



## **LIBERALISM'S NEW MEDIUM: ENHANCING LIBERALISM'S ABILITY TO REALIZE ITS AIMS**

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### **Abstract**

Liberalism is a theoretical model for shaping political-economic/socio-cultural bodies into multi-level systems of cooperation that create social-economic progress and enhanced security. That is to say that Liberalism is an approach to establishing cooperative partnerships and peaceful coexistence. Liberalism refers to the theory that cooperation between social agents is enhanced by applying principles effective for reconciling differences in the interests and values of agents engaged in social interactions. However, the ideals of Liberalism prove difficult to realize even for the most outstanding models of democracy.

This article analyzes Liberalism's current crisis and explains the effectiveness of Liberalism's new medium for improving its ability to fulfil its aims. The new medium refers to a multiplexity of cross-sectoral, local-global, transnational connections which help to reframe issues in a way that delivers more desirable results thus enhance Liberalism's effectiveness in matching theory with practice in order to gain the prescribed results. This article focuses on the issues of interethnic relations, migration, and the security challenges imposed by intrastate and cross-border social movements and networks.

### **Keywords**

Idealism, Intrastate and Cross-Border Social Movements, Migration, Cross-Border Communication Networks, Belonging (nationalism), Otherness (migrants)



## 1. Introduction

*The crisis of Liberalism consequentially results in “The migration of international pressures and conflicts into domestic politics and the triangular relationship that this creates among ordinary people, their governments, and international institutions* (Tarrow, 2005, p. 80).

The term Liberalism/Idealism refers to the conviction that when certain principles are applied to interactions social agents are benefitted (not harmed) by cooperating. The principles of Liberalism promote multi-level cooperation in three specific ways: (1.) institutionalism – structuring systems by which normative principles are institutionalized in order to facilitate cooperation, reduce conflict, and promote peace (Keohane & Nye, 1997, p. 134; Bull, 1977, p. 13); (2.) freedom of association – promoting free trade which results in increased economic interdependence and an interconnected value chain; and (3.) mutuality – human rights and creating more desirable forms of social activity by including norms and values. In other words, liberal processes promote social-economic progress and cooperation is the means for achieving this. This article explains a new medium by which Liberalism is more effective in achieving its aims. The new medium enhances Liberalism’s effectiveness for conflict reduction and peacebuilding plus for increasing benefits for a larger number of stakeholders who participate in cooperative interactions within integrated networks.

Liberalism, in principle, is a viable social model for resolving problems related to diversity and the conflicting interests of social agents at the

various levels of social interaction. Liberals argue that because of the very nature of the nation-state they are confronted with the need to manage diversity, immigration, intrastate and cross-border social movement, and migrations – all of which effect their social, economic, and security conditions. The impact that Liberal approaches to intervention, progress, and development have on society result in the increased convergence and integration of the interests of social agents at multi-levels: e.g. regarding the need to manage diversity and interethnic tensions, the impact of environmental conditions on the society and its economy, and the fair use of natural resources. Consequently, there is increased recognition of the extent to which interdependence converges the interests of micro, meso, and macro level stakeholders. The fact of interdependence means that social agents are influenced by various factors at multi-levels that transcend borders and influence preferences: e.g. social agents are involved in interpersonal, social, cultural, economic, and political interactions that impact the prospect of satisfactory and beneficial outcomes at the various levels of social engagement. “Interdependency amplifies the need to understand and address interlinkages: e.g. that increase overlaps of use, rights, and ownership and increase interregional migration and interconnections between social groups in different regions” (Brondizio et al., 2009, p. 254).

Liberalism is effective when society is planned so that individual human rights are guaranteed (i.e. the right of individuals to pursue what they believe is in their best interest). The concept

states that the ability for individuals to experience what is in their best interest is maximized when they agree to interact in accordance with shared principles, cooperate to achieve shared goals, and agree to create the common good. Liberalism is based on the belief that the threat that individuals potentially pose to each other (Hobbes, 2005, p. 105) is reduced when the members of society ensure each individual his or her human rights. Liberalism is purported to create social solidarity, increase social flourishing and economic prosperity, increase liberty, reduce conflict, and promote peace even when there is extensive ethno-cultural diversity.

