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“Less Bound to the Desk”: Ban Ki-moon, the UN, and Preventive Diplomacy

Richard Gowan

WHAT SORT OF DIPLOMATIC STRATEGIST IS BAN KI-MOON? SINCE BAN TOOK office as Secretary-General of the United Nations in 2007, there has been a great deal of discussion about his personal diplomatic style. Until the Arab Spring, he was typically characterized as an archetypal (though not always effective) quiet diplomat. In January 2011, Human Rights Watch accused Ban of having an “undue faith in his professed ability to convince by private persuasion” when dealing with repressive governments in cases such as Myanmar, Sudan, and Sri Lanka.1 As I argued in a previous article for Global Governance, Ban’s belief in diplomacy meant that he took too little interest in peacekeeping during his first term leading the UN.2 Since the beginning of the Arab Spring, however, Ban appears to have lost some of his faith in diplomatic niceties. He spoke out early in favor of the protestors in Egypt, became a consistent supporter of military action in Libya, and publicly condemned the Syrian regime’s violence against civilians as early as May 2011.3 As the Syrian crisis deteriorated in 2012, Ban appointed first his predecessor, Kofi Annan, and later the stalwart UN mediator Lakhdar Brahimi as envoys to Damascus but repeatedly escalated his own criticism of President Bashar Al-Assad.

Previous leaders of the UN have experienced similar tensions between the imperatives of quiet diplomacy and the impulse to speak out over certain crises. Indeed, it is standard practice to evaluate each Secretary-General according to how he has balanced the two.4 Given Ban’s change of priorities in 2011 and 2012, it is likely that future biographers will use a similar framework to examine his record.

In judging Ban’s performance as diplomatic strategist, however, it is necessary to look beyond his statements and consider his broader impact on the UN’s diplomatic machinery. Experts on the UN often distinguish between the personal political role of a Secretary-General and his managerial functions.5 This distinction is only partially justifiable. It is equally possible to distinguish between the personal role of a national foreign minister and the ministry that he leads. But to understand the minister’s performance
overall, it is necessary to judge his or her relationship with and impact on the bureaucracy. It is often argued, for example, that Hillary Clinton’s tenure as US secretary of state has been defined not only by her own diplomatic aptitude but also by her widely noted ability to motivate the State Department. An assessment of the Secretary-General’s record must similarly take into account his ability to shape the broader diplomatic performance of the UN during his tenure.

In my earlier contribution to *Global Governance*, I concluded that, as of mid-2011, “Ban had not transformed the UN’s intellectual agenda, at least as far as peacekeeping is concerned.” If this was, in part, because Ban was more interested in diplomacy than in peace operations, did his leadership make an appreciable difference to the UN’s diplomatic structures, missions, and practices during his first term? It was his stated intention to have such an impact, specifically through boosting the Department of Political Affairs (DPA). In his first two years in office, he emphasized the need to “significantly strengthen” DPA to help it “become more proactive in tackling global crises, especially in the realm of preventive diplomacy.”

This article addresses whether Ban did indeed equip DPA to undertake preventive diplomacy more effectively (it does not cover other aspects of Ban’s diplomacy, such as his interventions at climate change summits). This is meant to complement my article on peacekeeping but is also relevant to analyses of Ban’s personal diplomacy, before or after the Arab Spring, as I place his individual efforts in an institutional context.

To address these issues, the article does three things. First, I review the state of DPA as Ban inherited it in 2007; the department was generally agreed to be in severe need of renewal. Second, I look closely at proposals that Ban and his under-secretary-general for political affairs, B. Lynn Pascoe, set out to strengthen DPA. Overall, their plans appear to be a pragmatic attempt to reinforce and rationalize the UN’s existing diplomatic assets—although they also put forward promising ideas for a network of UN regional offices with preventive mandates, which are still largely unfulfilled. Third, I look briefly at how DPA has evolved during Ban’s tenure so far and how the department has promoted the political missions and the three regional offices that currently exist under its auspices.

This is only meant to be an initial reckoning of developments at the UN under the current Secretary-General. Indeed, because Ban did not become deeply involved in the practicalities of DPA reform, he is a shadowy figure in much of the narrative that follows, letting others work out what “significantly strengthening” DPA should mean in practice. A fuller account of his diplomacy would give more space to his approach to diverse issues such as the 2010 Sri Lanka crisis, the Middle East peace process, and the Responsibility to Protect. My focus here is narrower and I conclude that the UN’s machinery for preventive diplomacy has improved since 2007—
and that even if Ban’s influence over this process has mainly been indirect, he deserves some credit for it. However, the crises in Libya and Syria have not only affected Ban’s outlook but also revealed deep differences among powerful states at the UN over the tenets of preventive diplomacy. In consequence, I end on a note of uncertainty about the UN’s future diplomatic role and Ban’s ability to shape it.

The Trouble with DPA

When Ban took office in 2007, UN officials had a general sense of his commitment to diplomacy but little idea of what it would mean in practice. There was a focus on his potential as an administrator, in part because he had promised to strengthen the UN’s ethical culture (an issue on which, he implied, Kofi Annan had failed). His career in South Korea’s foreign service offered few firm clues about how he would lead the UN. In Seoul, he had a reputation for avoiding confrontation and sidestepping tricky questions.10 His caution was widely believed to make him an appealing Secretary-General in the eyes of the Bush administration after its clashes with Annan over Iraq.

