

uses grants and low-interest development projects when there is interest in gaining political influence and currying favor with political elites, and uses the market or close-to-market rate projects when the objective is to maximize investment returns. With this being said, the authors argue that China and the OECD-DAC have more in common in terms of motivations for aid disbursement and recipient countries. The authors confirm what scholars have repeatedly shared about China's aid not dogmatically favoring authoritarian regimes or states that are rich in natural resources; a country's GDP size is often the primary determinant of receiving Beijing and OECD-DAC-financed development programs. The main difference is that while Beijing uses more debt, the OECD-DAC disburses more ODA (aid).

Ultimately, despite the caveat that direct comparison between China and OECD-DAC donors is very complicated, the book strongly gestures to the fact that according to their rich analysis, it is not about who gives development projects, but about the type of financing these projects get (debt or aid) and the type of institutions on the recipient end. The authors argue that both China's and OECD-DAC aid "promote economic growth in low-income and middle-income countries.... Chinese development projects consistently improved economic development outcomes in Africa, but not necessarily elsewhere. They reduce political instability in some countries that experience sudden withdrawals of Western aid, but not in others" (p. 7).

After laying out the general arguments and motivations in the introduction, the second chapter of the book offers a historical background on Chinese aid, while chapter 3 outlines the methods used to put together the dataset of Chinese overseas development programs. Chapter 4, then, investigates what specific sectors, countries, and development areas are subject to Chinese official financing. Chapter 6, 7, and 8 dive into the nitty-gritty analysis of Chinese overseas development programs while also comparing them to similar projects financed by the World Bank. More specifically, chapter 5 examines the factors that influence the allocation of Chinese development finance. Chapter 6 focuses on the subnational distribution of funding from Beijing. Chapter 7 compares the impacts of Chinese and world development finance on economic growth at the national and subnational levels in recipient countries. Chapter 8 analyzes the positive and negative externalities of Chinese aid on a variety of aspects ranging from political/security stability, governance (corruption, accountability, and so on), and the effectiveness of Western development projects. Chapter 9 examines the evolution of China's financial development programs under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). It identifies the lack of trust between China and its OECD-DAC (or traditional) donors as a major obstacle facing Beijing's ambitions to both *multilateralize* development finance and take on a more prominent

leadership position in global development finance. The chapter identifies a set of remedies that policy makers in Beijing can adopt to overcome China's trust deficit.

The in-depth analysis and rich empirical material undergirding it make for very rich and compelling reading. As noted by the authors, many of the volume's chapters were previously published in peer-reviewed outlets and scholars who are interested in more details can read the journal article versions. However, the book remains very accessible to both specialized and general audiences. Moreover, combining all the work that the team has previously published into one book adds value to the conversation as the various dimensions of the argument speak to one another better in book form and the overall roadmap provided by the authors in the introduction is very helpful. The book is essential reading, as it goes a long way to fully dispelling a number of myths and much confusion about China's overseas development programs.

Uncertainty and Its Discontents: Worldviews in World Politics. Edited by Peter J. Katzenstein. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. 320p. \$105.00 cloth, \$34.99 paper.
doi:10.1017/S1537592723000063

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Peter Katzenstein's edited book, *Uncertainty and Its Discontents*, seeks to expose and explore the worldviews of both IR scholars and their subjects. Katzenstein argues that most IR approaches cannot analyze uncertainty because they are embedded in a Newtonian-Humanist worldview that assumes a world of human-controllable risks. He calls for waking IR from its "Newtonian slumber" (p. 339) to grapple with the unexpected events and planetary crises that this worldview is unable to grasp.

For Katzenstein, worldviews are "unexamined, pre-theoretical foundations of the approaches with which we understand and navigate the world" (p. i) that "offer global overviews evident in relatively constant, repetitive habits of beliefs and emotions that mediate the relations between an individual or group and the world" and "create narratives about what is possible, what is worth doing, and what needs to be done, as well as what is impossible, what is shameful, and what needs to be avoided" (p. 9). They are thus much more than traditional IR paradigms, which for the most part are trapped in the same Newtonian-Humanist iron cage of reason. Under Newtonian approaches, innovation is limited to remixing existing elements to respond to calculable risks. By contrast, in Post-Newtonian approaches, there is room for protean power: improvisation as a response to uncertainty. Humanism, similarly, is limited by endowing agency only to people, placing them on a pedestal as the anthropic center of the world. Hyper-Humanism, by contrast, treats everything as a potential agent.