Liberal democracies are in principle outstanding models for reconciling the tensions between the majority population, immigrants, and migrants; for managing diversity effectively; for reducing interethnic conflict and violence; and for realizing the liberal peace. However, Liberalism is more impressive in theory than in practice. That is to say that matching theory with practice in order to gain the prescribed results proves difficult even for those countries that pride themselves in being the model of a liberal democracy and for those countries aspiring to be the best functioning liberal democracy in the world (Chandler, 2006, pp. 20-21 & 194; Habermas, 2013, pp. 338-345; & Mahajan, 2010, pp. 4-5). The fact is that liberal democracies are severely challenged in their effort to apply the principles of Liberalism in order to effectively manage contemporary diversity issues (e.g. in particular interethnic conflict and violence related to migrants plus the impact that migrants and intrastate and

cross-border social movements have on security) (Kymlicka, 1995, pp. 1-6). Even though Liberalism is the preferred political philosophy for democracies the scope and complexity of the issues related to the disparity of interests of social agents at multi-levels and environmental and resource issues call for a critical analysis of Liberalism's inadequacies and the prospect of applying Liberalism's new medium toward enhancing its ability to meet its aims.

This article argues that Liberalism's new medium alters the established notion of intervention, conflict reduction, and peacebuilding by establishing a multiplexity of cross-sectoral, local-global, transnational connections that reframe issues in a way that delivers more desirable results. A review of the literature explaining the outcome of applying the new medium to social action indicates that it improves intra-state and interstate interactions, improves public-private relations and interactions, resolves the structure-agent dichotomy, democratizes power relations, and improves the efficiency of institutional operations. That is to say that a preliminary exploratory investigation of the literature indicates that new forms of networked participatory social action are creating more desirable outcomes by generating effective forms of collaboration, collective action, and solidarity (Shirky, 2008, pp. 49-52).

Section two of the article is a critical analysis of the rise of Liberalism and an explanation of its current crisis. This section focuses on issues related to legitimacy; migratory activity and the security challenges imposed by intrastate and

cross-border social movements; and the environmental consequences of assumptions regarding Modernization and problems resulting from applying the established approach to development. This section also examines the connection between Liberal intervention(s), state-making, development, and the way authority/power is applied in Liberal interventions – thus the connection between applying the liberal peace agenda to interventions and the effectiveness of Liberalism in meeting its aims. Section three explains Liberalism's new medium, why it introduces a means to enhance Liberalism's effectiveness, and why it supersedes the liberal peace concept. The final section concludes the article by highlighting the factors that make Liberalism's new medium effective as a strategy for realizing the ideals of Liberalism. The concluding section also summarizes the article and explains its contribution to the literature on multi-level social action, on governance, multi-level networks, strategic partnerships, conflict reduction, and peacebuilding.

## **2. The Rise of the Liberal International Order**

*“The current challenge to the liberal order is as much, if not more, from within as from without”* (Acharya, 2017, p. 1).

“One of the great dramas of the last two hundred years has been the rise of liberal democracies to global dominance. Over the last two hundred years, democratic states have made efforts to build international order around open and rule-based relations among states –

that is, they have engaged in liberal order building” (Ikenberry, 2011, pp. xi & 1). Liberalism emerged as a world system whose fundamental principles promote legitimate liberal order based on complementary interactions between authority/legitimate power (i.e. the structure) and the civic body (social agents). Liberalism's ascendancy was grounded upon establishing a triangular balance between legitimacy based on adherence to liberal normative principles, democratic/capitalist political-economic systems (e.g. economic development and the notion of progress based on increasing material capabilities and purchasing power – e.g. GDP), and various types of intervention aimed at promoting well-ordered states. The liberal international order was postulated as an open, multilateral, rule-based global system (Ikenberry, 2018a, pp. 8-16).