Ban did not set out a specific vision for enhancing the UN’s diplomatic capabilities. But the need to reinforce DPA—which had just over 200 regular staff at the beginning of 2007—had become a standard discussion point at the UN before Ban took office. DPA was set up in 1992 in parallel with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), but it struggled to establish a role.11 Although intended to be the UN’s focal point for conflict prevention and peacebuilding, it remained marginalized for much of Annan’s tenure.12 The 2005 report by the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change argued that DPA suffered from “deliberate under-resourcing” by member states.13 In 2006, the UN’s Office of Internal Oversight Services questioned the department’s ability to provide serious political analysis.14 While the General Assembly took steps to aid DPA, authorizing the creation of a specialized Mediation Support Unit, UN officials conceded that preventive diplomacy remained “largely improvised.”15 In Annan’s last Secretary-General’s report on prevention, published in July 2006, he cast doubt on DPA’s ability to offer strategic leadership or even adequate coordination to other elements of the UN system in conflict prevention, warning that it was “heavily driven by the exigencies of crisis response and unable to engage in depth at the country level in many cases.”16

UN officials ascribed these difficulties to a lack of resources (in terms of not only staff but also funds for basic activities such as travel) and the fact that DPA was bogged down in routine diplomatic duties. In a representative if detailed cri de coeur, it was calculated that, in 2006, “six desk officers of the Europe Section prepared 204 talking points for the Office of the Secretary-General and other United Nations senior officials and 147 notes
of meetings, attended 872 official meetings and drafted 173 analytical and background papers and 54 briefing notes for Security Council and other meetings.”17 The officers had also generated almost 1,000 other types of official documents. By the time Ban arrived in office, therefore, DPA officials had a fairly consistent argument about their position: they needed more personnel and financial resources, and they had to be liberated from the drudgery of day-to-day diplomacy.

While these complaints focused on DPA’s responsibilities at UN headquarters, the department also maintained assets further afield, including special political missions and regional offices. While the phrase “special political missions” covers a wide range of entities, including sanctions committees and some envoys, it primarily applies to civilian UN field presences dealing with conflict prevention, mediation, and peacebuilding.18 At the start of 2007, there were eleven such field-based presences; many of these involved very few staff, but some, such as the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq, employed hundreds. (Although also a political mission, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan was overseen by DPKO.) More missions opened in the course of 2007 in Nepal, Lebanon, and Central Asia.

Some DPA staff believed that the key to the department’s revitalization lay in improving political, technical, and administrative support to these field missions—and potentially promoting them as an alternative to DPKO’s larger and more expensive peacekeeping operations. But there were considerable obstacles to this project. While some political missions, such as that in Iraq, had a significant profile, many others were weakly staffed and of peripheral interest to the Security Council. DPA officials complained that political missions should be funded from a special budget, as were peacekeeping operations, rather than from the UN regular budget. Given these obstacles, a significant faction in the department opposed concentrating on field missions. Instead, they argued, the priority should be to build up DPA’s analytical capacities in New York.

For those favoring an operational future for DPA, however, two small political missions were of particular interest. These were the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA, based in Dakar, Senegal), which had been set up in 2000, and the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA, in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan), inaugurated in December 2007. These two offices had been created to engage in conflict prevention at the regional level, although their mandates were convoluted. UNOWA had been charged with “harmonizing” UN activities across West Africa as well as engaging in direct preventive diplomacy.19 A 2007 review found that it did some good diplomatic work but had “sub-optimal interactions” with New York and was hampered by the “lack of an overall workplan and an unclear sense among some staff of what is expected of them and their Office.”20 UNRCCA was instructed to focus on thematic issues such as
counterterrorism and water sharing among Central Asian states. The center had taken a great deal of time to launch, having run into opposition from the United States and Russia, and its staff needed time to build trust in the region. Nonetheless, these regional offices seemed to provide a promising alternative to addressing conflicts remotely from New York. Officials from UN development and humanitarian agencies, although concerned about the politicization of their own work, were open to receiving additional help in addressing emerging conflicts. Specific proposals for an office in Central Africa had been debated as early as 2002.

So when Ban Ki-moon stated his intention to strengthen DPA, he was echoing arguments that had already been made in the UN Secretariat—and UN officials had identified potential options for moving forward. In his July 2006 report, Kofi Annan had also set out ideas for boosting “systemic prevention” efforts across the UN. By this he meant “measures to address global risk of conflict that transcend particular states,” such as limiting the flow of small arms and light weapons. While Annan argued that systemic prevention should embrace a wide range of UN funds and agencies, he argued that DPA should receive extra resources to coordinate their activities. Replacing Annan, Ban had to choose whether to pursue this expansive vision (which was still rather vague) or to promote an alternative diplomatic philosophy and strategy. Although Ban recognized the importance of transnational drivers of conflict—in particular, climate change—he never embraced “systemic prevention” as a phrase or guiding concept. An online search of his speeches from 2007 to 2011 does not locate a single use of the term (nor can it be found in the DPA reform proposals from his first term). But Ban largely left the job of articulating an alternative vision for DPA to Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs B. Lynn Pascoe, a former US ambassador to Indonesia, who started work at DPA in March 2007.

