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.

doi:10.1017/S153759272400015X

— Paul D'Anieri , *University of California Riverside*
danieri@ucr.edu

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 Yanukovych 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 Yanukovych 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 *spetznaz*, 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

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. IP address: 3.16.217.189, on 29 Sep 2024 at 01:29:40, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/S153759272400015X

that the notion of a divided Ukraine is a "kind of myth, based on a dichotomous rendering of certain statistics that obscures the middle ground of which he tapped" (24). They invoke three concepts to advance this thesis: civic identity, rally effects, and generational effects.

Ukrainians, they argue, have developed a civic identity in which "people identify strongly with their country not because it represents any specific ethnic, linguistic, or religious group but because it represents an inclusive vision of the citizenship as a whole" (24). Ukraine's previous politicians, including Zelensky's rival Petro Poroshenko, stressed regional, ethnic, and linguistic issues as means of building support in one region or another. Zelensky, they show, rejected both the narrative and the political tactic and did so in his comedy programming long before he became president.

The salience of this civic identity was driven, Onuch and Hale contend, by the rise of an "independence generation," born roughly between 1975 and 1985: they were born under communism but came of age in post-Soviet Ukraine. Members of this generation remember communism, the transition from it, and the chaos of the 1990s but take independent Ukraine in its post-1991 borders as a fact of life.

A third key factor is "rally effects," in which people unite during a time of crisis, causing a surge in a leader's support. The rallying around the flag that Ukraine experienced after Russia's invasion, the authors claim, was rooted specifically in the civic notion of Ukrainian nationality that Zelensky both advocated and personally embodied as a Russophone Jew from Ukraine's southeast.

The Zelensky Effect compellingly and innovatively combines political reporting, analysis of Zelensky's TV show *Sluha Narodu* (Servant of the People), discussion of extensive survey data (in 48 pages of figures), personal recollections by Onuch, and even a playlist that comprises a soundtrack to the book. The first section of the book (chapters 1–4) summarizes the argument and presents Zelensky's biography in parallel with Ukraine's recent political history. The second section (chapters 6 and 7) focuses on the "Zelensky effect" as Zelensky became president and wartime leader. The final section considers Ukraine's "future history" after the war.

Although Onuch and Hale clearly admire Zelensky, they state that "our argument is not that the man made the country, but that the country made the man" (37). Yet the book's title and much of the evidence imply that causal arrows point in both directions. Generational effects and public attitudes about national identity were, at least before Zelensky's election, beyond his ability to influence. The benefits he derived from them reflect his political savvy and his innovative communication methods. Similarly, any Ukrainian leader was likely to benefit from a rally-around-the flag effect after Russia invaded. But Zelensky's actions are likely responsible for the scale of that effect—a roughly 50-point increase in his approval rating after the invasion. Not every leader would have turned down the US offer to evacuate the country or done so with such a memorable phrase: "The fight is here! I need ammunition, not a ride" (242). His daily messages to his people, his cultivation of foreign leaders and audiences, and even his wardrobe all contributed to making him an effective wartime leader and an international celebrity.

Can Arel and Driscoll's view that Ukraine was a divided country be reconciled with Onuch and Hale's argument that this was a myth? Doing so requires acknowledging what we might call "the Putin effect." Although both books, for good reasons, foreground Ukraine's agency, the key outcomes cannot be adequately explained without Russian actions. Russia's invasions in 2014 and 2022 helped reshape Ukrainian identity and rescue Zelensky's flagging popularity. As Onuch and Hale show, and as Arel and Driscoll acknowledge, Russia's 2014 invasion delegitimized the version of Ukrainian identity that saw Ukraine and Russia as close relatives, pushing Ukraine decisively out of reach. That, in Putin's eyes, necessitated the invasion of 2022, which has likely done more to consolidate Ukrainian solidarity than anything the shrewdest politicians in Kyiv could dream up.

Whenever this war ends, the issues raised in these two books will be newly relevant. Can Ukraine integrate populations that have been governed by Russia for months or years without reopening new debates about language and identity? Can the unity forged during the war be sustained when normal democratic politics returns and issues such as reform and reconstruction need to be tackled? The resolution on these issues will provide the longer-term measures of the Zelensky effect.

The Politics of Investment Treaties in Latin America.
By Julia Calvert. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. 272p. $115.00 cloth.
doi:10.1017/S1537592724000215

— Daniela Campello, *Fundação Getúlio Vargas*
daniela.campello@fgv.br

The rapid spread of bilateral investment treaties (BITs) during the 1990s prompted a great deal of academic inquiry aimed at understanding factors driving this phenomenon and examining its implications for the economies of developing countries. These initial investigations delved into the rationale behind countries' decisions to sign and ratify BITs, the underlying criteria guiding partner selection, the role of international financial institutions (IFIs) in facilitating their diffusion throughout the 1990s, and the efficacy of BITs in promoting foreign direct investment (FDI). Overall, research on these

Downloaded from https://www.cambridge.org/core. IP address: 3.16.217.189, on 29 Sep 2024 at 01:29:40, subject to the Cambridge Core terms of use, available at https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms. https://doi.org/10.1017/S153759272400015X