

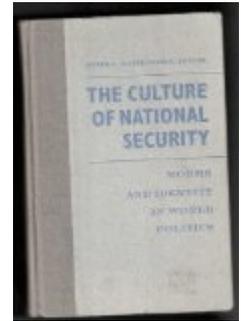
H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences



Peter J. Katzenstein, ed. *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1996. xv + 562 pp. \$76.50 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-231-10468-5.

Reviewed by James Carafano (Georgetown University)
Published on H-Diplo (June, 1999)



Breaking and Remaking Paradigms Past and Present: Rethinking International Relations Theory for the Post-Cold War World

Breaking and Remaking Paradigms Past and Present: Rethinking International Relations Theory For the Post-Cold War World

This volume of collected research is united by a basic premise. The two dominant theories of international relations, neorealism and neoliberalism, failed to forecast the end of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union, and many post-Cold War regional developments (p. 3).[1] Since the objective of international relations theory is both to explain and predict behavior, the scholars represented here agree that the two most powerful traditional paradigmatic explanations of state behavior must be flawed and in need of correction. In general, the authors explore an alternative analytical perspective that draws heavily on sociology and identity theory.[2] Inconsistent and inexplicable foreign and national security policies, they argue, are made understandable by examining the norms, collective identities, and cultures of the societies underlying the international community.

Editor Peter Katzenstein provides a useful introduction, laying out the two dominant paradigms and the volume's alternative theoretical approach. Neorealism argues that the structure of the international system places states in ceaseless competition. Conflict is inevitable. Power is the core concept of the neorealist paradigm. States collide because they are rational actors, constantly working to ensure their national security by maximizing power in relation to other states, aligning with other

nations to achieve uneasy collective security, or nestling under the wing of a great power hegemon. In each case, state behavior is driven by the unending quest for security (p. 12).[3]

Neoliberalism, in contrast, contends that state actions represent the collective will of groups within in the society. Foreign policy and national security strategy are the product of the cooperative view of the state's "empowered" elements. States, neoliberalism predicts, are not monolithic rational actors; rather their decisions represent the cumulative influence of group interests. Neoliberalism also takes a structuralist approach to international relations (believing power is exercised and distributed thorough formal organizations and institutions), but its theoretical framework includes domestic players (legislatures unions, cooperations) and non-state actors (non-governmental and international organizations). In the neoliberal paradigm conflict and competition are not inevitable. Institutions can act to ameliorate international conflict and promote cooperation, trust and joint action (pp. 12-13).

The problem with both the neoliberal and neorealist approaches, Katzenstein argues, is that they share common constraints—they focus on the physical capabilities of states and institutions (pp. 16-17). He argues for a third analytical approach, one that loosens up the constraints and looks at a broader range of factors relating to cultural, ethnic, and national identity.

In addition to introductory and summary chapters by Katzenstein, this volume contains twelve wide-ranging case studies on alternate approaches to international relations and national security. The essays include: Ronald L. Jepperson, Alexander Wendt, and Katzenstein on culture and security; Dana Eyre and Mark Suchman on the proliferation of conventional weapons; Robert Price and Nina Tannenwald on nuclear and chemical weapons; Martha Finnemore on humanitarian intervention; Elizabeth Kier on military doctrine; Alastair Johnston on China; Robert Herman on Soviet foreign policy; Thomas Berger on national security in Germany and Japan; Thomas Risse-Kappen on NATO; Michael Barnett on alliances in the Middle East; and Paul Kowert and Jeffrey Legro on national identity theory.

Together these studies make a strong case for broadening traditional approaches to international relations theory and incorporating the cultural/national identity perspective. They demonstrate that an alternative view does have the power to clarify odd, quirky or “niche” behavior. For example, Alastair Johnston’s study explains how China can appear to act as the “high-church” of *realpolitik* until it comes to relations with Taiwan and Japan or China’s participation in the Korean War, where, in each case, the Chinese often seemed to be behaving less than rationally. Johnston’s description of Maoist strategic culture offers a perspective for understanding why Chinese behavior has never followed a strict neorealist line (pp. 256-67).[4] China’s version of realism can only be understood by filtering it through the country’s distinct cultural and historical experience.

Martha Finnemore’s engaging study on why nations agree to undertake the often unrewarding burdens of humanitarian intervention is another especially noteworthy effort. She explains, for example, why defining end-states and exit strategies may make sense in neorealist terms, but that all too frequently these strategic tools prove insufficient and unworkable in real life (pp. 153-75).

