

Department of Political Science Guest Lecture



Professor Peter J. Katzenstein

Professor of International Studies, Cornell University
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Power in Uncertainty: Exploring the Unexpected in World Politics

Moderator: Dr Giulia Mennillo

Thursday, 8th Nov 2018

2.00pm to 4.00pm

PS Staff Meeting Room, AS1, #04-01

National University of Singapore

ALL ARE WELCOME!

ABSTRACT

This lecture introduces the concept of "protean power" as the basis for a better analysis of unanticipated events in world politics. Protean power is the effect of actors' agility as they adapt in situations of uncertainty. This definition departs from conventional definitions of power, which focus on actors' evolving ability to exercise control in situations of calculable risk and their consequent ability to cause outcomes these actors deem desirable. I argue that this conventional view is overly confining; inclusion of protean power in our analytical models helps us to better account for unexpected change in world politics. Notably, actors respond to shifts between risk and uncertainty, in both context and experience. In doing so, they create room for control and protean power as effects, rather than causes, of different political practices. Protean power should not replace control power. These two basic forms of power relate to one another, in a variety of ways, in complex contexts characterized by both risk and uncertainty.

BIO

Peter J. Katzenstein is the Walter S. Carpenter, Jr. Professor of International Studies at Cornell University. His research and teaching lie at the intersection of the fields of international relations and comparative politics. Katzenstein's work addresses issues of political economy, security and culture in world politics. His current research interests focus on power, the politics of civilizations and regions in world politics; and European and German politics. Recent books include *Protean Power: Exploring the Uncertain and Unexpected in World Politics* (Cambridge University Press, 2018), co-edited with Lucia Seybert. *Anglo-America and Its Discontents: Civilizational Identities beyond West and East* (Routledge, 2012). *Sinicization and the Rise of China: Civilizational Processes beyond East and West* (Routledge, 2012). *Civilizations in World Politics: Plural and Pluralist Perspectives* (Routledge, 2010). He is the author, co-author, editor and co-editor over 40 books, edited volumes or monographs and over 100 articles or book chapters.



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