide important opportunities for nation states to cooperate with other nation states and non-state actors.

### Knowledge check

- 1 Define liberalism.
- 2 Define realism.
- 3 What is the balance of power and why is it a realist concept?
- 4 What is complex interdependence and why is it a liberal concept?





According to liberal theory, nation states can cooperate in harmony

## Divisions between realism and liberalism

### Key term

#### Complex interdependence

The liberal belief that there are many connections and relationships that states share which make them mutually dependent on each other and reduces the risk of conflict.

There are therefore significant divisions between realists and liberals based on their different views of human nature.

As a result of their negative view of humanity, realists focus on protecting state sovereignty in a dangerous and volatile world in which survival is the state's core objective. In contrast, liberals' more optimistic view of human nature means that they approach international relations like a 'college campus' (J.D. Bowen), taking advantage of all the many opportunities for cooperation to increase trust and understanding. Liberals' belief in natural rights also means that the principle of our collective humanity guides policy, encouraging the spread of human rights, free trade and liberal democracy. For realists, such ideals are irrelevant since the nation state's sole purpose is to maintain its autonomous existence in a world of ever-present danger.

### Debate

#### How do realists and liberals disagree on human nature and power?

Realism	Liberalism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Realists are pessimistic about human nature and believe humans are intrinsically selfish, violent and greedy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liberals are optimistic about human nature since they believe that humans are rational, communal and cooperative</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Therefore, nation states prioritise their own interests (state egoism) and strive to relentlessly maximise their power</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consequently, liberals argue that nation states can form positive relations with other states and non-state actors so encouraging a world of <b>complex interdependence</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Since there is no natural harmony of interests in global relations, states face continuous challenges to their security</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cooperative endeavours to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes can be carried out through institutions of regional and international governance</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To survive, nation states must maximise their military and diplomatic power to deter aggression, so creating a favourable balance of power that can maintain peace</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If nation states focus too much on military hard power they will provoke other nation states to do the same, so leading to arms races and the security dilemma</li> </ul>



Thomas Hobbes argued that in a 'state of nature' without government, life would be 'nasty, brutish and short' because human beings are naturally aggressive, creating a constant 'war of all against all'

## Debate

### How do realists and liberals disagree on the significance of nation states and international organisations?

Realism	Liberalism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Realists believe that nation states are the central actors in global politics and should prioritise their security and geo-strategic interests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liberals argue that nation states should cooperate with each other and with non-state actors to advance mutually beneficial collective outcomes in regional and global institutions of governance</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nation states can participate in international organs of global governance, especially if they provide an opportunity for the national interest to be defended and advanced. However, there is no supranational authority that can compel the obedience of a sovereign nation state</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Since state egoism encourages aggression, liberals believe that nation states should be prepared to sacrifice sovereignty in supranational institutions of regional and global governance. By pooling sovereignty, for example in the EU, the potential for aggression is greatly reduced</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respect for state sovereignty provides the basis for global peace and stability. There is never a justification to intervene within the sovereign affairs of an independent nation state</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide are taking place within a sovereign nation state then there is a moral obligation for outside powers to act</li> </ul>

## Knowledge check

- 5 What is a polycentric approach to international relations and why is it a liberal principle?
- 6 Explain the security dilemma.
- 7 How does Thomas Hobbes' view of human nature influence liberalism?
- 8 How does John Locke's view of human nature influence realism?

## Anarchical society and society of states

### Key term

**Anarchical society and society of states** Although global politics is state-centric and anarchical, nation states can still choose to cooperate to best maximise security and self-interest.

The political scientist Hedley Bull developed **anarchical society and society of states** theory in his book *The Anarchical Society* (1977).

According to Bull, global politics is anarchical because sovereign nation states pursue their own interests and there is no single authority with the supranational authority to command or control the actions of states. Consequently, an organisation like the United Nations only has limited jurisdiction because it recognises the sovereign independence of its member states. However, Bull differs from classical and structural realists because he does not argue that global anarchy creates a Hobbesian world of constant warfare.

Instead, nation states can rationally decide to cooperate to maximise the best outcomes for themselves. This does not make Bull a liberal, because nation states only choose to do this out of self-interest rather than from any higher liberal goal to encourage democracy, free trade or human rights. In other words, a 'society of states' can be created even though nation states have no greater purpose than achieving positive outcomes for themselves.

We can see this sort of approach to international relations after the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars (1792–1815), when the great powers of Europe decided at the Congress of Vienna (1814–15) that they would mutually benefit by working together through the congress system. Similarly, in the 1970s President Richard Nixon and his national security adviser, Henry Kissinger, developed détente (a loosening of tension) with the Soviet Union on the basis that both would benefit from developing more positive relations with each other.