Defining a Reform Agenda
Ban’s choice of Pascoe had stirred up some initial controversy. Although the former head of DPA under Annan was a Nigerian diplomat, Ibrahim Gambari, the post had mainly been headed by British officials. In 2006, the British had indicated that they wanted “their” job back, as the de facto price for supporting Ban. The UK apparently felt that the new Secretary-General would acquiesce, as it put forward a very strong candidate: Sir John Holmes, a former ambassador to Paris and personal adviser to Prime Ministers John Major and Tony Blair. Yet Ban ultimately decided that he would choose an American for DPA, and Holmes took responsibility for the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs instead. This ultimately proved serendipitous, as Holmes made good use of his diplomatic skills to explain
humanitarian issues to the Security Council and negotiate over crises with leaders on the ground.

But as of 2007, UN officials were unsure as to how US leadership might affect DPA. Some saw it as a boost to the department’s credibility: Pascoe, they guessed, had a mandate from Washington to strengthen the department. Pessimists asked whether he had a mandate to ensure that the UN followed US dictates. This speculation overlooked the fact that Pascoe was Ban’s personal choice. The two diplomats had worked together on Asian affairs when Ban was serving in South Korea’s embassy in Washington and enjoyed a very high level of mutual trust.

Pascoe himself admitted that he faced a steep learning curve at DPA. “Having spent very little of my career at the United Nations—only a short stint at the UN mission in 1996,” he noted in an interview for DPA’s newsletter, “I didn’t know exactly what the [under-secretary-general] for Political Affairs does.”26 Insofar as he had a vision of his department’s work, it appeared to be conditioned by his career in the US foreign service. He argued that his experience gained from forty years of bilateral diplomacy was “not that different” from the work of the UN.27 Although this might sound like common sense, it was liable to unnerve UN officials who distinguished their role as international civil servants from the national interest–driven work of diplomats. Some of Pascoe’s staff noted that he did not use Annan-era phrases such as systemic prevention. Instead, he dwelt on the narrower concept of preventive diplomacy.

There was, in short, a general impression that both Ban and Pascoe shared a fairly traditional view of diplomacy—and that their common vision of a stronger DPA might well look like a smaller version of the US State Department or South Korean foreign ministry. Nonetheless, any effort to overhaul the department would also be influenced by its existing commitments (such as talking points and the management of political missions) and the ideas already circulating among UN officials (such as those about the potential of regional offices). In the summer of 2007, while Ban’s team focused on their initial priority of reforming DPKO, Pascoe’s staff worked on a blueprint for DPA reform. There was a good deal of consultation with the department’s staff, ensuring that preexisting complaints and proposals filtered into the process. There was definitely no diktat from either Ban or Pascoe about the precise future shape of DPA. Indeed, there was arguably too little top-down direction. (This author briefly served as an unpaid consultant on the process, but with a focus on background research.)

When Ban finally presented a consolidated reform proposal to the General Assembly in November 2007, it captured both long-standing concerns within DPA and an attempt to reshape the department along the lines of a traditional foreign service. The stated goal was “to make the Department of Political Affairs more field-oriented and less bound to the desk.”28 While
the proposal—a lengthy and often unwieldy document that requested the creation of 96 new posts within DPA—covered a number of priorities (such as strengthening the well-respected Electoral Affairs Division), it centered on three main points for changing the department’s focus and culture.

The first was to expand the DPA’s core group of regional divisions in New York to enable better monitoring and analysis and faster response to crises. The second, harking back to Annan’s emphasis on transnational threats, was to build up the department’s policy section to address “cross-cutting global issues” including “organized crime, corruption, democracy and terrorism.” The proposal suggested that DPA’s policy and mediation staff should be folded into one division, creating a consolidated central hub for the department’s research and thematic expertise. The third main element, and one that would prove especially sensitive for national diplomats, was to “rationalize the Department’s presence in the field through the establishment of a small network of regional offices that would assist Member States and regional organizations with their preventive diplomacy efforts.” These offices, modeled on UNOWA, would provide “a forward and more agile platform to support preventive diplomacy.”

The proposal explained that one immediate priority for 2008 would be to establish a regional office for Central Africa and the Great Lakes. It also raised the possibility of four further offices covering the Horn of Africa, the Balkans, Southeast Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean. DPA staff already had some specific locations in mind: the Southeast Asia office would be based in Singapore and that for the Americas in Panama City, already a hub for UN funds and agencies. Overall, the proposal emphasized that DPA would make savings by coordinating the placement of these offices with the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and other elements of the UN. In contrast to its emphasis on regional presences, the proposal had relatively little to say about “single-country” political missions such as that in Iraq—a strategic decision had been taken to leave proposals on this score for a later date, for fear of testing member states’ patience—although it did propose that a new unit be set up in DPA to help backstop these operations.