However, the rise of Liberalism was accompanied by three phenomena that shaped the nature of the global arena and of the societies in which there has been Liberal intervention. First, the emergence of the nation-state introduced the notion of “Belonging” in terms of politicized identity (e.g. being a part of a social group that defines itself in terms of local, regional, and/or national identity) (Delanty, 1995, pp. 6, 16, & 66). In other words, the rise of Liberalism and its consequential impact on the global arena can be described as, on the one hand, expansion (i.e. *looking out* or the expansion of the international liberal order) and, on the other hand, contraction (*looking in* or the nationalization of identity and a strong connection between the

nationalization of identity and notions of social-inclusion). Secondly, the expansion of the liberal global order coincided with increased migratory movement (e.g. a migrant is a person who is impelled to look for better living conditions but consequently can be regarded as “the proverbial other”). Third, the rise of Liberalism is based on notions of progress, development, and modernization which influenced how natural resources are used and increasingly having a disruptive impact on the environment.

This section of the article analyzes the rise of Liberalism to the level of shaping the international liberal order – including an analysis of the factors that hinder Liberalism from achieving its aims. It focuses on the impact of Liberalism in terms of three ways in which the liberal global order developed and is currently experiencing a crisis: section 2.1 emphasizes legitimacy as a basis for power, status, and stability; section 2.2 addresses “belonging” and attitudes toward *the proverbial other*; and 2.3 analyzes Liberalism’s promotion of Modernization and progress, the liberalization of the market, and economic development. The three areas in which Liberalism impacts social action are analyzed from the perspective of the struggles for power and conflict that occur in national and international political economy (Morgenthau, 1985, pp. 31-37 & 43-51).

### 2.1. *Liberalism, Legitimacy, and Social/Global Stability*

*A “legitimacy crisis’ comprises a crisis of vision, of belonging, of leadership and of governance” (Lango & Murray, 2015, p. 3).*

The article argues that Liberalism’s current problem with legitimacy is related to the inadequacies of the liberal peace agenda: e.g. its strategy for intervening in order to establish liberal democracies; the claim that greater stability, freedom, and peace would follow economic development; and the notion of progress based on the exploitation of natural resources (Mandelbaum, 2002). That is to say that addressing Liberalism’s current legitimacy problem requires a critical re-evaluation of the liberal peace agenda; the reasons for its ineffectiveness; and its failure to include norms, principles, and values that are regarded as legitimate from a contextual socio-cultural perspective (Chandler, 2007, pp. 70-78).

Legitimacy is defined as social action that is compatible with “Rule[s], norms, values, beliefs, practices, and procedures” and acting in a way that is believed to be an appropriate form of conduct (Zelditch, 2001, p. 33; & Clark, 2005, p. 2). “Legitimacy, as I use it here, refers to the normative belief by an actor that a rule or institution ought to be obeyed” (Hurd, 1999, pp. 379 & 381). People are most convinced of the legitimacy of a social system (and the authorities representing that system) if the values and normative prescriptions it advocates can be internalized. The sense of legitimacy (i.e. trust, confidence, validity) that individuals have in a social system provides them a greater feeling of security and satisfaction with their condition in life.

Legitimacy influences interactions at the multi-levels of social engagement by providing a normative basis for shaping and constraining the actions of social agents. Thus, legitimacy is

a form of power that induces others to comply because they are attracted by values, moral authority, and magnanimity (Nye 2004, x & pp. 6-11). The notion of legitimacy also provides a basis for ordering and structuring social action in a global arena that is otherwise considered anarchic thus is a significant factor in the endeavor to establish a liberal global order (Keohane & Nye, 1977, p. 19). The foundational conceptualization of legitimacy asserts that it is the basis of social, economic, and political stability (Aristotle, 1959, pp. 371-395). “Stability has commonly resulted not from a quest for peace but from a generally accepted legitimacy” (Kissinger, 1977, p. 1). Thus, the most stable social order is one that “enjoys the prestige of legitimacy” (Nye, 1999, p. 167; Weber, 1978, pp. 31 & 93-94) and it follows that a lack of legitimacy causes instability (Holsti 1991, 337-339). It is at the times when stability is threatened that there is the greatest need to articulate, reformulate, and reinstate the core principles of legitimacy (Knutsen, 1999, p. 64; & Osiander, 1994).

“For liberals, the basis of legitimacy is consent, and when consent is strained (as in the Eurozone crisis) legitimacy suffers” (Sherr, 2013, p. 59). A lack of legitimacy – a trend toward instability – has the social psychological consequence of individuals experiencing a diminished sense of “Integral selfhood, the permanency of things, of the reliability of natural processes, the substantiality of natural processes, [and] of the substantiality of others” (Laing, 1960, p. 39). This results in the person feeling ontological insecurity (i.e. the lack of any unquestionable self-validating

certainties). The feeling of insecurity increases the need to securitize one’s social space in order to protect the self from the impending threats (McSweeney, 1999, pp. 152-158).