Hedley Bull argued that although institutions of global governance, like the UN, cannot ensure peace and stability, nation states can still avoid conflict by negotiating mutually beneficial agreements



### Knowledge check

- 9 Which liberal thinker developed the principle of 'natural rights'?
- 10 How does the theory of 'natural rights' influence liberal priorities in international relations?
- 11 Which political scientist do you associate with 'anarchical society and society of states' theory?
- 12 Define 'anarchical society and society of states' theory.



## Stretch and challenge

American political scientist Francis Fukuyama published *The End of History and the Last Man* in 1992. According to Fukuyama, history had reached its end point with the post-Cold War victory of liberal democracy. The great ideological struggles of the twentieth century that had caused the Second World War and the Cold War were now over, and 'at the end of history, there are no serious ideological competitors left to liberal democracy'. Fukuyama's faith in the triumph of liberal democracy encapsulated the zeitgeist of the 1990s and may even have influenced neo-conservative plans to spread democracy to Iraq during the War on Terror.

Four years later, in 1996, Samuel Huntington published *The Clash of Civilizations*. This provided an altogether darker vision of the future in which conflict between rival civilisations would characterise the twenty-first century. Huntington's thesis that the values of Islam put it in civilisational conflict with the West made it deeply controversial. However, the focus on Islam has often meant that Huntington's other potential civilisational clashes based on radically different cultural values and geo-strategic interests have been neglected. For example Huntington argued that Western Europe and Orthodox (Russian-led) Europe were civilisational rivals. Since Ukraine is 'a cleft country', caught between Western and Russian civilisations, 'The situation between Ukraine and Russia is ripe for the outbreak of security competition between them'.

- 1 Why do you think liberal democracy did not triumph at the end of the Cold War as Fukuyama predicted?
- 2 Research Huntington's civilisational clashes. How convincing do you find his thesis?
- 3 Some political scientists are now arguing that globalisation is over. Do you agree? Explain your answer fully.

## Realism and liberalism in contemporary global relations

Realist and liberal impulses can be seen in the behaviour of states in global politics in issues such as:

- action on climate change
- poverty reduction
- self-defence.

The extent to which a nation state adopts a realist or a liberal approach depends upon a variety of factors such as:

- whether it is an authoritarian or liberal democratic state
- the political ideology of its government
- pragmatic considerations of whether a problem is best resolved through liberal or realist means.

Table 17.1 shows how realism and liberalism can be seen in global political events since 2000.



A destroyed Russian tank remains beside a house in Hostomel, Ukraine

**Table 17.1** Realism and liberalism in events since 2000

State and globalisation	Globalisation and regionalism were both expected to 'hollow out the state' (Kenichi Ohmae). However, nation states have proved remarkably resilient. In 2021, the UK exited the EU and nationalist leaders across the world (Erdoğan, Modi, Putin and Xi) have reacted against globalisation by reasserting state sovereignty
Economic and political global governance	Economic globalisation has been hampered by the failure of the Doha trade round at the World Trade Organization because member states were not prepared to compromise on their national interests. Political institutions of global governance, such as the UN Security Council and the G20, are increasingly ineffective because nation states generally approach them from a realist rather than a liberal perspective
The environment and human rights	Although the IPCC and COP climate change summits have alerted governments to the immediacy of the climate crisis, progress is still slow. This is because nation states are unprepared to accept supranational limits on their carbon emissions Human rights are also still poorly protected because nation states resent outside interference in their domestic affairs. This has severely limited the effectiveness of international courts such as the International Court of Justice, the European Court of Human Rights and the International Criminal Court
Power and developments	Challenges to US hegemonic power have led to a period of power transition in which Russia and China have been increasingly prepared to deploy military power to shift the balance of power towards them. Consequently, NATO has become increasingly important to Western security and AUKUS was established in 2021 to maintain the geo-strategic status quo in the Indo-Pacific region
Regionalism and the EU	Regional organisations generally fail to challenge state sovereignty. ASEAN, USMCA, the Arab League, and the African Union are intergovernmental without effective supranational governmental institutions. However, treaties like Maastricht (1993) and Lisbon (2009) have increased EU cohesion. Some critics suggest that the Russian invasion of Ukraine (2022) has provided greater impetus for EU integration, since it enhances European security





Chinese soldiers march past Tiananmen Square during the National Day parade in Beijing

### Summary

By the end of this chapter you should be able to answer the following questions:

- What are the key ideas of realism?
- What are the key ideas of liberalism?
- How do realists believe that conflict is best avoided?
- How do liberals believe that conflict is best avoided?
- What are the links between realism and liberalism and core political theory (conservatism, liberalism and socialism)?
- What is the anarchical society and society of states theory?
- What are the main ideas of Francis Fukuyama's and Samuel Huntington's interpretation of global politics?
- What has been the impact of realism and liberalism on recent events?

