have been considered largely irrelevant in the discipline of International Relations due to its predilection for theorizing a "Westphalian" state system made up of "like units." Among the four cases examined, the contemporary case of deviance (Al Qaeda) and the case of the Mongols (13th century) are fairly well known. The two other cases, however, are likely to represent truly novel cases of systemic challengers for most IR scholars: the Nizari Ismailis (or "Assassins"), located in what we today would call the Middle East and operating from the late 11th century to mid-13th century, and the Barbary powers, located in today's Maghreb and Northern Africa and active between the 16th and early 19th century. Second, Brenner performs an excellent job in mining diverse sets of historical scholarship. He also largely succeeds in arranging and tailoring it to his research needs and overarching theoretical arguments, while acknowledging controversies and diversity of opinion among historians as well as the partial dearth of records (especially for the cases of the Nizari Ismailis and the Mongols). Third, while some of the findings about tailor-made and partly novel strategies of concealment and conquest, identity formation, and overarching systemic transformation may not be too surprising, the key findings are less than obvious. The rise and extended survival of systemic challengers is not only linked to great power decline, and what is more, all of the eventual systemic challengers initially courted closer or loser relationships with the dominant powers, which they eventually challenged. Brenner provides quite a bit of evidence that this kind of breathing (and breeding) space may indeed be a critical variable which might help explain why there are, after all, surprisingly few historical instances of successful systemic challenges and why even gradual systemic change takes more than a sustained effort by daring challengers and happens, if at all, slowly at best.

Despite its strengths, the book also has some shortcomings. The decision to approach the subject matter from a systemic perspective, which eclectically combines neorealism and the English School, stands out in that regard. This structural bias is surprising for several reasons. First, agency in general and individual (and partly charismatic) leadership in particular stand out in all cases as prime candidates to explain the success of the respective movements. The author explicitly addresses this point at a general level (pp. 6, 19, 251-252) and, more or less strongly, in all the case studies (pp. 78-81, 108, 123, 157-159, 214). If "agency often plays a formative role" (p. 251) and if it obviously does so, as the historical record shows in all the cases examined here, why would one consciously limit oneself to a model which "emphasizes the material and structural constraints that actors face"? To be sure, it is an open question to what extent the individual leaders "produced or were products of their environments and circumstances" (pp. 252, 19). But in analogous form, the same question can be (and ought to be) raised about the potential causal impact of agency of different sorts upon prevailing structural conditions. Obviously, what we normally call "structures" are productive phenomena in the sense of being causally relevant. Yet it should be equally obvious that it is not merely structures that produce structures. All processes of socialization involve two types of agents, the socializers and the socialized. None can be reduced to be merely a product of structures. The second part of the research question that draws on the English School indirectly grants that agency-related factors may be instrumental in possibly bringing about systemic change (here, in the form of normative change).

Thus, it is not only counterintuitive but also quite arbitrary to opt one-sidedly for a systemic approach. It is also surprising in view of the fact that Brenner mobilizes a dual "pragmatist ethos." First, he rightly draws on the liberating "analytical eclecticism," which Peter Katzenstein and Rudra Sil have championed in order to muster "whatever analytical leverage" can be gained in addressing an important research problem, which may, at first sight, elude standard disciplinary approaches (p. 15). Second, in emphasizing (with explicit reference to John Dewey) the significance of possibility and novelty as drivers of social (inter)action (pp. 1, 243) he actually lays the ground for thoroughly engaging the so-called structure-agency problem head-on. To follow these tracks with a balanced research design, which pays equal attention to structural *and* agency-related factors, would have been much more obvious than the one-sided structural route actually taken. Anthony Giddens, to name one obvious point of departure for developing such an approach besides Dewey, is quoted in this study as well. Tellingly, however, the sociologist who has been most instrumental, especially via the work of Alexander Wendt, in popularizing the "co-constitution" of structure and agency in IR is mobilized rather lopsidedly in justifying a particular conceptualization of constraints (pp. 31, 265).

These restrictions notwithstanding, "Confounding Powers" makes a valuable contribution to the expanding literature on international systems with "dissimilar" types of actors. It also helps in opening up space for more innovative approaches that will hopefully reach, in truly "analytically eclectic" fashion, far beyond the constricting bounds of ahistorical structural approaches such as neorealism.