On this account, the Newtonian worldview embeds substantialism, which “takes pre-given entities as the starting point and imbues them with properties and agency” (p. 19). Importantly, logics of appropriateness, as well as consequences, are substantialist because they differ on causal mechanisms but ultimately are grounded in individualism. By contrast, the Post-Newtonian worldview incorporates relationalism, in which relations are ontologically prior to entities and agency operates through processes, boundary setting, or other ways of engaging with the world.

The book proceeds in four parts: examples from each of the possible combinations of Newtonian/Post-Newtonian and Humanism/Hyper-Humanism (Mark Haas and Henry Nau, Milja Kurki, Jairus Grove, and Michael Barnett); defenses of Newtonian-Humanism (Henry Nau) and Post-Newtonian Hyper-Humanism (Prasenjit Duara); meditations on two specific types of worldviews (Bentley Allan on science, Timothy Byrnes on religion); and a conclusion by Katzenstein navigating a path between Nau’s Scylla of totalitarianism-enabling relationalism and Duara’s Charybdis of planet-destroying individualism.

Nau’s full-throated defense of Newtonian-Humanism warns against a relativist relationalism that cannot defend against the Scylla of potential totalitarianisms. He assumes a particularly extreme version of relationalism in which choice and freedom are eliminated. For example, in this book Grove demotes President Kennedy from a quarterback to a mere mascot, arguing that ExComm was the decision-making collectivity during the Cuban Missile Crisis. This erases Kennedy’s innovative recombining of existing relations to first create and then orchestrate the deliberations of ExComm: the president was a skilled conductor operating under conditions of extreme uncertainty. Here I side with Nau: if there is nuclear use by the United States, it is still the moral responsibility of the US president, however constrained that choice may be by the historical, social, and physical structures that Grove enumerates.

But as Kurki points out, there are many relationalisms; the one Nau objects to is far from the only option. For example, Barnett studies how relational structures and historical events constrain and enable the agency of his subjects to choose between different Jewish worldviews. Nau’s critique treats relationalism as if it operates at the holistic level of analysis. But relationalism largely operates at a relational level of analysis between individualism and holism. Treating relations and processes as ontological primitives does not result in a uniform holistic structure; instead, it creates variegated sets of structures wherein agency lies in the creative rewiring of relations and manipulation of processes to produce innovative solutions.

Duara’s warning, like Nau’s, is concerned with catastrophic outcomes: without a relationalist approach, we will be unable to escape the Charybdis of an individualistic “runaway global technosphere with cascading

consequences” (p. 207) fueling global catastrophes. Both warnings bring out the ethical and moral values of different worldviews, with Nau’s Newtonian-Humanism arguing strongly for Enlightenment notions of universal rationality and individual responsibility as a bulwark against the potential evils of an extreme relativism that cannot combat malignant worldviews, whereas a Post-Newtonian-Hyper-Humanism instead locates the evils of the world in “efficiency-driven, resource-exploiting, nature-controlling, and competing nation-states” (p. 287).

Regardless of the path sailed, thinking about worldviews allows for a conceptual framework that can tackle both science (Allan) and religion (Byrnes), as well as the ways in which they intertwine historically and contemporarily. At the level of worldviews, these are simply two different sets of beliefs about how the world works. Yet neither can be satisfactorily understood within the Newtonian worldview.

Consequently, in the conclusion Katzenstein takes a stance against Haas’s and Nau’s suggestion that Newtonian and Post-Newtonian worldviews are rivals, arguing for two possible ways of having them coexist: complexity and subjective probability. The latter includes both classical and quantum Bayesian approaches, both of which are still tied to an individualist ontology and so, in my view, steer too close to Charybdis.

By contrast, complexity approaches, which focus on the emergent properties of systems from relations, reject individualism while still avoiding the Scylla of extreme relationalism. By eliminating the Newtonian closed-system assumption, complexity approaches can analyze “adaptive characteristics of open systems, their emergent properties, and their uncertainties” (p. 308). This move incorporates insights from quantum approaches without importing some of the more mind-boggling ones that lack social analogies (e.g., nonlocality). Importantly, it acknowledges that some phenomena cannot be predicted or explained in advance but may be understood after they occur. These include emergent properties of human behavior, changes in social processes that foil previous models, unanticipated interactions in a complex system, and unknown unknowns.

Even better, complexity provides an answer to the conditions under which a Newtonian worldview can be used: “The determinist or probability-inflected Newtonian world can be thought of as a special case that reveals itself when the quantum world of infinite possibilities and radical uncertainty collapses” (p. 308). It is difficult, however, to set out conditions for when collapse occurs, because, unlike the physical world, the social world does not have a convenient micro–macro transition. Pragmatically, because all models are wrong (but some are useful), I would argue that a Newtonian perspective can be useful for analyzing relatively closed, rational systems in which the controllable risk assumption is plausible; it identifies why certain equilibria exist and persist or even explains

endogenous evolution of a system through simple recombinations of existing strategies or scripts.