The sense of legitimacy (or lack of it) has a significant influence on how power and authority are viewed, thoughts about in-groups and out-groups, and how one perceives equality and inequality. Thus, various crises related to “Demographic change and global social networks, as well as environmental and climate change” are all reflections of the ongoing legitimacy crisis in western democracies (Gattinara, 2017, p. 319; & Kelman, 2001, pp. 54-55). Consequently, they are influencing how one views ‘the proverbial other’. In addition, a lack of legitimacy corresponds with an increase in reactionary intrastate and interstate social movements that add to security challenges (Tilly, 1978, p. 153). According to the World Development Report there is a direct correlation between the deterioration of legitimacy and conflict, resistance movements, and violence (World Bank, 2011, pp. 7 & 86). “For this reason, we suggest that governance actors focus less on stability and more on legitimacy – because legitimacy induces stability for the right reasons” (Eickhoff and Müller, 2017, p. 8).

## *2.2. Liberalism, Belonging, and Otherness*

*“Societies are fundamentally about identity. They are about what enable a group of peoples to refer to themselves as ‘we’... The defining modes of ‘we’, ‘us’ and ‘them’ are all challenged by the formation of new identities, and the movement of peoples carrying different identities” (Buzan, 1993, pp. 5-6).*

Liberalism's legitimacy crisis is prompting a rise in the notion of security as a socio-spatial practice (i.e. securitized identity). Securitized identity results from an intensified fear caused by a threat imposed by various forms of social activity that heighten security concerns. Individuals sense a threat to security when there is a disruption of "Sustainability, within acceptable conditions for evolution, of traditional patterns of language, culture, association, and religious and national identity and custom" (Wæver et al., 1993, p. 23). Securitization due to issues related to migration, the security challenges resulting from cross-border social movements, and security endeavors to effectively manage terrorism are amongst the top concerns facing the USA, The EU, India, and parts of Southeast Asia (Weaver et al., 1993; Niblett, 2017; Castles & Davidson, 2000; and Castles & Miller, 1993). Because migration and cross-border social movements are caused by and cause "Conflict, instability, environmental degradation, [and] threatens social cohesion, solidarity, and peace" effectively dealing with the issue demands multi-level policy-decisions that addresses and resolves the global liberal crisis (Widgren, 1990, p. 749; Hollifield et al., 2008, p. 68; & Baubock, 2001, p. 36).

Attempts to securitize are the outgrowth of an "Intersubjective established existential threat with saliency sufficient to have substantial political effects, requiring emergency measures, and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure" (Buzan, 1997, p. 14). The challenges to security – along with the feeling of their intensified relevance – is

prompting new security discourses in social circles as well as in the scholarly arena. The established notion of security is based on how states protect their interests and safeguarded their citizens. The contemporary notion of security is unique in that it involves a broadening of the idea of security to include efforts to securitize social space in response to the threat that individuals feel in relationship to intrastate forces (e.g. terrorism, increased conflict with the ethnic other, resistance movements, and conflict due to sub-national groups seeking autonomy, and threats to existence due to environmental and climate issues).

Social actors "Have shown tremendous concern of late with issues of citizenship, im/migration, as well as community membership, inclusion/exclusion and social cohesion [sparking a trend toward] *Shrinking Citizenship Regimes*" (Dobrowolsky, 2007, p. 632). Citizen regimes refer to institutionalized systems that promote the right to participation and the underlying norms and principles of Liberalism that define those rights. In fact, the massive number of immigrants, migrants, those exiled, and refugees establish the roots of the coining of the term *outcaste*. To be an outcaste means not to be wanted, looked down upon or even rejected, excluded from normal privileges, and they are refused acceptance. The politics of who is included in the benefits of a society and who is excluded are generating controversy that continue to be the subject of heated debate. On the one side, "Are conservatives extolling tradition [and resisting] change" (Wallerstein, 2004, p. 52). On the other side are those

declaring that adherence to the principles of social inclusiveness, equal rights, and ‘mutuality’ is the basis for improving social conditions.

