CONSTRUCTIVISM

I. Actors and Systems
II. The Role of Ideas
III. Security Dilemma and State Identity
IV. Applying Theory
I. Actors and Systems

- Realism and Liberalism: States and Anarchy
- Constructivists because focus on how reality is ‘socially constructed’
- Agent-Structure Debate
  - Agents = Actors (State and Non-State)
  - Structure = Structure of International System
- Q: Does the structure of the system shape actors behavior, or do actors shape the structure of the system?
Theories and Agent-Structure

- **Realism**: Nature of the international system shapes states’ behavior
- **Liberalism**: Behavior of actors shapes the nature of the international system
- **Constructivism**: Actors and system mutually constituted
II. The Role of Ideas

- Ideas important in their own right
- Consequences v. Appropriateness
- International Norms: shared expectations about appropriate behavior held by the international community
- Changes in norms lead to changes in state behaviors
- Examples: Sovereignty, Colonialism, Land Mine Treaty
- “Anarchy is what states make of it”
Norms and State Behavior

- State Behavior and International Norms “Mutually Constituted”

ACTORS
(States)
• Behavior
• Interests
• Identities

CONTEXT
(System)
• Ideas
• Meanings
• Rules
III. Security Dilemma and State Identity

- Determinants of national interests
  - US and China versus US and Britain

- National interests (goals) a function of national identity

- Sources of identity domestic (level of analysis)

- Convergent national identity → Cooperation and Peace

- Divergent national identity → Conflict and War

- Q: IF goals are convergent...really anarchy???
Summary of Constructivism

- States and system mutually constituted in IR
- Ideas (separate from power) are important in shaping international relations
- Whether IR is anarchy or society a function of convergent or divergent national identities
IV. Applying Theory

REALISM
- Power
- Anarchy = Security
- Dilemma = Emphasis on Power

CONSTRUCTIVISM
- Ideas
- Anarchy v. Society
- National Identity

LIBERALISM
- Institutions
- Anarchy mitigated by IGOs, Interdependence
- Common Values, etc.