In many ways, this reform proposal simply represented a consolidation and extension of certain ideas that had been present in DPA before Ban took office. As his emphasis on “strengthening” the department indicated, the goal was to expand and improve existing models for preventive diplomacy, rather than anything more radical. The proposal also emphasized that these changes would not undermine existing UN diplomatic tools—the regional offices would support rather than replace the Secretary-General’s special envoys and work closely with UN funds and agencies. But these recommendations also promised to shift the UN toward a traditional diplomatic structure, built around a reinforced central foreign ministry (DPA) and a

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nascent network of de facto embassies (the regional offices). This comparison has obvious limitations: the numbers of staff involved, especially in the proposed regional offices, would be a small fraction of the number of diplomats employed by medium-sized foreign ministries. (As of late 2011, UNOWA had 24 international staff and UNRCCA just 8.)\textsuperscript{34} Moreover, the regional approach to conflict prevention diverged from national diplomacy’s emphasis on state-to-state relations. Officials involved in drafting the proposal argue that it was actually less beholden to classical diplomacy than earlier suggestions for reforms floated by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.\textsuperscript{35} Nonetheless, Ban and Pascoe had tabled a proposal that, as UN officials had predicted, implicitly reflected their common experiences in their respective foreign services.

A Slightly Stronger DPA?
Unfortunately, Ban’s 2007 report itself broke a fairly basic rule of multilateral diplomacy by containing a number of passages that offended the member states it aimed to impress. Latin American diplomats were especially furious to read that their home countries had “seen episodes of conflict, political volatility, institutional weakness and citizens’ growing disappointment with the dividends of democracy and the effects of globalization.”\textsuperscript{36} While this might well be true, it was not likely to win Latin American support. More generally, parts of the reform proposal looked thin. Some passages seemed to suggest that a few extra junior or midlevel staff at DPA would make a decisive difference in the UN’s abilities in some regions—a doubtful proposition.\textsuperscript{37}

The report was far from universally unpopular. African governments were persuaded that reforms to DPA would improve their interactions with the Secretariat, in part reflecting frictions with DPKO over the expanding number of peace operations on the continent. Nonetheless, the General Assembly postponed a decision on the proposal until December 2008, when it approved fifty new posts for DPA—half the original request.\textsuperscript{38}

There was a widespread impression in the UN Secretariat that DPA had regained some of the ambition it had lost in the Annan years. Pascoe, having initially seemed distant from his staff, developed a positive reputation as a dedicated civil servant who was willing to travel to trouble spots to engage in direct diplomacy. He also proved a good judge of senior staff, typically selecting strong director-level officials. A number of well-regarded younger personnel also took up posts in DPA, dealing with policy and mediation issues. Many of these had experience in political missions and peace operations, reinforcing the impression that DPA was indeed “more field-oriented and less bound to the desk.” The expansion of the department’s policy capacity—merged, as the 2007 report proposed, with the Mediation Support Unit—has also allowed it to grapple with some of
the transnational “global cross-cutting issues” identified in the 2007 reform proposal, including the UN’s responses to coups and organized crime.39

Observers of DPA also agree that there has been an improvement in the quality of staff in the department’s regional divisions dealing with specific countries and crises, although this has not been completely consistent.40 A study of the UN’s early warning capabilities in early 2011 concluded that there were still notable gaps in DPA’s analysis of the Middle East and West Africa.41 There have also been questions about how the various parts of the enlarged department fit together. As Elodie Convergne notes, officials in the regional divisions have placed strict limits on the work of the department’s mediation experts, insisting that they should not engage autonomously in the field.42 The demand for talking points and meetings has proved persistent (and, ironically, much of this demand comes from the Secretary-General’s executive office).

More positively, DPA has proved increasingly open to working with external actors, including nongovernmental organizations involved in mediation and conflict prevention. There has also been deepened cooperation between DPA and UNDP, instantiated by their joint support to a growing number of peace and development advisers in countries at risk of conflict.43 UN officials give Ban, Pascoe, and the UNDP administrator, Helen Clark, credit for maintaining good personal relationships that have influenced officials’ readiness to cooperate.44

DPA’s gradual institutional evolution has also been punctuated and at times overshadowed by its difficulties in responding to individual crises. Like the Secretary-General and the UN as a whole, DPA has been criticized for its halfhearted response to the bloody end of Sri Lanka’s civil war in 2009. It also stumbled in its initial response to the Arab Spring, struggling to find the expert staff and financial resources to respond to events in the Middle East. As the crisis in Libya deteriorated, Ban Ki-moon chose a former Jordanian foreign minister with limited knowledge of both the UN and Libya—Abdel-Elah Al-Khatib—as special envoy to Tripoli.45 He had little impact on the situation. Even so, UN diplomacy regained credibility as the Arab crises progressed: UN officials played a significant role in averting war in Yemen and, as we will note below, DPA provided the platform for developing a political mission for postconflict Libya. It is too early to say what long-term impact the crisis in Syria will have on UN diplomacy. In the meantime, the UN’s ability to make some headway in Yemen and postconflict Libya brings us to the implementation of Ban’s ambitions for a more “field-oriented” DPA.

