

have given greater prominence to the three factors and might have helped explain how they relate to each other. Specifically, it is unclear which is the most important factor for climate resilience (after all, some strong states are exclusive). This structure would have also required the author to be more consistent with definitions. As it stands, the meaning of state capacity shifts from a generic reading of the ability to enforce rules in chapter 3 to a more specific reading of the ability to manage disasters in the empirical chapters.

Busby is one of the few US scholars who has successfully bridged the gap between theory and practice, or else between academia and the world of practitioners (which is practically unheard of in the United Kingdom). From 2021–23, he served as a senior adviser for climate at the US Department of Defense. Although the book is written in a scholarly manner and represents his own views only, it is not surprising that Busby places great value on policy relevance. He makes three suggestions to practitioners. First, take the security implications of climate change seriously. To increase his chances of being heard by policy makers, he links human security to national security. Thus, practitioners ought to care about human security concerns because they can undermine national security; for example, when people protest a regime's policy. Second, practitioners ought to focus on state capacity building. The case studies clearly show that states with relatively greater relevant state capacity—including, for example, early warning mechanisms—fared much better than those with decreased state capacity. Third, foreign aid and international assistance must be sensitive to issues of inclusion and exclusion. To perform these tasks, practitioners will need to be assisted by scholars. Climate security scholars of the future have a vital role to play in promoting relevant but not sensationalist messages on climate insecurity. They ought to provide maps and detailed country knowledge on where help is needed, what local specifics to observe, and the like. To my mind all this is unobjectionable.

What I do object to, however, is Busby's claim that "climate change is an emergent structural parameter of international relations, as important, and perhaps ultimately more important, than anarchy in shaping the behavior of states going forward" (261). From where I stand, this is not only unnecessarily sensationalistic but also unsubstantiated by his list of examples. Many of these examples show not that climate change will replace anarchy but rather that climate change will exacerbate well-known security issues associated with and indeed resulting from anarchy, including cross-border migration, resource competition in the Arctic, and conflicts over water among neighbouring states.

Notwithstanding this criticism, *States and Nature* is a significant and timely contribution with real theory-, field-, and action-guiding potential.

**Making International Institutions Work: The Politics of Performance.** By Ranjit Lall. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023. 412p. \$130.00 cloth.

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International organizations (IOs) have been delegated a wide variety of tasks. They are part of the global attempt to find and adopt effective means against climate change, they command armed troops to protect civilians in fragile states, they assist nation-states in solving humanitarian and refugee crises, and they administer the world financial system. Considering the growing relevance of IOs in developing and applying global public policies, there has been increasing interest in their performance. Remarkably, however, our understanding remains limited as to why some IOs outperform others or why IOs that were once successful begin to falter over time.

*Making International Institutions Work: The Politics of Performance* by Ranjit Lall fills this lacuna, presenting a compelling new theory on the functioning and failure of IOs. Contrary to popular views, Lall contends that the most substantial impediment to their effectiveness is *not* rogue behavior within the IOs' bureaucracies. Rather, he identifies the principal challenge as opportunistic interference from individual states or coalitions of states that aim to advance their specific agendas. Drawing on Lall's own metaphor, he argues that the main obstacles to optimal performance are *not* institutional "Frankensteins" that were poorly designed from the outset but "Jekyll and Hyde" states that reveal their disruptive or self-serving nature only *after* the IO is established (18). Lall substantiates his theory through rigorous analysis, using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. This holistic approach represents a notable departure from traditional studies and offers fresh insights into the performance of IOs that have important implications for both international relations and political science scholarship.

Chapter 2 sets out the book's broader theoretical framework. It starts with the observation that IOs' creation naturally involves a high level of complexity and uncertainty. Countries might thus not perfectly "pre-program" IOs. Over time, powerful member states try to find (unilateral) ways of influencing IOs and their bureaucracies. In consequence, the pivotal question is how well the IO can maintain its functional de facto autonomy; that is, "the ability of international bureaucrats to determine which mandate-related problems institutions focus on and what measures they take to address such issues in the absence of interference from states" (37). Lall posits that this ability hinges on two key characteristics: a robust and diversified network of alliances and governance tasks that are difficult for states to monitor. Partners can

enhance an institution's de facto policy autonomy in three ways. First, by raising the political costs, they can reduce the overall incentives for states to capture or control an IO. Second, partners can furnish bureaucrats with valuable information and expertise, thereby bolstering their ability to set the agenda. Third, through financial contributions and payments for products and services, partners can prevent governments from monopolizing an IO's funding sources.