Unfortunately, not all the authors make the best use of available scholarship on their particular case studies and that detracts somewhat from the strength of their analysis. Thomas Berger’s study of German national security is a case in point. He treats the “sonderweg” theory (that the evolution of the German liberal state was skewered by the retarded development of its middle class) as a matter of fact, when in truth this historical explanation is highly controversial and out of favor with much of the current scholarship (p. 324).[5] Likewise, Berger’s analy-

sis on the impact of the U.S. occupation of Germany relies on two books published in the 1950s, ignoring the substantial body of recent scholarship on the occupation period (p. 321).[6] Elizabeth Kier’s discussion of the development of French inter-war doctrine is similarly flawed (pp. 186-204).[7]

Despite the limitations of some of the studies, historians, policy-makers and analysts of contemporary affairs will find much food for thought here. These essays only begin to suggest the potential avenues of exploration.[8] The cultural and national identity paradigm offers the promise of new research agendas, expanding the field of traditional international relations theory in many new directions.[9]

Notes

[1]. See also an excellent short bibliography at fn 5. See also Ted Hopf, “Getting the End of the Cold War Wrong,” *International Security* 18 (Fall 1993), pp. 202-08; John Lewis Gaddis, “International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War,” *International Security* 17 (Winter 1992/93): 5-58; Robert O. Keohane, “Institutional Theory and the Realist Challenge After the Cold War,” in David A. Baldwin, eds., *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

[2]. This work represents one of several recent collected critiques of contemporary international relations theory. Also recommended are Michael W. Doyle and John Ikenberry, eds., *New Thinking in International Relations Theory* (Boulder: Westview, 1997); Ken Booth and Steve Smith, eds., *International Relations Theory Today* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995).

[3]. See also Paul Schroeder, “Historical Reality vs. Neo-realist Theory,” *International Security* 19 (Summer 1994): 108-48.

[4]. See also Shu Guang Zhang, *Mao’s Military Romanticism: China and the Korean War, 1950-1953* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995); *Deterrence and Strategic Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

[5]. See, for example, David Blackbourn and Geoff Eley, *The Peculiarities of German History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984).

[6]. Among the more recent works that provide greater insights into the impact of the U.S. occupation see James F. Tent, *Mission on the Rhine: Reeducation and*

Denazification in American Occupied Germany (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); Richard L. Merritt, *Democracy Imposed, U.S. Occupation Policy and the German Public, 1945-1949* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995). For a contrasting view on the impact of the U.S. occupation of Germany see Edward N. Peterson, *The American Occupation of Germany, Retreat into Victory* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1977). In addition, see the recent edition of *Diplomatic History* 23 (Winter 1999).

[7]. For a fuller treatment of Kier's thesis see Elizabeth Kier, *Imagining War: French and British Military Doctrine Between the Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999). For a more historically accurate treatment of the development of French doctrine see Robert Allan Doughty, *The Seeds of Disaster: The Development of French Army Doctrine 1919-1939* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1985).

[8]. I would have liked, for example, to see discussions concerning the expanded use of post-modern historical methods and other research areas on cultural issues such as gender and ideology. See, for example,

Elaine Tyler May, "Ideology and foreign policy: Culture and gender in diplomatic history," *Diplomatic History* 18 (Winter 1994): 71; Robert D. Dean, "Masculinity as Ideology: John F. Kennedy and the Domestic Politics of Foreign Policy," *Diplomatic History* 22 (Minter 1998): 29-68; Michael J. Hogan, *A Cross of Iron: Harry S. Truman and the Origins of the National Security State, 1945-1954* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Michael H. Hunt, *Ideology and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

[9]. For a contrasting less favorable review of this volume see Barry Buzan, *Survival* 39 (Autumn, 1997): 174-75. Buzan argues that these works amount to an "anti-theory." "What these authors seems to be saying," he concludes, "is that all cases are fundamentally unique, and can therefore only be understood in their own time and context, a basically anti-theoretical formulation that threatens to atomise the subject."

Copyright (c) 1999 by H-Net, all rights reserved. This work may be copied for non-profit educational use if proper credit is given to the author and the list. For other permission, please contact H-Net@H-Net.MSU.EDU.

If there is additional discussion of this review, you may access it through the network, at:

<https://networks.h-net.org/h-diplo>

Citation: James Carafano. Review of Katzenstein, Peter J., ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*. H-Diplo, H-Net Reviews. June, 1999.

URL: <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=3195>

Copyright © 1999 by H-Net, all rights reserved. H-Net permits the redistribution and reprinting of this work for nonprofit, educational purposes, with full and accurate attribution to the author, web location, date of publication, originating list, and H-Net: Humanities & Social Sciences Online. For any other proposed use, contact the Reviews editorial staff at hbooks@mail.h-net.msu.edu.