**Regional Offices and Political Missions:**
**Proving Their Worth?**
It has not proved easy to make DPA “less bound to the desk.” Much of the department’s energy is devoted to dealing with “non-mission settings”
(those where there is no peacekeeping operation or political mission). The 2007 proposal’s concept of “agile” regional offices assisting DPA’s preventive work did not gain significant traction with the UN’s member states. After Ban tabled his reform plans, the Latin American and Southeast Asian states indicated that they wanted no such office in their regions. The case for a new UN office in the Balkans was put to one side because of the debate about the UN’s position in Kosovo after its unilateral declaration of independence in February 2008. The idea of a UN Office in Central Africa, prioritized in the 2007 proposal, took longer to realize than had been hoped.

Although negotiations on the topic took place in the region in 2008, Ban only sent a letter to the Security Council announcing his intention to set up the UN Office in Central Africa (UNOCA) in December 2009. The proposal encountered skepticism, especially from the United Kingdom. UN officials and diplomats from other countries noted that the UK’s opposition appeared to harden after the British general election in May 2010, which ushered in a coalition with a fierce focus on cutting costs. London relented in August 2010, but the new mission (based in Libreville, Gabon) was given a two-year mandate for conflict prevention and liaison with the local subregional organization (the Economic Community of Central African States) and a limited number of staff. The new office encountered a degree of mistrust from UN development staff in the region, who feared that it would interfere in their work, and it has been noted that the mission faces extra scrutiny as a model for further regional offices.

The degree of skepticism toward UNOCA is ironic. It is arguable that the two preexisting regional offices—UNOWA and UNRCCA—proved their worth in this period. Although UNOWA has had to deal with frequent coups and crises across West Africa, its main test came in Guinea. When the country tumbled into a constitutional crisis and experienced severe violence in 2009, the head of UNOWA, Saïd Djinnit, gave great support to mediation efforts led by the Economic Community of West African States. Regional experts have emphasized that Djinnit’s main contribution was to coordinate a complex set of international actors throughout the crisis: his efforts would not have succeeded if France, Britain, and West African states had not engaged. But the fact that he was able to move rapidly around the region from his base in Dakar emphasized the advantages of a regional office.

In Central Asia, UNRCCA came to the fore during the crises in Kyrgyzstan in 2010, which culminated in attacks on ethnic Uzbeks in the southwestern area of the country. Stemming this violence was another diplomatic coordination challenge, as Russia, the European Union, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) all had potential leverage. Miroslav Jenča, the head of UNRCCA, played a prominent role among his counterparts from the OSCE and EU in managing the crisis, and DPA worked with UNDP on a plan to assist the affected areas.
Although the final settlement in Kyrgyzstan was flawed (an OSCE police assistance mission was blocked and the crisis was never fully investigated), a worse bout of bloodshed was avoided. DPA points to the Guinean and Kyrgyz cases as highlights of UN diplomacy, and Ban Ki-moon is reported to refer to them as the major successes of his first term.51

The two cases also suggest that Ban and Pascoe’s original emphasis on “a small network of regional offices” was based on sensible strategic logic. As this author has previously argued, the events of Ban’s first term “suggest that these regional platforms for conflict prevention both offer the best value and are the most politically acceptable mechanisms for preparing for many future conflicts.”52 It is probable that DPA will continue to push to open more such offices—although there are still major political obstacles, and diplomats grumble that DPA cannot base its arguments on the successes in Guinea and Kyrgyzstan indefinitely.

In the meantime, DPA has also focused on its broader range of political missions. Although largely excluded from the 2007 reform proposal, these missions have come to play an increasingly important role in defining the department’s profile. In Ban’s first years in office, two political missions in particular won plaudits for the UN. One was the UN Mission in Nepal (UNMIN), which oversaw the end of the country’s civil war and transition from monarchy to democratic rule.53 The other was the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI), which had almost been written off after its headquarters was bombed in 2003, leaving the head of mission, Sergio Viera de Mello, and 21 others dead. But as the Bush administration struggled in Iraq, the mission offered the UN an increased political role in 2007. UNAMI played a significant functional role in efforts to ease tensions between the Kurdish and Arab communities.54 The Obama administration made a point of embracing UNAMI as a partner from 2009 onward.

Not all political missions could boast equally successful track records. The UN’s political mission in Guinea-Bissau (one of the longest-running in Africa) looked on helplessly in 2009 as the country’s president was assassinated, the prime minister was arrested, and troops forced their way into the UN compound.55 There was a further coup attempt in 2011 and the military seized power in April 2012. The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (overseen, as we have noted, by DPKO) was publicly embarrassed when its top leadership fell out over how to deal with clearly flawed national elections in 2010.56 The mission has been the target of a series of attacks.

Notwithstanding these grim setbacks, DPA has continued to develop its doctrine for managing political missions and promoting their utility (as the 2007 report’s proposal for a DPA unit devoted to backstopping political missions was not approved, this work has fallen to policy planning staff). Some political missions—such as that in the Central African Republic—have been converted into integrated peacebuilding offices, giving them a

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coordinating role over other elements of the UN system. This has given DPA additional leverage in internal UN debates, although in at least one case (Burundi) a government has insisted on a “normal development partnership” with UN funds and agencies rather than an integrated mission.

