Entanglements in World Politics

In this seminal study, Peter J. Katzenstein drags the analysis of world politics from the Newtonian humanism and para-humanism of the nineteenth century into a new post-Newtonianism of the twenty-first. The key concept is entanglement. By examining differences in context, process, and language, Katzenstein specifies how risk and uncertainty intertwine. Three deeply researched case studies – finance and political economy, nuclear crisis politics and war, and global warming and AI – support his original arguments. A chapter on power further illustrates the risk-uncertainty conundrum. *Entanglements in World Politics* calls for humility and eclectic pragmatism, emphasizing the unity of knowledge of the natural and humanistic sciences and the complementarities of science and religion. Katzenstein's engaging writing and innovative approach make this a must-read for anyone interested in the complexities of global politics. This book is also available as Open Access on Cambridge Core.

Peter J. Katzenstein is the Walter S. Carpenter, Jr. Professor of International Studies at Cornell University. His work addresses issues of political economy, security, and culture in world politics. In 2020 he was named the 26th recipient of the Johan Skytte Prize. He is the author, co-author, editor, and co-editor of more than forty books, edited volumes, or monographs and over 100 articles or book chapters. Recent books include *Uncertainty and Its Discontents: Worldviews in World Politics* (2022), *Downfall: The End of the American Order* (co-edited with Jonathan Kirshner, 2022), and *Protean Power: Exploring the Uncertain and Unexpected in World Politics* (co-edited with the late Lucia Seybert, 2018). Katzenstein served as President of the American Political Science Association from 2008 to 2009, was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Science in 1987, the American Philosophical Society in 2009, and the British Academy in 2015. He holds six honorary degrees.

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 05 Nov 2026 at 10:37:11, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009675819

Cambridge Studies in International Relations: 168

Entanglements in World Politics

EDITORS

Evelyn Goh
Christian Reus-Smit
Nicholas J. Wheeler

EDITORIAL BOARD

Jacqueline Best, Karin Fierke, William Grimes, Yuen Foong Khong, Andrew Kydd, Lily Ling, Andrew Linklater, Nicola Phillips, Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, Jacquie True, Leslie Vinjamuri, Alexander Wendt

Cambridge Studies in International Relations is a joint initiative of Cambridge University Press and the British International Studies Association (BISA). The series aims to publish the best new scholarship in international studies, irrespective of subject matter, methodological approach or theoretical perspective. The series seeks to bring the latest theoretical work in International Relations to bear on the most important problems and issues in global politics.

167 *Tyler Jost*
Bureaucracies at War
The Institutional Origins of Miscalculation

166 *Jack Donnelly*
Systems, Relations, and the Structures of International Societies

165 *Jason Ralph*
On Global Learning
Pragmatic Constructivism, International Practice and the Challenge of Global Governance

164 *Barry Buzan*
Making Global Society
A Study of Humankind across Three Eras

163 *Brian Rathbun*
Right and Wronged in International Relations
Evolutionary Ethics, Moral Revolutions, and the Nature of Power Politics

162 *Vincent Pouliot and Jean-Philippe Thérien*
Global Policymaking
The Patchwork of Global Governance

Series list continues after index

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 05 Nov 2026 at 10:37:11, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009675819

"International Relations has found its Tolstoy! The hard problem of uncertainty in world politics has found its match. Dancing nimbly on the cutting edge of the sciences and humanities, jumping deftly from the subatomic to the geopolitical, Katzenstein constructs a protean world view for navigating the political, financial and environmental uncertainties and risks of the twenty-first century. He does so with a humility and humour uncommon in academic treatises. If you are looking for a ray of hope in a time of dark fears and creeping nihilism, read this wickedly smart book."

James Der Derian, Michael Hintze Chair of International Security, University of Sydney

"This book changes how we study global politics. Katzenstein makes an original and seminal contribution by joining the Newtonian and post-Newtonian worlds to those of risk and uncertainty. Our politics are shaped simultaneously by linear, additive worlds and by dynamic non-linear worlds where they are entangled in complex ways. Knowing which world we are in when matters. This book speaks to the moment with a unique, important, and defining voice."

Janice Gross Stein, Belzberg Professor of Conflict Management, University of Toronto

"The third in his masterful trilogy, *Entanglements in World Politics* is Katzenstein at his best. This ambitious and powerful reimagining of international relations theory dares us to abandon long-held ideas and embrace new political imaginaries. With his trademark erudition and skill, Katzenstein lays bare 'conundrums' at the heart of our thinking about politics and challenges the foundations on which we build our understandings of the world. Readers will come away rethinking many long-held assumptions about how we know what we know, and with new ideas about paths forward."

