

# *Theory Talks*

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## THEORY TALK #15

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### PETER KATZENSTEIN ON ANTI-AMERICANISM, ANALYTICAL ECLECTICISM AND REGIONAL POWERS

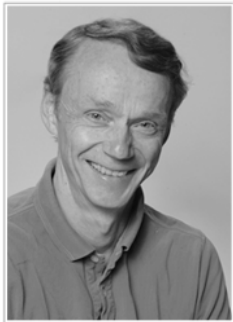
#### Theory Talks

is an interactive forum for discussion on actual International Relations-related topics for both students and specialists. Theory Talks frequently invites cutting-edge specialists in the field to open a debate, discuss current issues or elucidate a theory.

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## PETER KATZENSTEIN ON ANTI-AMERICANISM, ANALYTICAL ECLECTICISM AND REGIONAL POWERS



While Peter J. Katzenstein is one of the founding fathers of the now strong-standing matrix of International Political Economy, he warns us to be careful about too much paradigmatic thinking. Katzenstein's work addresses issues of political economy, security and culture in world politics, and in this elaborate talk he discusses, amongst others, the distinct nature of anti-Americanisms, the preconditions for successful regionalisms and analytical plurality in a divided field of science.

**What is, according to you, the biggest challenge / principal debate in current IR? What is your position or answer to this challenge / in this debate?**

First of all, I would like to distinguish between 'challenge' and 'debate'. Concerning the latter: I think there is no principle *debate* right now. There used to be these paradigmatic debates (between Realism, Marxism and Liberalism, Neorealism and Neoliberalism) but I think now there is a different kind of discussion going on: we now have more of an intellectual divide between two idealist theories, rationalism and constructivism. Actually, they're not even real paradigmatic theories but rather content-less analytical languages dealing principally with beliefs. For a theory to be a paradigm, it needs to have a moral dimension, which the different positions in these former debates have. These novel positions, however, do not impel us to action. That is probably the reason why there is no debate: both the current positions are social-science constructs.

Nevertheless, I do think the current situation is interesting. When talking about these more paradigmatic debates, I, for one, regard the absence of Marxism in social sciences as a great lacuna in the social sciences and I expect materialism (which encompasses Marxism) to make a return soon – it's been out of the running for a while, but it'll come back in some form or another.

The biggest *challenge* – and here I just speak about the United States – consists of the overwhelming tendency towards paradigm thinking. In International Political Economy (IPE), for example, it's all about the 'American School vs the British School', and two-thirds of all articles deal only within one paradigm, which is liberalism. In the U.S., scholars should break out of this straitjacket of working only in one paradigm. Not that I have anything against paradigms, they are very useful, but I am increasingly convinced that 'analytical eclecticism' is at this stage a superior way of doing theory because we are so paradigmatic; had we been predominantly eclectic, I would've said we should be a little more paradigmatic – but right now we almost work in a monoculture, which intellectually is pretty unhealthy.

### **How did you arrive at where you currently are in IR?**

Jerry Cohen wrote a book about the founding fathers of IPE and I found myself in there. How did I get there? I guess I just can't sit still intellectually, I've migrated between fields, and throughout I've basically remained a weberian, interested in the influence of history on politics – that's what I've focused on in IPE, in Asian and to some extent European security, and that's what I'm now studying about civilization and culture. An example of my restlessness is that in the 70s, when me and some influential others like Robert Keohane, Jerry Cohen, Robert Cox started studying IPE, it consisted of the big questions you ask when founding a paradigm. But as the questions got smaller, for me IPE grew stale. The same thing goes for security, which I've studied in the 90s. While Security Studies gained attentions as a field after the Cold War, and even more so after having been interbred with attention for terrorism, I find its answers now quite predictable. The constant in my changes is that once a field normalizes, I get drawn to other issues. You could say the lasting impact for me is that I get bored.

Another important constant underlying my work is that I've retained an intellectual European cast of mind: I'm not drawn to rigorous deductive theory and I think that to make interests exogenous takes away some of the most interesting questions in politics; to say that identity is fixed is in this day and age so apolitical that one can just not do that. So I hold that many of the reductionist moves American IR makes, and which are powerful, not to be convenient. In order to do high-quality research, American scholars should read more broadly and catch up on the interesting work going on outside their own, clearly limited, paradigm. We should collaborate more with the foreign graduate students we've received and who move back to their own countries – they are our gateways to broader intellectual knowledge. But American IR scholars still think themselves to be missionaries, while their momentum as such is passing rapidly as social science globalizes.