An Unfinished Foundation: The United Nations and Global Environmental Governance. By Ken Conca. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. 332p. $99.00 cloth, $27.95 paper.
doi:10.1017/S1537592716003923

— David N. Pellow, *University of California, Santa Barbara*

Ken Conca is an internationally renowned authority on the subject of global environmental politics and policy,

and in this book he builds on his previous work by taking on the United Nations and arguing for a bold and ambitious framework that integrates pillars of that institution that have largely been left separate and estranged from one another. Specifically, the Charter of the United Nations rests on four legs: international peace and security, social progress through development, rule of law among nations, and human rights for all people. The problem is that the UN's approach to addressing environmental challenges has drawn primarily on development and international law, while treating issues of peace and security and human rights as somehow unrelated to global environmental sustainability.

Conca's writing is most powerful when he spells out the substantive linkages among these four legs of the UN mandate, articulating the ways in which, for example, environmental degradation is often caused by and, in turn, contributes to human rights abuses in places like Ecuador, Sierra Leone, and California. His discussion of the connections between the California-based Chevron Corporation and the environmental privileges that this state enjoys at the expense of people and ecosystems in Nigeria and Ecuador is disturbing and profound (p. 98). He makes a strong case, for example, that where we find the absence of (or serious threats to) human rights in any given nation, we also find the conditions that make it difficult for citizens to enjoy the rights of participation in decision making and governance around sustainable and socially just environmental policy and practice. Similarly, where he finds an absence of peace and security because of civil conflict, war, and/or widespread violence, Conca reports that nation-states and their constituent institutions are often taxed in ways that make it exceedingly challenging to enact or comply with international environmental-protection commitments and responsibilities. But the author goes further than simply making the point that these issues are inextricably bound together; he demonstrates that these missed linkages underscore how the UN is undermining its own ability to respond to the dictates of its mandate across all four legs.

How did this disconnect come about? Conca offers a rare window into the history of the United Nations with respect to the dominance of the "law and development" orientation and how it emerged, with particular attention to the rise of the idea of "permanent sovereignty over natural resources" (PSNR), which became central to the UN's work in the wake of Global South decolonization and independence movements that took hold during the organization's first two decades. PSNR was a demand made by former colonies in order to maintain control over the very ecological wealth that enriched the world's former colonizing powers—resources to which the latter nations fought and still fight to maintain access. Thus, "rights" in this context became framed not as individual human or community rights but as a nation's right to access and protect the ecological materials within its borders. The PSNR concept thus laid the groundwork and was a well-worn script by the time the Stockholm Convention and subsequent efforts sought to address key environmental issues in an increasingly globalized and dynamic world—a context in which the UN was ill-equipped to maneuver.

While Conca offers unflinching and sometimes harsh criticisms of the United Nations, he remains convinced that it is the best hope we have for addressing global environmental challenges, if only it can build on the important foundations it laid down decades ago, as the book's title suggests. After all, the UN "is the only venue in which a sufficiently wide range of voices may be heard as we seek to forge a robust consensus on difficult environmental problems," and "[i]t has been the most important catalyst for negotiating international environmental agreements among nations" (p. 2).

An Unfinished Foundation presents a solid and persuasive critique of the UN's limited approach to linking the four pillars upon which it was founded, and in the Conclusion, Conca offers excellent proposals for addressing these limitations. Even so, there are some key topics around which I would like to have seen a bit more engagement. First, while the author is clearly attuned to the ways in which nationality, ethnicity, indigeneity, social class, race, and gender intersect with the UN's mission and environmental politics more broadly, it would have been refreshing to see a closer examination of the ways in which these social categories come into play when various stakeholders seek to address (or evade) that mission. For example, throughout the book, there are mentions of these issues but there is less in-depth exploration of how, for example, gender and indigeneity have served as hurdles and opportunities for bringing together the four legs of the Charter. In spite of this, for scholars and readers with an interest in the field of environmental justice studies, the book provides a much-needed legal, historical, and policy framework for understanding why so many efforts to secure global environmental justice advances in international treaties have been limited or stymied.

My other concern with the book is a question for environmental politics more generally: Can we imagine ways of promoting and securing global peace and security, sustainable development, and environmental justice through a framework that does not rely so heavily on nation-states? The UN Charter is obviously predicated on the presence and strong role of states, and the book—as well as much of the field of international relations and environmental politics—takes the view that strong democratic states are necessary for achieving these goals. After all, again and again, we see an absence of peace, security, human rights, and sustainability most visibly in failed states. But that common wisdom in academic and policy circles seems to ignore one extremely important fact: The

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outcomes of state failure and human rights/environmental abuses are often committed by other state actors. In fact, Conca points out repeatedly that nation-states are among the primary perpetrators of massive human rights and environmental atrocities. For example, he cites Wolfgang Sachs, who once wrote that "the resource claims of core states collide with the subsistence rights of the periphery" (p. 109). And Conca's discussion of California's outsourcing of environmental and social costs to other nations that make its relative environmental and economic privilege possible also reflect this dynamic.