Although the interethnic, migratory, social-economic, and environmental problems which impact the security concerns of a society are frequently characterized as unique to each context a deeper analysis reveals a set of causes deeply rooted in the crisis of the liberal global order (Venugopal, 2003, pp. 2-3; & Sisk, 2017, p. 2). “In a shared-power world, each of the individuals, groups and organizations affected by complex, intractable problems have only partial authority to act on them and lack the power to resolve them alone. Collective action is, therefore, essential, but it cannot happen without first connecting across differences” (Ospina & Foldy, 2010, p. 292). That is to say that the solution to the crisis lies in strengthening systems of cooperative/collaborative, multi-level, strategic partnerships.

### 2.3. *Liberalism, Modernization, Progress, and Development*

Throughout the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the rise of Liberalism (as a force driving internationalization) was motivated by the belief that modernization is a means of social and economic advancement for the people of undeveloped and developing countries. Assumptions about progress “And the liberal vision [we]re tied together by the idea that societies are involved in an ongoing process of modernization” (Inkenberry, 2011, p. 65). “This picture of a steady, persistent, and uniform improvement had all the parochialism

of the eighteenth century. The advocates of *Progress* regarded their own period – which was in fact a low one measured by almost any standard except scientific thought and raw energy – as the natural peak of humanity's ascent to date” (Mumford, 1955, p. 182). Thus, liberal interventions were regarded as a type of tutoring by which the disadvantaged would learn about good government, how to develop a well-ordered society, and as a means of social-economic progress based on the Modernization Theory of development. The belief was that progress occurs by “Giving a commencement to industrial life [which will] raise [the uncivilized] out of a nation of savages” (Mills, 1977, pp. 394-395).

The vision of progress, liberty by means of freedom of association /exchange, and prosperity – inspired by Adam Smith’s prescription for increasing *The Wealth of Nations* – in actuality, turned out to be tantamount to spreading a model of social-economic progress that was based on fusing the notion of “the good life” with that of modernizing (Toynbee, 1951, p. 170). In addition, the expansion of the liberal global order was characterized as a world system where states endeavor to increase their material, economic, and military capabilities as the means of increasing power. Thus, the rosy picture of progress based on increasing *The Wealth of Nations*, industrializing, and adopting a blend of capitalism and democracy also initiated social movements (some of a revolutionary nature) that were sparked by a variety of internal and external factors: e.g. contention, instability resulting from a



legitimacy crisis, the changing nature of authority, the increased feeling that authority is failing to promote the common good, environmental crises, resource controversies, and changes in the social, political-economic, and industrial activities of society (Tilly, 1995, pp. 4-6; Porta & Diani, 2006, pp. 75-77).

Social movements are sustained social actions that utilize a variety of public politics tactics (Tilly, 2003, pp. 3 & 50). Social movements are a form of social action made-up of networks of individuals and organized groups who share traits and concerns, and who pursue better social-economic and/or political conditions. This vast and complex phenomenon is prompted by three factors that trigger the movements: “The desire to be free from compulsion, the desire for economic security, and the desire to return to nature” (Mumford, 1955, p. 297). That is to say that people get involved in a social movement because of the dichotomy between their social-economic reality and the one they aspire to. Without resolving such dichotomies “The problem of the breakdown of civilization stares us in the face [and] one of the symptoms [is] social disintegration. The nature of the breakdown can be summed up [as] an 'Internal Proletariat', recalcitrant under the Dominant Minority within the disintegrating society, and an 'External Proletariat' who now violently resist incorporation” (Toynbee, 1951, pp. 4 & 6).

Thus, a study of the historical data reveals that the rise of global Liberalism corresponds with multi-level domestic and international social movements. The movements were sparked by social disruptions resulting from the impact of

advances in industrial technology, large scale migratory movements of people, and new ways in which natural resources were used to achieve progress based on Modernity assumptions (United Nations, 1980, pp. 63 & 112). In addition to having a tremendous impact on urbanization, the movement of people, their thoughts about development and progress, and their ideas about a good or even better life notions about modernizing had enormous impact on the way the global landscape took shape and, as well, on the environment. In sum, the data provides a historically documented account of why “A moribund civilization finally lose[s] its identity: [e.g.] an iconoclastic revolt on the part of its own external and internal proletariat in order that one or other of these insurgents may obtain a free field for bringing a new civilization to birth” (Toynbee, 1951, p. 78).