In July 2010, Under-Secretary-General Pascoe told an audience in Washington that political missions were “relatively lean, inexpensive, civilian operations that can achieve impressive results” (he added that UNOWA and UNRCCA were “particularly valuable”). DPA’s advocacy for political missions arguably paid off most significantly in 2011, when the UN was tasked with planning for the postconflict reconstruction of Libya. Ban Ki-moon gave this challenge to Ian Martin, the former head of UNMIN, in April 2011. Martin set up shop in DPA, although there was also some planning in DPKO. He had nearly six months to plan a mission while the war ground on. Unlike the mediation effort under Al-Khatib, Martin’s planning gained traction and, after Tripoli fell to opponents of Muammar Gaddafi, the UN was authorized to deploy the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) that September. Despite great political uncertainty and bouts of violence (including an attack on Martin), the mission facilitated successful elections in 2012. While many commentators had predicted that a blue-helmeted peacekeeping force would be necessary in Libya, it gave DPA a chance to show off the utility of political missions.

DPA officials have, however, continued to be frustrated by the budgetary and administrative systems for mounting political missions. The fact that they are paid from the UN’s regular budget, which is set on a biennial basis, has complicated efforts to react promptly to threats and political development. By contrast, peacekeeping operations’ budgets are set annually, and are supplemented by a support account to cover DPKO’s backstopping of missions. DPKO also has access to a peacekeeping reserve fund and strategic deployment stocks on which it can draw immediately when launching new missions. DPA has no such start-up facilities.

Despite the publicity opportunities offered by the creation of UNSMIL, Ban Ki-moon failed to persuade the General Assembly to make a more general investment in political missions in 2011. Since the completion of the initial DPA reform discussions in 2008, the department had gradually promoted debate about improving support to political missions. In October 2011, Ban tabled a report that argued that “given the evolution of the role of these missions over the past decade, the funding arrangements for such missions and their associated requirements for backstopping [i.e., support from UN headquarters] are not adequate in three important respects.” These were the missions’ reliance on the regular budget; the lack of financing mechanisms for mission start-ups; and complications arising when political missions needed to call for assistance from DPKO and the Department of Field Support (DFS) in New York, creating more budgetary confusion. The report, compiled under the leadership of DFS, coyly promised “a
number of options that could address these challenges to one degree or another.” It suggested that “the General Assembly may wish to consider the alternative of establishing a special and separate account for the funding of special political missions.” It also proposed that DPA should have access to the peacekeeping reserve fund and strategic stocks.

This remained a modest proposal in many ways. Even if enacted in full, it would have left DPA with less well-developed funding mechanisms than those available for peacekeeping. DFS and DPA officials decided to avoid more radical proposals that would, at a minimum, have put large-scale political missions including those in Afghanistan and Iraq on a completely equal footing with standard peace operations (although, in private, even DPKO officials argue that this distinction is mistaken). Despite the qualifications, the report did promise to raise the status of DPA-led political missions and consolidate their claim to be a distinct and important part of the UN’s contribution to international security. This arguably represented the logical end point of Ban and Pascoe’s efforts to shake up UN diplomacy. The relative successes of political missions in cases from Nepal to Guinea to Libya justified the arguments of those in DPA who had focused on field operations before 2007. Ban’s original proposal for strengthening DPA, emphasizing regional offices, had given extra impetus to these arguments despite saying little about political missions. The 2011 proposal filled some gaps that had been left in 2007, rounding out a vision for DPA’s future role. But it was a vision that some important governments rejected.

The main objections to the proposal came from the permanent five members of the Security Council. They pay a higher percentage of the peacekeeping budget than the regular budget—and they foresaw that they would also pay a larger part of the proposed budget for political missions. Discussions of Ban’s report went nowhere. In the words of a UN press release, member states “agreed that the current funding and backstopping arrangements for the missions were inadequate, but they differed greatly over how to rectify that situation and over the Secretary-General’s proposals for doing so.” It was decided to postpone a decision until the next General Assembly session. At the time of writing, it is unclear whether Ban’s proposal will make any further progress, although broader debates over major powers’ financial commitments to the UN will shape the final outcome.

Conclusions
Just as Ban Ki-moon’s initial proposals to strengthen DPA were delayed early in his tenure, therefore, his first term ended with uncertainty over his plans for political missions. Nonetheless, the Secretary-General could claim that his emphasis on preventive diplomacy had made a difference to DPA and had garnered support among member states. Whatever DPA’s current
faults, it is no longer the byword for incompetence that it seemed to have become when Ban took office. And while many of the ideas put forward for unbinding DPA from its desk remain unfulfilled, the department has begun to develop a robust narrative about its role in the field. Meanwhile, the Security Council and General Assembly have repeatedly stated their support for preventive diplomacy and mediation, which gives DPA political capital.

To what extent can these developments be attributed to Ban’s influence? He was the originator of very few—indeed probably none—of the specific proposals for strengthening DPA that he has advocated. It is in fact notable that Ban’s own quiet diplomatic style is quite distant from the more rough-and-ready field operations that play an important part in DPA’s narrative about its renewal. In his 2010 speech in Washington, Pascoe cheerfully described how the head of the political mission in Sierra Leone “literally scampered to the roof of a building in Freetown to defuse a situation that could have triggered a relapse into conflict.” DPA officials with field experience do not necessarily believe that Ban understands this sort of diplomacy.