Those data seem like evidence for taking seriously the problem of democracies (core states) contributing to, if not producing, the instabilities, violence, and precariousness that lead to failed states, rather than viewing the central problem as an absence of democracies in our quest to secure a sustainable, peaceful, secure, and just future. So why do we assume that the best way to address problems that nation-states have caused is by working through and reinforcing the nation-state form? I do not have the answer, but I am certain that we have only begun to scratch the surface of what may be the defining challenge of twenty-first-century environmental politics. And Conca's powerful book offers truly important clues as to why we need to ask this question.

Peace at What Price? Leader Culpability and the Domestic Politics of War Termination. By Sarah E. Croco. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015. 258p. $93.00.
doi:10.1017/S1537592716003935

— Jeff D. Colgan, *Brown University*

Why do some wars drag on for years, while others are quickly resolved after a few battlefield clashes? Sarah Croco's excellent new book explores the conditions under which wars are terminated. She argues that the answer has much to do with domestic politics. Her core insight is the importance of the culpability of leaders, of those individuals who led the state when the war began, regardless of the eventual war outcome (so culpability does not always mean "guilty of a defeat"). She finds that the culpable leaders are far less likely to want to end wars, whereas nonculpable leaders—those who came to power after a war began—are more likely to accept necessary compromises to end them. The argument has an intuitive appeal at a time when America's experience in Iraq, and the different approaches of Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, are likely to loom large in readers' minds.

The core logic of the argument is straightforward. Voters are more likely to politically punish a culpable leader for a bad war outcome than a nonculpable leader. This gives a culpable leader greater incentive to continue a war in the hopes of achieving a better outcome or even just delaying the inevitable defeat. Consequently, Croco's theory predicts, and her statistical analysis confirms, that culpable leaders tend to have relatively bimodal war outcomes: They either win big (when the gamble pays off) or they lose big (and face the wrath of their domestic audience). Nonculpable leaders, on the other hand, tend to have more mediocre outcomes, with fewer outright wins or losses, and more negotiated settlements. Her argument that this logic applies not just to democracies but also to nondemocracies (though not quite as strongly for the latter) is an interesting one. Although the domestic audience in autocracies cannot punish culpable leaders via elections, Croco argues that elites in autocracies often find other ways to punish culpable leaders who lose wars. In this sense, she builds upon Jessica Weeks's findings on the similarities between democracies and some forms of autocracies (in *Dictators at War and Peace*, 2014).

Peace at What Price? has a conventional structure. After the introduction, there is a theory chapter and three empirical chapters, followed by a conclusion. Each of the empirical chapters focuses primarily on a statistical analysis, though there are some illustrative historical examples sprinkled throughout. The first empirical chapter, Chapter 3, tests and finds support for the book's hypotheses about leader tenure: Culpable leaders are indeed more likely to be punished (compelled to exit office) if they lose a war than are nonculpable leaders. The next chapter tests the implications for war outcomes. As expected, culpable leaders tend to have a relatively high "win" rate, whereas nonculpable leaders are relatively more likely to end a war in a "draw." Chapter 5 then extends the analysis to legislative leaders as opposed to the executive leaders studied in Chapter 3. Chapter 5 focuses only on the U.S. context in contrast to previous chapters. Here, however, the analysis is somewhat less convincing. Her findings (pp. 142–45) suggest that the effects of simple partisanship tend to be far more important than culpability, and she does not conduct any statistical test on whether voters punish culpable legislators as they do culpable executives. Indeed, she finds that voters punished Republicans in 2006 "regardless of the Republican incumbent's position on the war" (p. 148).

Croco's theoretical focus positions her research squarely in a growing body of scholarly work on leaders and elites in international relations. This corpus includes *Leaders at War* by Elizabeth Saunders (2011); *Why Leaders Fight* by Michael Horowitz, Allan Stam, and Cali Ellis (2015); and *Leaders and International Conflict* by Giacomo Chiozza and Hein Goemans (2011), among others. Leaders and elites are more difficult to study in some ways than masses, whose preferences are more amenable to the survey experiments that have come into vogue in IR. Yet the growing body of insightful leader-centric research suggests that the explanatory payoff to studying elites is well worth the effort.

Although Croco is not eager to challenge the rationalist bargaining model of war (p. 48), her book is the latest to point to the shortcomings of using it as the dominant