Theories of International Political Economy II: Marxism and Constructivism

Min Shu
Waseda University
An outline of the lecture

- The basics of Marxism
- Marxist IPE theories

- Constructivism at a glance
- Constructivist IPE theories

- Feminist approaches to IPE
The basics of Marxism

- **Class struggles**
  - The relationship to the *means of production* defines one’s (initial) membership of a class
  - Ruling class vs. working class (e.g., bourgeoisie vs. proletariat)

- **Historical materialism**
  - Economic structure, legal and political superstructure, and social consciousness
  - Primitive communism → ancient (slave) society → feudalism → capitalism (→ socialism → communism)
  - ‘Cultural hegemony’

- **Marxist interpretations of capitalism**
  - The exploitation of labor
  - Chronical economic crisis
  - Capitalist world system
Marxist IPE theories: Imperialism

- The imperialism analysis of IPE
  - Domestic conflicts between the working class and the capitalist class
  - Overseas colonial expansion
  - Imperialist wars over colonial territories

- Imperialist wars and the two world wars
  - Small-scale regional conflicts
  - The first world war
  - The second world war...

- Socialist revolution
  - Economic production and socialist revolution
  - Class struggles and socialist revolution
Marxist IPE theories: Dependency theory

- **Time and cases**
  - Between 1960s and 1970s
  - Failed independent economic development in Latin America

- **Dependency theory**
  - The centre and the periphery in world economy
    - International economic order under attack
  - ‘International division of labor’
    - Poor states: natural resources, cheap labor, old technologies
    - Rich states: advanced technologies, highly value-added products, dominating the international politico-economic order
  - Reproduction of dependency
    - trade, finance, politics, technology, media, education, and culture
Marxist IPE theories: World System

- Wallerstein and his works
  - Immanuel Wallerstein (1930-)

- The theories of World System
  - Rejecting the third-world argument, and claiming instead ‘a complex network of economic exchange relationships’
  - The structure of capitalist world economy
    - Core: the centre of business, industries and finance
    - Semi-periphery: providing the semi-finished products
    - Periphery: supplying raw materials, agricultural products and cheap labour
  - Possible transition from the semi-periphery to the core
Three theoretical frameworks compared

- The interaction between politics and economy
  - Liberalist: politics and economy as two interacting spheres
  - Marxist: economy determines politics
  - Realist: politics determines economy

- Analytical focuses and explanatory variables
  - Liberalism: individual actors → economic efficiency
  - Realism: state actors → geo-strategic considerations
  - Marxism: unequal relationships → class conflicts

- The overlapping of alternative theories
  - The role of national interests: Realism, Marxism
  - The emergence of IOs: Liberalism, Realism
  - Explaining inter-state conflicts: Marxism, Realism
Constructivism at a glance

- Some basic assumptions of constructivism
  - Constructivism or social constructivism
  - The national/state interests are relative
  - ‘Anarchy is what states make of it’ (Wendt, 1992)
  - ‘The logic of appropriateness’ (March and Olsen, 1989)

- The social construction of IPE
  - Ideas
  - Identities
  - Values
  - Norms
  - Knowledge
Constructivist IPE theories: Epistemic Community

- What is an epistemic community?
  - The network of knowledge-based professionals in scientific and technological areas that have an impact on policy-making

- The features of epistemic community
  - Experts who share the common knowledge and beliefs
  - The coordination between policy-makers and policy experts
  - A global network beyond state borders

- The influences of epistemic community
  - Environmental protection
  - Financial regulation
  - Trade in service
Constructivist IPE theories: Norms and their impacts

- What are the norms in IPE?
  - Norms: standards of behavior that are typical of, or accepted within, a particular group or society
  - Norms in IPE: sets of accepted rules of appropriate practices in international political economy
  - Examples: anti-dumping, anti-child labor, trade restrictions based on health concerns

- ‘Norm entrepreneurs’
  - Actors that are able to prioritize certain norms (at the expense of others) in international politico-economic interaction
  - Politicians, diplomats and experts
  - State or a group of states (G7, G20, etc.)
  - International organizations
  - Network of international NGOs
Constructivist IPE theories: Norms and their impacts

- Creation and acceptance of international norms
  - The basis of norm internationalization
    - The internationalization of domestic politico-economic problems
    - The contagious nature of financial, environmental and healthy issues

- The acceptance and internalization of norms
  - The 'boomerang effect': five stages
    - Negligence
    - Resistance
    - Strategic concession
    - The roles of domesticized rules
    - Domestic rules as given

- Norm diffusion and localization
Constructivist IPE theories: Identity

- Identity in international political economy
  - How does one identify herself, her job, her daily life, her country and her region…?
  - How does one identify other people, their jobs, their lives, their religions, their countries and their regions…?

- The multi-layered structure of identity
  - Overlapping identities
  - Possible conflicts between multiple identities
  - The dominant identity and its impact

- The formation and transformation of identity
  - Identity formation
    - education, socialisation, emulation
  - Identity transformation
    - International political or economic crisis: incentives for change
    - External pressures: reward, coercion, persuasion…
Constructivist IPE theories: Identity

- **Self-identification**
  - Race, nation, culture, and ethnicity…
  - Self-identification and interest calculation in IPE
  - Self-identification and policy formation in IPE

- **Spatial Identities in IPE**
  - Small vs. big
  - Local vs. global
  - Domestic vs. international

- **Everyday life, identity consolidation and transformation in IPE: a grassroots perspective**
Feminist approaches to IPE

- What is feminism?
  - Three waves of feminist thoughts
    - Pursuing gender equality (in public life)
    - Opposing gender discrimination (in personal domain)
    - Opposing essentialist definitions of femininity (in cross-cultural context)

- The roles of female in international political economy

- Reforming the masculinized international relations
  - The masculinity of IPE: power, interest, conflict…
  - The femininity of IPE: coordination, compromise, consensus…