### **3. Liberalism’s new medium: a new means for realizing the Ideals of Liberalism**

Coinciding with the apparent decline of a hegemonic liberal global order are new forms of multi-level networked social activity. Global social action is increasingly taking place amongst “Like-minded coalitions of governments and civil society..., the inclusion of NGOs in the governance structures of UN agencies, and various forms of multi-stakeholder, public-private, public policy networks” (Ikenberry, 2003, p. 544). The new forms of multi-level networked social (inter)action are prompted by increased recognition of the possibilities made available by advances in communication technology for

establishing collaborative/cooperative strategic partnerships, for determining the normative principles that would operationalize the global norms shaping the interactions/transactions, for increasing legitimacy, neutralizing power relations, and improving the effectiveness of liberal interventions.

This includes acknowledgement of the need to re-conceptualize global social action: e.g. a more comprehensive conceptualization of international relations that is inclusive of social action taking place at the micro, meso, and macro levels, how sub-state actors influence interstate activity, and a perspective on global progress that integrates social and economic value theory (Wallerstein, 2006; Giddens, 2007; Kothari, 2009 & 1989; Habermas, 2012). The re-conceptualization allows for an analysis of “The broader range of nonstate actors and their forays into the international arena and how a sense of collective identity can develop among groups of states” (Tarrow, 2005, p. 22). However, the question is, how does Liberalism’s new medium contribute to helping it be more effective in dealing with the migrant challenge, interethnic conflicts, and the security challenges imposed by intrastate and cross-border social movements?

Liberalism advanced to the point of having a global impact because there are strong incentives for individuals and social groups to engage in cooperative interactions that create beneficial and satisfactory outcomes for stakeholders at the multi-levels of social, political, and economic interaction. In fact, without concerns that motivate behavior that transcend the special interests of social groups

(both conflictual and cooperative social activity) social agents “Would have no rational incentive to engage in world politics at all and would simply devote their resources to an autarkic and isolated existence” (Moravcsik, 2008, pp. 234 & 235). Thus, the most important advantage that social agents have by basing multi-causal interactions on Liberalism’s new medium is its ability to establish shared systems of cooperative, strategic, and multi-level instrumental social action.

This section of the article explores social science claims that Liberalism’s new medium rectifies the shortcomings connected with the liberal peace agenda, provides a model for improving structure-agent relations, and introduces a more progressive notion of the role of power in the social relations that occur at every level of social interaction (Haas, 1972, pp. 103-131; O’Toole, 1997, p. 445; Castells, 2011, p. 777; & Frederickson et al., 2012, p. 110). It examines the literature on the relationship between new mediums for realizing the ideals and aims of Liberalism (e.g. more extensive multi-level strategic partnerships and networking to increase security) and satisfying the interests of stakeholders. The literature suggests that Liberalism’s new medium contributes to resolving its crisis because of its ability to establish transnational cooperative political-economic networks within which individuals, groups, and institutionalized social agents participate in collaborative collective action (Tarrow, 2005, p. 164). In other words, Liberalism’s new medium can be defined as globally networked public-private coalitions in which participants engage in Constructivist-

type communication processes that generate the knowledge needed to address and resolve issues they are confronted with, that strengthen strategic partnerships, resolve the discrepancies of the liberal peace agenda, and promote sustainability (i.e. a more progressive approach to social-economic progress).

Preliminary research on implementing Liberalism's new medium as a strategy for conflict reduction and peace-building indicates that it contributes to enhancing security and to establishing an infrastructure for peace in six ways: (1.) it expands the state-centric emphasis on security regimes and the use of force to include a multi-track approach to diplomacy (2.) it establishes the social action networks that transform shared values and common goals into cooperative social action, (3.) it is a medium for networking with other Human Rights and advocacy NGO's, (4.) establishes the processes for creating cooperation between otherwise opposing groups, (5.) it facilitates multi-level dialogue between various stakeholders, (6.) and it serves as an advocacy network for protecting citizens against violence (Paffenholz, 2010, p. 5). Thus, Liberalism's new medium increases its effectiveness by expanding the notion of international relations to include multi-level strategic partnerships; it expands the security concept to include threats from intrastate forces; and increases legitimacy by means of including unique cultural worldviews and values, norms, and principles as factors when engaging particular socio-cultural contexts – thus including the notion that social reality is co-constituted in its conceptualizations of effective intervention.