In addition to the role of partners, the nature of governance tasks also has implications for de facto IO autonomy. Specifically, differing monitoring costs related to these tasks affect the extent to which states can exert control. When monitoring costs are high, states are less likely to acquire comprehensive information about the institution's operational activities. This increases the realm of actions that bureaucrats can take without direct state oversight and intervention. Overall, Lall does not assume a unidirectional relationship between operational alliances, governance, and de facto policy autonomy, on the one hand, and IO performance, on the other. Instead, he argues that performance and de facto autonomy mutually reinforce each other: better-performing IOs are more likely to attract alliances, granting them greater policy autonomy, which positively influences institutional performance.

Chapter 3 rigorously examines the theory's macrolevel implications by combining descriptive and multivariate regression analyses. To assess varying levels of IOs' performance, the book thoughtfully combines data from six distinct donor performance evaluators to analyze a diverse sample of 54 IOs. The data on de facto policy autonomy come from a multiyear survey of high-level IO bureaucrats in these organizations. The remaining variables, specifically, de jure autonomy and operational alliances, are constructed using information gleaned from official institutional websites, annual reports, work programs, and other policy documents. A key asset of this quantitative approach is its comprehensive scrutiny of the data, addressing *not* only their strengths but also their inherent limitations.

Chapters 4 and 5 offer insightful and well-crafted qualitative examinations of "most-similar" IOs operating in the arenas of international food security (FAO, WFP, IFAD) and global health policy (WHO, UNAIDS, Gavi, GFATM). Both chapters demonstrate how variations in de facto, as opposed to de jure, policy autonomy can account for disparate performance pathways. These insights again underscore the importance of operational alliances and governance tasks. Chapter 6 challenges the notion that there is necessarily a trade-off between the accountability and performance of IOs, a conclusion one might reach based on the preceding chapters. The book argues that so-called second wave accountability (SWA) mechanisms can effectively supplant traditional state

oversight and control mechanisms. These SWAs may not directly alter the range of actions available to bureaucrats, but they still enhance accountability through added layers of transparency, evaluation, investigation, and participatory mechanisms.

Although this book offers a robust theoretical framework and compelling empirical analysis, there are areas that warrant further research and scrutiny. Notably, despite the generally positive portrayal of bureaucrats, they (surprisingly) remain *outside* the focus of the empirical analysis. Ultimately, it is these bureaucrats who play an active role in establishing organizational alliances, thereby shaping the IOs' de facto autonomy. Recent research on both international and national public administration, however, has revealed that bureaucracies do vary significantly in their ambitions to make a difference and to actively engage in policy matters (J. Ege, M.W. Bauer, and N. Wagner, "Improving Generalizability in Transnational Bureaucratic Influence Research: A (Modest) Proposal," *International Studies Review*, 22(3), 2020). L. Bayerlein, C. Knill, and Y. Steinebach (*A Matter of Style: Organizational Agency in Global Public Policy*, 2020), for instance, show that bureaucracies develop different administrative routines (styles) that vary in the degree to which they involve outside actors in support mobilization or policy promotion. The appearance of these diverse approaches appears to be influenced by factors intrinsic to the bureaucracy, such as bureaucratic capacity (M. Heinzl and A. Liese, "Managing Performance and Winning Trust: How World Bank Staff Shape Recipient Performance," *Review of International Organizations*, 16, 2021) and the presence or absence of a strong organizational identity and esprit de corps (A. E. Juncos and K. Pomorska, "Manufacturing Esprit de Corps: The Case of the European External Action Service," *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 52, 2014). So, there could be more going on than saying states mess things up while bureaucrats keep things running smoothly. An even more "complete" approach would involve investigating why some IO bureaucracies are more *proactive* in defending their autonomy, whereas others are more prone to be resigned to their fate. Additionally, it is noteworthy that IOs can exhibit considerable variations in institutional performance even when operating under *similar* levels of de facto autonomy (87). This observation aligns well with the earlier point about heterogeneity in bureaucratic ambitions and actions. The crucial question, therefore, is what enables certain bureaucracies to effectively leverage their de facto autonomy for improved performance, whereas others fail to do so. Understanding these nuances could provide deeper insights into the complexities of organizational performance and the role of both states and IOs' bureaucracies therein.

To conclude, the book offers a very compelling analysis of “the performance puzzle” (5) of IOs that is outstanding in its theoretical and empirical components. Scholars, students, and general readers alike will highly appreciate this theory-guided empirical research. Furthermore, the book lays the groundwork for new ways of thinking and understanding institutional performance, thereby introducing new research domains, some of which I outlined here.