### Practice questions

- 1** Analyse the divisions that exist between realists and liberals on the most effective way of achieving lasting peace and stability. (12)
- 2** Analyse why realists and liberals differ over the impact of the nation state on global politics. (12)
- 3** Analyse why realists and liberals differ over the effectiveness of international organs of global governance. (12)
- 4** Analyse why realists and liberals differ over human rights and humanitarian intervention. (12)
- 5** Analyse the concept of anarchical society from a liberal and a realist perspective. (12)



### Further reading

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Martin Luther King, Jr. during his famous Lincoln Memorial Address on 28 August 1963



## Key thinker

### Betty Friedan (1921–2006)

Betty Friedan's ideas were influenced by both classical liberalism (the importance of individualism) and modern liberalism (the enabling state) for how women can achieve equality of opportunity with men. Her key works are *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) and *The Second Stage* (1983).

#### Friedan's main ideas

- Friedan argued strongly for individual freedom. In particular, she believed that individuals should be free to be able to achieve their potential. Like Mary Wollstonecraft, she argued that gender was a serious hindrance to women as they were constantly discriminated against.
- She believed that women were victims of restricted opportunities within society because of patriarchal attitudes. (For a more detailed discussion of patriarchy, see Chapter 14.)
- Friedan was influenced by classical liberalism in her belief that if the state allowed equality of opportunity, then women's individual efforts could achieve the successful combination of marriage, motherhood and career.
- Friedan was also influenced by the ideas of modern liberalism and, like Rawls, she felt that if utilised properly, an enabling state could assist women in being free. The state could counter dominant patriarchal values that discriminate against women, and ensure foundational equality and equality of opportunity in both society and the economy. This would include state benefits for single, divorced or widowed mothers.



Modern liberals argue that foundational equality in itself is not enough to guarantee equality of opportunity, and that to guarantee true social justice individuals must have access to a full welfare state encompassing education, healthcare, the minimum wage and welfare provisions. T.H. Green's ideas directly influenced the Beveridge Report, which was the intellectual basis for the post-war welfare state in the UK.

In his book *A Theory of Justice* (1971), Rawls described a rational model to demonstrate not just the need for social justice but the inherent logic of it:

- Using an abstract 'veil of ignorance', Rawls claimed that if individuals were asked to choose what type of society an individual would prefer and were ignorant of their own circumstances, they would choose a society with little inequality. The veil of ignorance was a rationalistic idea based on what Rawls described as a 'purely hypothetical situation. Nothing resembling it need ever take place'.
- Rawls' conception of social justice (he used the term 'distributive justice') was that inequality in a modern capitalist-based society could be justified as long as those who do well economically do not do so at the expense of the least well-off in society. In other words, individuals should not be allowed to prosper at the expense of others.
- Although society was a **meritocracy** and would produce unequal outcomes, all individuals would have an equality of opportunity as the state would intervene, via a welfare state, to allow everyone equal life chances.

### Key term

**Meritocracy** A principle that suggests that although inequality is natural in a free society, in a just society those with greater abilities, drive, creativity and work ethics deserve more rewards than those without those qualities.

### Knowledge check

- 20 What does rationalism mean?
- 21 Give an example of how classical liberalism has been influenced by rationalism.
- 22 Give an example of how modern liberalism has been influenced by rationalism.
- 23 How did Rawls' veil of ignorance work?
- 24 What did Rawls mean by social justice?

### Key thinker

#### John Rawls (1921–2002)

Rawls is considered the most important advocate of modern liberalism of the twentieth century. His key work was *A Theory of Justice* (1971).

#### Rawls' main ideas

- Rawls' key idea was 'justice as fairness', and he believed that everyone would agree to an enabling state (and positive freedom) if they were in a position of ignorance.
- An enabling state would provide a welfare state (including health and education). Rawls' theory implies that classical liberals (oblivious to their personal circumstances) would choose an interventionary state that guaranteed equality of opportunity, rather than a limited state that did not.
- To the traditional idea of foundational equality, Rawls added the need for social and economic equality. He argued that a just society must provide equality of opportunity for everyone and this could only be achieved by the state taking a larger role within society. This would be funded from progressive taxation.
- Robert Nozick (1938–2002) (see Chapter 10) argued that Rawls' ideas were a betrayal of liberalism and that Rawls' demands for an interventionary state had more in common with socialism than liberalism. Nozick's ideas are part neo-liberalism, which can be seen as a modern version of classical liberalism and as a reaction to modern liberal and socialist ideas.