But the Secretary-General’s commitment to diplomacy, channeled by Under-Secretary-General Pascoe and his staff, opened up the political space for DPA to expand its operational horizons. Without Ban’s own interest in diplomacy, resolving DPA’s woes would not have been a priority. This is why he deserves a degree of credit for DPA’s gradual process of renewal, even if his role was indirect. Whether he would have had any impact without Pascoe’s support and the preexisting ideas of DPA officials about how to proceed is unclear (Pascoe stood down in mid-2012, handing over to another senior US official, Jeffrey Feltman). Ban’s role in this story is arguably less about leadership than simply about letting others get on with their work.

How far DPA’s renewal process can go is, meanwhile, open to question. It will continue to face significant budgetary limitations such as those it encountered in 2007 and 2011 (and, more narrowly, over the creation of UNOCA). In both political and operational terms, the department still faces the reality that much of its work is overshadowed by DPKO-led operations. But these are not the greatest threats to the UN’s role in preventive diplomacy. Instead, it is growing increasingly clear that divisions among major powers could increasingly distort and undermine the UN’s efforts at preventive diplomacy in the years ahead. In September 2011, the Security Council met at the ministerial level to discuss preventive diplomacy. Although Ban had presented a report on the UN’s role in the area, the participants bickered about the Libyan war, Palestine, and the worsening crisis in Syria. Soon after that, the Security Council entered an extended period of much more vicious debates over Syria, resulting in a series of vetoes and diplomatic breakdowns, while Ban became increasingly critical of the regime in Damascus, as I noted earlier.
It would be a mistake to argue that the Syrian crisis has marked the end of UN diplomacy. Russia was willing to cooperate with the West and UN officials over Yemen while disagreeing over Libya and Syria. China and the United States have collaborated closely in trying to keep the peace between Sudan and South Sudan, both on the ground and in the Security Council. Yet it is possible to imagine clashes such as those over Syria growing increasingly common in a period of international power shifts. The gradual strengthening of DPA has, arguably, left the department equipped to manage crises that it could not have handled effectively in 2006. But as Ban looks forward to the end of his second term in 2016, he should ask himself how to prepare the UN for potentially much more serious crises ahead.

Notes
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3. See, for example, Ban Ki-moon, address to the Sofia Platform, 12 May 2011, http://ecfr.eu/content/entry/commentary_ban_ki_moons_address_to_the_sofia_platform.

4. This is a recurrent theme in the essays in Simon Chesterman, ed., Secretary or General? The UN Secretary-General in World Politics (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Note especially Kofi Annan’s foreword to the volume, pp. xi–xiii.

5. See Shashi Tharoor, “‘The Most Impossible Job’ Description” in Simon Chesterman, ed., Secretary or General? The UN Secretary-General in World Politics (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 43.


7. For a useful guide to how each Secretary-General prior to Ban related to the organization, see Thant Myint-U and Amy Scott, The UN Secretariat: A Brief History (1945–2006) (New York: International Peace Academy, 2007).


12. Ibid., p. 100.


25. This is based on a search of Ban’s speeches at www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/sgspeeches.

26. “‘The UN Gets Dealt All of the Toughest Issues’: An Interview with B. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs,” *Politically Speaking* (Summer 2007): 3. *Politically Speaking* is the DPA newsletter.

27. Ibid., p. 4.


29. Ibid., p. 6.

30. Ibid., pp. 6–7.

31. Ibid., p. 7.

32. Ibid., p. 77.

33. Ibid., pp. 78–79.

34. Sherman, *Review of Political Missions 2011*, pp. 41 and 121. Three of UNOWA’s international staff were military personnel.

35. E-mail exchange with UN official, 12 August 2012, on file with the author.


37. See, for example, the paragraphs on the Balkans on pages 60–61 of *Revised Estimates*.

38. The General Assembly had only recently approved Ban’s peacekeeping reforms and acknowledged that it may have been a mistake to raise DPA expansion
so soon afterward. See, for example, Gowan, “Floating Down the River of History,” pp. 405–406.


40. This statement is based on discussions with a number of officials and external experts in July and August 2012, but is inherently a subjective assessment.


42. This observation is based on a draft article by Elodie Convergne, “The Mediation Support Unit and the Production of Expert Knowledge at the UN.” The author is grateful for the chance to see the text in advance.

43. For more details on this cooperation, see www.un.org/wcm/content/site/undpa/conflict_prevention.

44. E-mail exchange with former UN official, 16 August 2012, on file with the author.

45. Al-Khatib admitted during the conflict that “I cannot claim that I was an expert on Libya, but I knew Libyan politics to some extent.” He gained a reputation for diligence in pursuing efforts to mediate, although he was also said to be distracted by domestic Jordanian politics. See “‘The Solution Must Be Political’: Interview with the UN Special Envoy for Libya,” Politically Speaking (Summer–Fall 2011): 4.