### **What would a student need to become a specialist in IR?**

First some disquieting news: you can no longer learn everything you need to get started in graduate school. But I think that in these short six years, one should have at least some courses in statistics, in soft rational choice, and some reflection on how to use text. The web is the largest unexplored data source for social science. It's not just information, facts, but text – and we're lagging woefully behind on humanities in using text for social science purposes. So if we resume a graduate program based on this – and the top ones are – a graduate student just attains skills and no knowledge. And that triangulation of methods is fine, and produces more stable results than my generation of students. There's simply no time during a PhD to attain both, and that's why PhD's are extended with post-doctoral fellowships – you need at least a year or two of post-doc to acquire some substance.

**You've studied Germany since the start of your career. How has Germany's role or importance in world politics changed over the last century and how would you characterize it now?**

As IR scholars, we have to work with the fetishes of the public client – after the cold war, Germany was a hot topic, right now it's China and in ten years it'll be India. Countries are subject to fashion whims of both public and policy makers. People now tend to forget that Japan is still the second biggest economy in the world, and Germany is the second biggest exporter in the world, and these facts don't change quite as quickly. The American Empire was a fashion whim during five years in the public debate. And these fetishes of public debate shouldn't influence scholarship.

So Germany, for me, has remained interesting – it might be less important than it was in 1914, when it was a revisionist great power, but the story of Germany is so entangled with that of the EU, that the institutionalized taming of soft and hard power has become the story of Europe. The German question has been resolved through Europe. And while Europe may be kidding itself, or overstated, it's gotten hold of a transformation of power that indicates a moment in its history differing very much from the American moment so related to hard, material and military power.

And this 'European moment' is the way it is because of Germany. To put it crudely: without the holocaust, without the thirty-years war – in short, without Germany, Europe would never have reached what it is becoming right now. To make that example less crude: just imagine how it must be for Russians to remember the 2nd World War, in which they lost twenty to thirty million souls. The US, in comparison, lost only fifty thousand men in Vietnam. That gives those countries completely different outlooks on war and military power. Which is why 'Germany in Europe' is a very important subject.

If bad or good experience in war influences foreign policy, we touch on two dynamics normal international relations scholars have a very hard time dealing with: the 'politics of memory', practiced by historians, and the 'politics of imagination', which is the core construct of literature and the humanities, but also central to the work of politicians. We don't have categories for imagination in IR, which is a big mistake. They're both very complex concepts which don't lend themselves to the reductionist theories we have. Think about 'apology'. We're simply not very good in writing about apologies. Now both constructivism and rationalism deal with ideas and ideals. Why can't they seem to arrive at making the step to discussing imagination?

**You've recently co-edited a book on Anti-Americanisms with Robert Keohane. Is this (worldwide?) negative sentiment towards the current economic and military hegemon to be seen as arising from specifically American behavior or is it comparable to, for example, hate towards the British empire in the 19th century, pagan distrust of the Church in the middle-ages, or barbarian feelings towards the Romans?**

*One* question here is: is it what we do? is it American behavior? My answer would be: yes. If not Cheney and Bush would make policy, and we'd all vote Obama, anti-Americanism would decline.

The *other* question is: is it who we are? is it because of who we are as Americans? And there you touch on the 'Empire' issue and rebellion against mister Big. And I don't think that's true. If it was just the 'mister Big' issue, then of course anti-Americanism in the 90s, when it became apparent that the US was the only remaining big power, should have been much greater, because its relative capabilities were much larger in the 90s than they are after 2000. Of course, anti-Americanism existed in the 90s, but it was regional and very specific, not some big wave lapping around the world. For me and Keohane current anti-Americanism has a lot to do with George Bush, the position America takes in the Kyoto rounds and the new role played by America after 2000, consisting in fact in trading in hard power for soft power, in saying: 'we have so much hard, military power that we don't give a damn about being voted away in the United Nations'.