It is thus unnecessary to resort to extreme relationalism to reap the benefits of adopting a Post-Newtonian social-scientific worldview. Similarly, to consider agents other than humans, it is not necessary to grant things other than humans completely equal standing. But escaping the Newtonian-Humanist straitjacket is necessary to understand systemic changes and to cope with the uncertainty and threat posed by global catastrophic risks. For only through creativity, innovation, and perhaps some luck can we escape the Charybdis that we have created through our runaway global technosphere.

War, States, and International Order: Alberico Gentili and the Foundational Myth of the Laws of War.

By Claire Vergerio. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022.

320p. \$99.99 cloth.

doi:10.1017/S1537592723000762

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This book tells the fascinating story of how the works of Alberico Gentili (1552–1608) were re-appropriated by international lawyers during the late nineteenth century and by Carl Schmitt in the twentieth in support of a narrative telling us how the right to war had become the prerogative of sovereign states to the exclusion of other actors. This canonization of Gentili produced one of the most persistent myths in the study of international law and international relations, one with profound implications for the ways in which the laws of war have been understood and justified in the modern world.

To explain how this myth was constructed and gained traction, Claire Vergerio first situates Gentili's *De iure belli* (1598) in its original context to convey a sense of what Gentili intended to achieve and how his work was received by his contemporaries, before proceeding to examine its re-appropriation by late nineteenth-century international lawyers in defense of the scientific status of their discipline, the emerging world of sovereign states, and new practices of imperial warfare. But the real villain of the story is Carl Schmitt, whose selective uptake of *De iure belli* allowed him to portray the transition from a medieval conception of war as law enforcement or punishment to a modern conception of war as a contest between legal and moral equals as a commendable step in the taming and humanization of war that he took to be characteristic of early modern absolutist states, all while legitimizing his own preference for authoritarian rule in the process. As the author contends, it was from his *Nomos der Erde* (1950) that this myth trickled down to eventually become a commonplace of the modern study of international law and international relations.

Its remarkable erudition and meticulous attention to detail make *War, States, and International Order* an

outstanding piece of scholarship, situated where the concerns of legal history, history of political thought, and international relations intersect. Skillfully combining insights from all of these fields, Vergerio argues that the impulse “to associate the restriction on the right to wage war exclusively to sovereign states with the stabilization of international order rests on an erroneous historical narrative about modernity, the emergence of the states-system, and the taming of war” (p. 19). In doing so, she joins forces with a growing number of scholars who have questioned received interpretations of past authors in favor of fresh contextualization, thereby frequently exposing abysmal discrepancies between their original meanings and those ensuing from later appropriations, often as a result of being informed by present ideological concerns. Inaugurated by Cambridge historians like Quentin Skinner, such myth-busting has evolved into a cottage industry within the human and social sciences today, nourished by the conviction that setting the historical record straight—that is, purging it of anachronism—is a necessary precursor to a better understanding of present problems, unclouded by distorted views of the past.

Although *War, States, and International Order* accomplishes this with great panache, the book also indicates the extent to which the practice of myth-busting has come to resemble a whack-a-mole, with the busting of one myth followed by sowing the seeds of another. A case in point concerns the historical origin of the sovereign state and the modern international system. While students of international relations and law have long been in the habit of locating the emergence of these to the mid-seventeenth century—in the textbook version to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648—recent scholarship has shifted attention to the long nineteenth century, with the consolidation of state power and the spread of nationalism as benchmark indicators of a world of nation-states in the making.

War, States, and International Order itself partakes in this shift by arguing that the late nineteenth-century appropriation of *De iure belli* was conditioned by rise of “the modern nation-state understood as a unitary authority with control over a linear and homogenous territory and a much stricter monopoly over the use of force than ever before” (p. 210). This was “a form that would have been entirely unimaginable for the likes of Gentili” (p. 197), who had drawn extensively on Jean Bodin to locate supreme authority and the right to wage war in the *person* of the sovereign, and on authors in the *ragion di stato* tradition to make sense of the intercourse between such sovereigns in terms of interest and power. The later appropriations of *De iure belli* and the corollary contention that war was the sole prerogative of sovereign states were made possible only by ignoring the differences between these conceptions of sovereignty.

Although it is true that early modern authors were characteristically vague when it came to the *scope* of