**Ukraine’s Unnamed War: Before the Russian Invasion of 2022.** By Dominique Arel and Jesse Driscoll. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023. 273p. \$34.99 paper.

**The Zelensky Effect.** By Olga Onuch and Henry E. Hale. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2023. 404p. \$24.95 cloth.  
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Why did Russia invade Ukraine? And why did Ukraine prove so resilient against an army that most believed would defeat it within days? These provocative books tackle two central puzzles surrounding the war in Ukraine. Both turn to national identity for part of the answer, but whereas Arel and Driscoll see conflict over Ukraine’s identity as the root of the war, Onuch and Hale argue that an increasingly unified national identity explains Ukraine’s astonishing resilience under Volodymyr Zelensky’s leadership.

Arel and Driscoll seek to explain the outbreak of war in Eastern Ukraine in 2014. Their primary argument is that “the war in Donbas was ... a civil war at its root” (7). Far from driving events, Russia intervened reluctantly and reactively in 2014 (4–5). This approach, they contend in their second argument, provides agency to Ukrainian actors (3). Their third argument is that peace would have been more attainable (before 2022) had Ukraine and the West accepted that this was a civil war. After an introduction, theory chapter, and brief review of Ukraine’s history up to 2013, the next four chapters proceed from the ousting of Viktor Yanukovich to Russia’s military invasion in August 2014. The final chapter explores the failed Minsk process and the path to Russia’s full-scale invasion in 2022.

Arel and Driscoll are aware that similar claims have been a staple of Russian propaganda, and they stress that they use the term “civil war” as it is used in the literature on that topic. Compared to works that indeed resemble Russian propaganda, *Ukraine’s Unnamed War* is better in two important ways. First, the empirical argument is based on a rational choice model rooted in theories of conflict, producing an “analytic narrative” that shows a logic behind the chain of events. Second, the empirical work is much more nuanced; Arel and Driscoll recognize that much of the evidence is ambiguous. The picture they draw

is plausible, and their analysis of the dynamics among actors in Donbas is illuminating. This makes their book well worth reading, even if one rejects the civil war thesis. Not everyone will connect the dots as they do. As they recognize, there is a battle of narratives (10–11).

The authors present Ukraine as divided by zero-sum conflicts over language and national identity. They argue that the collapse of the Yanukovich government led to a power vacuum in Donbas and to fears there of a nationalizing agenda. Donbas officials, who generally supported accommodation with Kyiv, were displaced by emergent actors referred to as “the street.” When violence by these new actors was met by force from Kyiv, Russia felt compelled to intervene. In this telling, the Donbas insurgents and the Ukrainian government were the key actors, and Russia found itself reacting to events beyond its control. Russia’s lack of agency is assumed in the formal model presented in appendix A, which features two players: the capital city and the “Russian speaking-community.”

Following the rationalist model of conflict in which war results from asymmetric information and commitment problems, Arel and Driscoll focus on the Donbas insurgents’ expectations of Russia’s likelihood of invading to support them. A “crucial” claim is that “it is unrealistic to assume that local actors within Ukraine could correctly make inferences about Russian behavior and backwards induct” (38). The rebels’ belief that Russia would intervene was “bad guesswork” (32), even though it turned out to be true. Therefore, the signals Russia was sending that it *would* intervene—its annexation of Crimea, the movement of troops to the border, and the Russian media’s provision of “a comprehensive script for Russian-speakers to perform in order to engage in sedition, and call for help” (121)—neither reduced information asymmetries nor caused the conflict.

Much depends on how one fills in the blanks concerning exactly when and how Russia encouraged, armed, or directly controlled forces in Donbas. A typically ambiguous episode was that of Igor Girkin, a former Russian intelligence agent who entered Ukraine from Russia on April 12 with 50 fighters. “The Girkin unit may not have been *spetsnaz*, but they radiated military experience, contrasted with the armed protesters” (148), yet Arel and Driscoll see Girkin as a free agent. Others believe Girkin must have been working for Russia. Evaluation of the civil war thesis depends heavily on how uncertainties like this one are resolved.

In *The Zelensky Effect*, Olga Onuch and Henry Hale seek to explain how Ukraine, against all expectations, met Russia’s massive invasion in 2022 with such incredible resilience. They provide the answer in the book’s title, describing the Zelensky effect as his embrace of civic nationalism and rejection of “the idea there was one way of being a ‘good patriotic Ukrainian’” (24). Onuch and Hale argue that Zelensky succeeded because he recognized