Applying Liberalism's new medium to multi-level social interactions involves “Stimulating those processes in a society that enable self-organization and that will lead to strengthening the resilience of the social institutions that manage internal and external stressors and shocks, and increasing social cohesion thus facilitating and stimulating the processes that enable self-organization to emerge” (De Coning, 2018, pp. 304 & 307). This new approach to social action balances human welfare with the prior emphasis on market/economic Liberalism. It thus addresses and resolves several of the sources of the crisis in the liberal peace agenda: e.g. its prior emphasis on states and institutions, on reinforcing authority and security – which overlook the essential aspects of participatory governance, co-creating public value, and the social construction of reality (Chau, 2009, p. 2). That is to say that the new medium – which is made possible by cooperation instituted by means of networked alliances – provides a new framework for conceptualizing interactions taking place between individual social actors and social actors within networks (Latour, 2011, p. 370).

Strategic partnerships, formed by means of networks, are having a revolutionary impact in that “On the one hand, they are blurring technological, economic, political, and cultural boundaries. On the other hand, [they] have created immense new moral spaces for exploring new communities of affinity” (Tehrani, 1997, p. 1). In fact, networking introduces an entirely new model of how to exercise political authority; it introduces a

model of governance based on public-private partnerships and co-creating social reality; it is a model for reconciling the difference in the interests of powerful elite, political authorities, and the overall public.

Liberalism's new medium is a means of engaging in international political community building. The network approach achieves this by defining structures as emergent properties of persistent patterns of relations among agents and which can define, enable, and constrain those agents. "We know that multi-stakeholder approaches including academics, policymakers and local communities give us the best chances for success, in everything from refugee integration and urban violence concerns to private sector contributions for early warning systems in conflict zones" (Miklian & Hoelscher, 2016, p. 2).

Thus, Liberalism's new medium "Is making certain aspects of peacebuilding that seemed idealistic thirty years ago, like mobilizing social movements from the ground up, suddenly possible and tangible" (Alliance for Peacebuilding, 2015, p. 3). The new medium proves effective for reconciling the vast differences in interests in power, goals, values, and identity between stakeholders at multi-levels. Liberalism's new medium is effective for creating shared values, common goals, and an agreement to relate on the basis of certain shared principles. Thus, it creates "The ability to work from a multi-group perspective – one that not only fully understands each group's needs, but also successfully bridges these needs and moves toward the goal of producing a greater good for everyone" (APALC, 2003, p.

6). Liberalism's new medium can be described as integrated networks that establish an infrastructure for sustainable peace by promoting participatory democratic processes (Castells, 2007); by implementing an interactive public value creation network as a new basis for multi-level social interaction (Miller, 2018); and by safeguarding the cherished socio-cultural values of particular contexts – which reverses cultural erosion (De Ville et al., 2015).

#### 4. Conclusion

*"The medium is the message' because it is the medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action"* (McLuhan, 1994, p. 9).

"Contemporary liberalism remains a plural liberalism, a liberalism bolstered left and right by a 'cluster of values' including market 'opportunity'; 'good', or 'modern governance' leading to 'empowerment'; social and economic 'inclusion' and, especially, conservative 'security'" (Porter & Craig, 2004, p. 338; also see Lippman, 1955). In addition, the fundamental principles of Liberalism call for inclusiveness and tolerance of *The Proverbial Other* (Locke, 1689). However, there are critical causal factors hindering the ability of Liberalism to realize its aims: e.g. scarcity and differentiation that make competition inevitable, conflict resulting from variations in the underlying pattern of interaction in pursuit of preferences for material and ideal welfare, and societal demands so conflictual that social actors are likely to consider coercion as an acceptable means to promote them (Moravcsik, 2003, pp. 161 & 162). This article stresses that

the manifestation of these casual factors in contexts where Liberalism is intended to promote prosperity and reduce conflict has resulted in Liberalism's failure to create the prescribed outcome of the liberal peace. This highlights the fact that "Interventions are not easily comprehensible through the lens of the liberal peace theory, particularly the strong version which sees an automatic connection between the virtuous [domestic] culture on the 'inside' and an ethical [international intervention] on the 'outside'" (Dunne, 2009, p. 113).