I call this the American Imperium, which has both the traditional military-territorial dimension and the not so traditional, non-territorial soft power dimension facilitated by globalization. Those two need to be aligned, and under this administration they haven't been. We pay a big price for this in terms of legitimacy, efficiency and a lot of more things.

But Europeans should not think that if Obama becomes America's next president – Europeans are in love with Obama – that things will change very radically. Obama might well ask 50.000 more European troops to go to Afghanistan. That's because of the structurally different position of the States in the world, and the distinct sense of self of Americans.

Our book underlines just by its title that there is difference between negative feelings about the British or Roman Empire and the American one, and that's what we call the polyvalence of America. America stands for many things: Protestantism, prostitution – you name it, we've got it. And because of that plurality, anti-Americanisms are also polyvalent. All the people that hate America, sort of also would like a green card enabling them to live and work in the States.

**You've contributed a lot to the study of Asian Regionalism. (Why Asia?) Is Asian regionalism something pervasive heading towards deeper integration or a temporary response to outside impulses?**

To answer your first, hyphenated, question: why not? Or rather: if you live on the west coast of the US, you're closer to Asia than to (the self-centered) Europe and even at Stanford it's difficult to come by the quality and quantity of information you can get on Asia. Why it interested me? I found out that Japan and Germany had a lot in common – mostly that they hated America and Britain, and that they were the only ones to take on the Anglo-Saxon Empire in the last 200 years. But they're also regional hegemonies and big military and economic forces in the world. About the second, explicit question: Asia has a completely different culture and history, so why should it look anything like Europe? I know it's difficult for Europeans not to take themselves as an example – like all the Ernst Haas integrationist and now the regionalist literature in IR does – but there is simply no reason to assume that Asia should be heading the same, European way.

Each region has its own measuring rod. From the European perspective, there's no integration in Asia so Europe is a deep, and Asia a shallow form of integration. Well, yes, from a European perspective. But you can turn that around just as easily by looking at market penetrations through

ethnic capitalism is occurring at an astounding rate and thus Asia is integrated more deeply than Europe. Both arguments are silly. Asian integration just has a different form, and its institutionalization is not based on law.

**The regionalism you put forward in your book *A World of Regions* consists, resuming, basically of the recognition of regionally converging trends on various policy issues, an added value in relation to both Realism and Liberalism for incorporating security, economics and culture, and the assessment that there is (always?) a core state linked to the US hegemony and porousness. Does this mean that if the power of the US drains away, regions will lose purpose? More concretely, is there some way to relate the legitimacy crisis of Europe to the economic crisis in the US?**

Well, no, because if regions lose purpose once the US loses power, this would mean that regionalisms serve solely the hegemonic interest of the US. And they don't: regions also serve region-wide and national interests – if not, regional initiatives would cease to exist. It would surely make a big difference and transform regions, but it wouldn't take regionalisms away.

And I don't think the economic crisis in the US is linked to Europe. What we see in Europe is a recalibration of two competing conceptions of 'Europe'; a shallow and expansive British one and a profound and integrative French one. And as I see it, England has one and Europe has to adapt to that reality, and the other one in which citizens generally don't care about a Brussels that issues an illegible constitution which is not clear about which of these two Europes it represents. The probable outcome is a Europe of seven speeds: France and Germany aren't just going to sit back and let Europe expand and lose integrative mobility, but push for further integration with core states.

**If I understand your argument correctly, no regionalism will function until it counts with a possible regional hegemon and US interest? Does that mean that, to you, African regionalism is doomed?**

That's what I argue, because Europe has Germany as its hegemon and Cold-War interests, Asia has Japan and economic interest, and the Middle East has America's interest but no state that could function as a regional power.

That does not mean there is no African regionalism – there is, of the kind of South Asian regionalism, which is also endemic – in terms of their influence on people's lives, in economic or regional political terms, or in international politics, they don't count for much. There are regional organizations everywhere, but they are differentially consequential, and I think Africa is pretty inconsequential. The policy advice would be: South Africa and Nigeria, Africa's two major economies, better get their act together, because the UN isn't going to send peacekeepers to Darfur. The Americans aren't going to send peacekeepers to Kosovo any longer. Regions will have to do these things by themselves. Africa is poor, so it will need assistance, but it has to be done by Africans themselves, and that only works if the powerful states have functioning institutions.

