Liberalism: Causing or Resolving the Crises of Global Governance?
Young Researchers' Conference
Goethe University of Frankfurt
February, 3rd-6th, 2011

Call for Papers

We live in a world marked by constant global crises: Global climate change threatens our future living conditions and those of our children; in 2008 financial markets crashed and brought the world economy to the brink of collapse; since 11 September 2001, the "War on Terror" has been declared, but there is no common consensus on how and when this war will be won – or if it can be won at all.

Partly due to these challenges many citizens do not trust the impartiality or problem-solving competence of policy makers anymore. Indeed, even global institutions that have been set up to handle these problems are either unable or very slow to meet these and other challenges. Moreover, while global institutions lack democratic legitimacy, the scope of national democratic decision making is limited by the advancing globalization.

These developments lead to opposition and contestation by both (trans-)societal and state actors.

Coinciding with all these developments, liberalism is seen as the dominant ideology in world politics. However, the understandings of liberalism differ widely. On the one hand, liberalism can be associated with an economic ideology, a view which is predominantly held in Europe. On the other hand liberalism is thought of as a political principle throughout other parts of the world (most visibly in the US). Both definitions, though, are based on the belief in the universality of individual self-determination, equality and liberty, which is regarded as rational and universal. Even the political definition in itself is ambivalent: Both the active promotion of democracy and human rights and the radical tolerance of other organizational forms of society and rule can logically follow from liberalism.

Consequently, the conference addresses the question of whether and what kind of connection between liberalism(s) and the persisting crises can be found. Are liberal ideas the cause of these crises? Or is it only a certain type of liberalism that can be held accountable? Maybe the world isn't liberal enough? Is liberalism's universal claim the problem? Or is it that the most powerful states adopted only those parts of liberal ideas which were suited to their (short-term) advantages?

It is not our goal to come up with definite answers to these questions but rather to demonstrate how complex and diverse the topic is and to stimulate further debate among scholars, politicians, the media and citizens.

We therefore invite you to submit papers engaging the questions outlined above. The papers should be suited to one of the following conference section topics:

Challenges and problems in a globalized world
We invite papers that shed light on any pressing global challenge and its reasons. Papers might both confirm or reject the above mentioned assumption that global crises are a result of liberalism's dominance in world politics. Moreover, papers addressing the issue of burden-sharing of global crises are welcomed.

How democratic is global governance in international institutions?
We invite papers addressing gaps between claims of democratic legitimacy and actual policy making in global governance. Possible topics could be the informalization of global governance, the

rising power of executives in the wake of globalization, civil society in global governance or the output dimension of legitimacy.

Opposition, protest and violence against global governance
Papers are most welcomed which engage with any form of opposition, resistance or contestation against global governance. This might include resistance by state actors or civil society. Papers may address both violent and non-violent opposition.

The claim of universal validity: Liberalism between the promotion of human rights and cultural imperialism
Papers for this section should deal with the promotion of liberal values in foreign countries or foreign policy that claims to promote such values. Possible topics could be e.g. free trade or promotion of human rights. Moreover, papers that address the power relation between different actors in world politics and, thus, shed light on the influence of liberal agency are most welcomed. Both empirical and normative papers are invited.

Is liberalism the solution to the crises?
Papers are invited to address the question of whether liberal ideas can be the solution to global crises. Both papers arguing for a continuation of liberal policy based on the assumption that global crises are not a result of liberalism at all or a reformulation of liberalism and papers fundamentally challenging liberalism or its universal claim are invited. Papers drawing on non-western approaches or post-colonial theory are especially welcomed.

The conference will consist of panels and key-note speeches. The following key-note speakers have already accepted our invitation: Prof. Nicole Deitelhoff, Prof. Nikita Dhawan, Prof. Jens Steffek, and Prof. Hubert Zimmermann. Moreover, we have invited Prof. Lothar Brock and Prof. Rainer Forst to the conference. The patron of the conference is Prof. Harald Müller.

The organizers of the conference invite all young researchers (including students!) to submit papers. Please send your abstracts of max. 500 words in German or English in .doc or .pdf format by Novermber, 19th 2010 to conference-global-governance@normativeorders.net

Presumably, traveling expenses and accommodation for panelists will be refunded.

For a more detailed program and the concept of the conference see: www.gesellschaftswissenschaften.uni-frankfurt.de/en/conference-global-governance

For further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at: conference-global-governance@normativeorders.net.