Liberalism's new medium is made possible by advances in communication media that provide resources needed for establishing networks that become fertile ground for global social movements. "These developments have facilitated issue networks that connect people of common interest in advancing a particular value and helps them to communicate and coordinate" (Swain, 2010, p. 4). That is to say that agents at the various levels of social interactions are increasingly relying on social networks to promote their aims and pursue their aspirations. This article addresses the questions of how Liberalism's new medium reconciles seemingly incommensurate value pursuits.

The new medium enhances Liberalism's ability to realize its aims in that it "Create[s] new social tools [that] synchronize behaviors with people who are changing their behavior to synchronize with you. The collective action results in collaborative creative productions" (Shirky, 2008, pp. 49-51). Liberalism's new medium operationalizes norms, principles, and processes of governance that reconcile

distinctive "comprehensive doctrines" at the local, regional, national, and international levels by means of the "networked overlapping consensus". The overlapping consensus promotes justice and rights by increasing the sense of mutuality (i.e. interconnected interests) that override conflicting, or even incommensurable, convictions (Rawls, 1993, pp. 133-172 & 385-396; also see Habermas, 1992, p. 7).

Although global relations do not match the characterization of "a global village" liberal international relations scholars believe that cooperation is possible when people "Conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another and share in the working of common institutions" (Bull, 1977, p. 13). Networks are an innovative means by which individuals and social groups at multi-levels establish cross-sectoral and local-global (transnational) connections to manage security challenges, to form a concerted reaction to the environmental and climate challenges, and to better manage of benefits and problems of population movements that bring the people of the world into much closer and intense interaction (Moore et al., 2017, p. 621). The article's claim is based on the presupposition that "In our increasingly complex and interconnected world, networked based solutions of knowledge creation, dissemination, and the diffusion of best practices can enhance our capacity to define and address problems more effectively" (Paar-Jakli, 2014, p. 1).

A critical perspective and conceptualization of the new medium was introduced when the

phrase *the medium is the message* was coined to mean that “The message of any medium or technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs” (McLuhan, 1994, p. 8). “The medium is a form of social organization” or the means by which communication is transformed *From Medium to Social Practice* (Williams, 1977, p. 159). Marshall McLuhan stressed that networks were creating new forms of social-formation, relations, interactions, social space, and structures which are simultaneously shrinking and expanding social identity. However, McLuhan focused on mass media where networks are multifaceted systems in which people interact to progress their personal, social, ideological, commercial, and political agendas.

This article emphasized that the medium provides a technological means by which Liberalism’s legitimacy can be enhanced. That is to say that the article explains how the new medium – operating in the form of networked strategic partnerships that agents participate in to safeguard their national interests and co-create increased benefits – can also act to increase legitimacy, stability, and security. In this respect the medium is the message is rendered *networks are the new medium* by which to achieve the aims of Liberalism and realize its ideals.

The revolutionary impact of globally integrated, networks warrant a re-conceptualization of global power relations and the emancipatory power of multi-level strategic partnerships – in the theory, methodology, and practice of international relations (Gaef, 2015, pp. 61-62).

That is to say that as the rising states continue to reshape the nature of the global order and power-relations they do not simply confront an apparently declining hegemonic global order; “They face a wider conglomeration of ordering rules, institutions, and arrangements; many of which they have long embraced” (Ikenberry, 2018b, p. 20). The state-focused global liberal order may be in decline, but another order is emerging. In the emerging global order agents at multi-levels are networked in associations that encourage and reward mutually beneficial *co-opetition*. “Traditional nation-states are now embedded in a new knowledge-based, globally hyperlinked, multi-level system in which a plurality of public and private actors have gradually woven strong meshes of functional interests that irreversibly link various levels of governance” (UN, 2007, pp. 4, 20 & 29).

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