**You've written about small countries in '84 and '85. How do small countries behave differently in relation to big countries?**

First of all, 'small' turned out for me not to be a geographic variable. Smallness is a degree of vulnerability. If you're big in size or population, but you perceive yourself to be vulnerable, you're actually small. States who 'feel' vulnerable show a tendency of not tolerating much domestic divisions; people will pull together. So vulnerability induces an ideology of cohesion.

This implies that if you have a big country that turns into a big mess, it might start behaving like a small, vulnerable country. But the mess would be really big – because the country is big – that would turn the world into a big mess.

**If Realism and Liberalism are implicated in constructing and reconstructing the domain of international and national security (as you argue in 'Norms, Identity and Culture in National Security'), does 'analytic eclecticism' do so as well?**

Realism and Liberalism have policy implications because they have normative content. You can be analytically eclectic as Joseph Nye, who's combining Liberalism with some aspect Realism, or as Henry Nau, sometimes a liberal, sometimes a conservative, who writes on some kind of conservative internationalism of the Reagan, James K. Polk, Truman and Jefferson strand in American foreign policy. They're both combining ideas with normative implications. You could also combine ideas of rationalism and constructivism which do not have moral implications. I myself combine constructivism with liberalism, because my normative commitments are largely liberal but I think it lacks the capacity to say anything about identity. So I think analytic eclecticism can combine things without or with normative elements, and I also think the most powerful combinations are those of Realism with constructivism and Liberalism with constructivism. For me, the combination Liberalism-Realism, the public domain favorite, is not coherent because of the conflicting normative positions the combination implies.

**IR is a relatively new science, in some ways still looking for an identity. Doesn't analytic eclecticism disturb our route as a discipline towards becoming a consolidated field of science?**

IR was born out of the British Empire, and taken over by the Americans after the world wars, so it is a handmaiden of great power – I mean, the Germans created geopolitics when they started having revisionist aspirations. In that sense, it is a consolidated field related to power. But I'm not for consolidation but for rivalry in the field, because rivalry implies debate and debate implies progress. You're right that eclecticism is contrary to some advantages of paradigmatic science, but at least it doesn't shun interesting questions.

**Peter J. Katzenstein is the Walter S. Carpenter, Jr. Professor of International Studies at Cornell University. His current research interests focus on the politics of civilizational states on questions of public diplomacy, law, religion, and popular culture; the role of anti-imperial sentiments, including anti-Americanism; regionalism in world politics; and German politics. Recent and forthcoming books include: *Analytical Eclecticism* (2009), with Rudra Sil. *The Politics of European Identity Construction* (Cambridge University Press, 2008/9), co-edited with Jeffrey T. Checkel. *Rethinking Japanese Security* (Routledge, 2008). *Anti-Americanisms in World Politics*, coedited with Robert O. Keohane (Cornell University Press, 2007). *Religion in an Expanding Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), coedited with Timothy A. Byrnes. *Beyond Japan: East Asian Regionalism* (Cornell University Press, 2006), coedited with Takashi Shiraiishi. *A World of Regions: Asia and Europe in the American Imperium* (Cornell University Press, 2005). *Rethinking Security in East Asia: Identity, Power, and Efficiency* (Stanford University Press, 2004). He is the author, coauthor, editor and coeditor of 32 books or monographs and over 100 articles or book chapters.**

### ***Related links***

- [Katzenstein's Faculty Profile at Cornell](#)
- Read a discussion of Katzenstein's work on Asian regionalism and a resume of his position on this subject (*Roundtable: Peter J. Katzenstein's Contributions to the Study of East Asian Regionalism*, Journal of East Asian Studies, 2007) [here](#) (pdf)
- Read Katzenstein's *Rethinking Asian Security: a Case for Analytical Eclecticism* (in 'Rethinking Security in East Asia: Identity, Power and Efficiency, 2004) [here](#) (pdf)
- Read Katzenstein's *Small States and Small States Revisited* (New Political Economy, 2003) [here](#) (pdf)
- Read Katzenstein's *Open Regionalism: Cultural Diplomacy and Popular Culture in Europe and Asia* (2002) [here](#) (pdf)