Martha Finnemore, University Professor of Political Science and International Affairs, George Washington University

"This important book about ubiquitous uncertainty and interpretation of risk in international relations demonstrates that Katzenstein remains among the most creative and erudite scholars in political science. Who else can illuminate current and historical crises in political economy, security studies, and climate change with equal depth and insight? This plea for empathy for others and humility about ourselves should be widely read and debated."

Scott D. Sagan, Caroline S. G. Munro Professor, Department of Political Science, Stanford University

"Katzenstein's highly readable tour de force calls out the overwhelming tendency of social scientists to conflate calculable risk and incalculable uncertainty. Invoking Tolstoy's warning against the false lure of 'an imaginary knowledge of the perfect truth', his penetrating insights on theories and myths of political economy are essential to understanding the crises of our times. He calls for a philosophically self-aware pragmatism treating theories as stories in a distinctive merger of science and humanistic thought."

Jack Snyder, Robert and Renée Belfer Professor of International Relations, Columbia University

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 05 Nov 2026 at 10:37:11, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009675819

"Katzenstein is political science's great re-framer of problems. He once turned a world of empire into a world of regions. Now he turns worlds of risk and uncertainty into worlds of mutual entanglement where the certain and the unexpected uneasily cohabit. Rather than treat worlds of finance and security as separate and fully knowable, Katzenstein shows us how they mutually imbricate, reinforcing and fracturing as they move forward.

Keynes sought to show us how the once general theory of competitive equilibrium was but a special case of a more general class of possible states of the world where calculability and risk were but fleeting companions. Taking up Keynes' concern with the structuring role of conventions in a world that is both risky and uncertain, Katzenstein rethinks what power is and how it is exercised in such a fleeting world."

Mark Blyth, The William R. Rhodes '57 Professor of International Economics, The Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, Brown University

"Katzenstein contrasts risk – where probabilities can be calculated – with uncertainty, where such calculations are impossible. For issue after issue, he shows that uncertainty is pervasive: worldviews and theories that deny or overlook 'the risk-uncertainty conundrum' fail. Erudite and challenging, *Entanglements in World Politics* will profoundly affect its readers' worldviews."

Robert O. Keohane, Professor of International Affairs, Princeton University

"Whereas uncertainty is an enduring condition of world politics, Katzenstein's book is groundbreaking for embracing it, contra the social scientific impulse to mitigate or control it. As he reminds us, 'there is no simple … path through the complexities of contemporary crisis.' By creating conceptual space for a social science that accounts for *both* (knowable) risk and (unknowable) uncertainty, this book provides not a compass, but a pragmatic and sagacious guide."

Steven Bernstein, Distinguished Professor of Global Environmental and Sustainability Governance, University of Toronto

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 05 Nov 2026 at 10:37:11, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009675819

Entanglements in World Politics

The Power of Uncertainty

Peter J. Katzenstein
Cornell University, New York

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 05 Nov 2026 at 10:37:11, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009675819

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8EA, United Kingdom

One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA

477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,
New Delhi – 110025, India

103 Penang Road, #05–06/07, Visioncrest Commercial, Singapore 238467

Cambridge University Press is part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, a department of the University of Cambridge.

We share the University's mission to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781009675802

DOI: 10.1017/9781009675819

© Peter J. Katzenstein 2026

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, with the exception of the Creative Commons version the link for which is provided below, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press & Assessment.

An online version of this work is published at doi.org/10.1017/9781009675819 under a Creative Commons Open Access license CC-BY-NC 4.0 which permits re-use, distribution and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial purposes providing appropriate credit to the original work is given and any changes made are indicated. To view a copy of this license visit https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0

When citing this work, please include a reference to the DOI 10.1017/9781009675819

First published 2026

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

A Cataloging-in-Publication data record for this book is available from the Library of Congress

ISBN 978-1-009-67580-2 Hardback
ISBN 978-1-009-67577-2 Paperback

Cambridge University Press & Assessment has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

For EU product safety concerns, contact us at Calle de José Abascal, 56, 1°, 28003 Madrid, Spain, or email eugpsr@cambridge.org

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. UNIVERSIDAD AUTONOMA METROPOLITANA, on 05 Nov 2026 at 10:37:11, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009675819