## Choose principles of justice as though you don't know your...

### Interest group

- Race
- Gender
- Income
- Age
- Health

### Conception of the good

- Religion
- Morals
- Lifestyle preferences



Rawls' veil of ignorance

## Liberal democracy

When Locke was writing in the seventeenth century, many governments in Europe were monarchies and the state was run by authoritarian elites. Locke's ideas were a reaction to his perception of illegitimate government enforced on the people. The concept of liberal democracy is underpinned by the social contract theory of Locke, whereby the government only holds power in trust for the people whom it serves. Government, Locke argued in his book *Two Treatises of Government* (1689), should be by consent as this was the only legitimate basis for authority.

Liberal democracy was initially representative democracy, which offered only a very limited form of democracy. This was the case in the early years of the USA, where only male property owners were allowed to vote.

- Edmund Burke, who many claim was as much a liberal thinker as he was a conservative thinker, also argued for the importance of representative democracy, asserting that a voter elected a representative to make decisions based on his own judgement and not that of the electorate. (For more on the Burkean principle, see Chapter 1).
- Mill, like the US Founding Fathers, feared the dominance of the working class if they were given the vote. In his work *Considerations on Representative Government*, he argued for plural votes for the educated and wealthy to prevent his own class being swept aside by the proletariat.
- Mill, like Locke and Wollstonecraft, has therefore been categorised as favouring elite democracy, whereby the Establishment exercises the real power and has significantly more influence than the ordinary voter.

Such ideas have given way to full emancipation in Western democracies, and modern liberals accept that each individual should have a vote. However, the defining feature of liberal democracy, both classical and modern, is that it involves more than just free and fair elections. It also includes constitutionalism (the rules by which the state operates) and safeguards of civil liberties and individual freedoms, particularly against the tyranny of the majority. Political writer Barbara Goodwin argues that there are six key points of liberal democratic theory and the influence of both classical and modern liberal thinkers is clearly evident (Table 9.5).

**Table 9.5** Key points of liberal democratic theory

<b>Supremacy of the people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• While classical liberals accept this as a broad concept of the social contract, this does not equate to full democratic representation</li> <li>• Modern liberals are insistent that supremacy of the people means that every adult should have the vote</li> <li>• However, the US Electoral College remains as a filter against the 'tyranny of the majority' in the USA</li> </ul>
<b>The consent of the governed as the basis of legitimacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A concept that unites both forms of liberalism — elections provide frequent opportunities for the governed to register their consent</li> </ul>
<b>The rule of law and peaceful methods of conflict resolution</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The rule of law forms part of the social contract between the governed and the governors</li> </ul>
<b>The existence of a common good or public interest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classical liberalism struggles with such concepts as it views society as atomistic and therefore any collective will is difficult for classical liberals to support</li> <li>• The developmental individualism of Mill and T.H. Green and the social justice of Rawls base their version of society on more collective aims such as a welfare state</li> </ul>
<b>The value of the individual as a rational, moral, active citizen</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Both strands of liberalism can accept this definition</li> </ul>
<b>Political equality and equal civil rights for all individuals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classical and modern liberalism are united on this</li> <li>• Friedan championed the rights of women in both respects, while Rawls' theory of justice argued that not only were such rights a necessity, this was also a rational choice for individuals to make when attempting to ascertain the principles of a society</li> </ul>

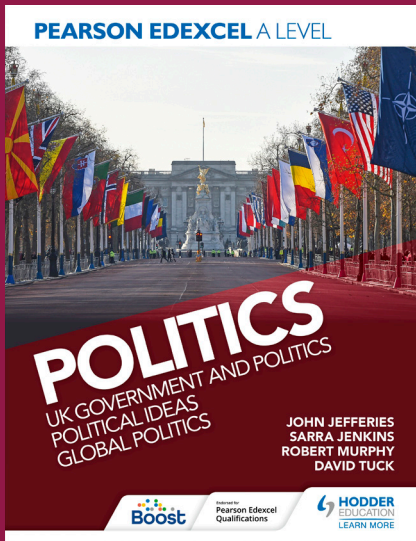
### Knowledge check

- 25** What is a meritocracy?
- 26** Why do classical liberals prefer representative democracy?
- 27** What is meant by supremacy of the people?
- 28** How is consent given in liberal democratic theory?

## Different views and tensions within liberalism

The ideological nature of classical and modern liberalism means that these ideas are difficult to reconcile as each posits a fundamentally different understanding of what constitutes:

- freedom and the individual
- which in turn informs:
- the role of the state in regard to society and the economy.



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Email your name, school name and school postcode to [Politics.Team@hodder.co.uk](mailto:Politics.Team@hodder.co.uk) to receive a bespoke quote from your local Hodder Education consultant.