46. Letter dated December 2009 addressed from the Secretary-General to the president of the Security Council, UN Doc. S/2009/697 (31 August 2010). The discrepancy in the dates of the letter’s dispatch and release reflects the length of the debate over the proposals for UNOCA.


56. Sherman, Review of Political Missions 2011, p. 79.


64. Ibid., pp. 2 and 9.


A “Great Experiment” of the League of Nations Era: International Nongovernmental Organizations, Global Governance, and Democracy Beyond the State

Thomas Richard Davies

This article aims to shed historical light on the contemporary debate concerning the role of international nongovernmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations in the democratization of global governance through an assessment of the experience and political thought of the League of Nations era. After introducing the interactions of international nongovernmental organizations and intergovernmental organizations in the present day and in the League of Nations period and the contemporary debate on their role in the democratization of global governance, the article discusses how democracy in global governance was conceived in the League of Nations era, with particular reference to the work of Alfred Zimmern. The analysis highlights not only the considerable continuities between interwar thought and that of the present day, but also the potential problems identified at the time that remain pertinent today. Keywords: democracy, global governance, international nongovernmental organizations, League of Nations, Alfred Zimmern.

In the opening article of the first issue of Global Governance, the sixth UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, discussed how, through the United Nations and other actors, including international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs), “the people of the world can work together to improve and strengthen democracy.”¹ His words echoed those of Eduard Beneš, president of the sixteenth assembly of the League of Nations, who claimed half a century earlier that “the League of Nations was the expression of a general democratization of the postwar world and an organ of international democracy.”² In the present day it remains commonplace to claim, as Barack Obama wrote in his second book, The Audacity of Hope, that in World War I, “making the world ‘safe for democracy’ didn’t just involve winning a war. . . . Wilson proposed a League of Nations to mediate conflicts between nations.”³ However, the practice of the League of Nations and INGOs in contributing toward the democratization of global governance in the 1920s and 1930s—despite being a popular subject of discussion at the time—has not since been given academic attention.
My purpose in this article is to shed light on the democratization of global governance through the experience of the UN’s precursor, focusing in particular on the relationship between the League of Nations and INGOs. That the interaction between INGOs and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) may be important in the development of democracy beyond the state has become a crucial issue in the study of global governance in the present day. However, the literature has tended to focus on recent experience at the expense of a longer-term perspective.

There have been advances in recent years in the exploration of the historical roots of global governance, including the role of INGO interactions with IGOs. In addition, in the study of the theory of international relations, there is a growing body of literature drawing insights into international politics from the major thinkers of the period between World War I and World War II. These literatures, however, have tended to overlook the work of scholars and practitioners from this period on the issue of democracy in global governance. Even recent studies of thinkers of the interwar era such as Alfred Zimmern, who put the role of INGOs and IGOs in the democratization of international affairs at the core of their work, have tended to neglect this aspect of these thinkers’ work.

In this article, I aim to address an important gap in existing literature. Drawing from archival as well as published sources from the interwar years, I will begin by outlining the ways in which INGOs and the League of Nations interacted. Then, I will analyze the arguments in the practice and literature of the interwar period concerning the contributions of such interactions to the democratization of global governance at the time. I will place the material on the interwar experience in the context of current practice and debate in order to reveal the pertinence of these arguments to the contemporary debate on INGOs, IGOs, and democracy in global governance, even though the terms INGO, IGO, and global governance had yet to become familiar at that time.

The League of Nations was a very different organization from the United Nations: its membership was far from universal, even among the European and American nations of which it was primarily composed, and its covenant made no provisions for consultative status for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The period in which the League of Nations operated featured intense divisions in international society that were later to develop into World War II and the Cold War, and much of the world remained subjected to European imperial rule. The number of INGOs operating in the 1920s and 1930s was less than one-twentieth of those operating in the present day, and four-fifths of these organizations had their headquarters in Europe. However, as I will highlight, the structural form of the League of Nations and its relationship with INGOs bore remarkable similarities to those of its successor, and the multipolar distribution of power...
and geopolitical uncertainties of the interwar period may have greater resonance today than during the Cold War era. Three-fifths of INGOs presently remain headquartered in Europe and, despite their limitations, the INGOs of the 1920s and 1930s often had considerable mass memberships, as I will discuss later. Literature on international relations from the period between World War I and World War II has, as noted previously, received revived attention since the end of the Cold War, and this article will show the importance of such literature to the contemporary debate on democracy in global governance.

International Nongovernmental Organizations, the League of Nations, and Global Governance

Today, INGOs are said to have greater access to the UN than to other major IGOs. Through the mechanism of “consultative status” NGOs gain recognition that may, depending on the category of their status, enable them to send observers to Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) meetings, to submit written statements to ECOSOC, to propose items for ECOSOC’s provisional agenda, and to be invited to make oral statements during ECOSOC meetings. Beyond ECOSOC, UN practice has been more ambiguous. In the case of the General Assembly, INGOs may be provided with seating arrangements and access to documents for meetings on economic and social matters, they have presented at special sessions, their expertise has been used in committee work, and occasionally they have been granted observer status. Although access to the Security Council has been limited, in informal sessions the Council has been briefed by humanitarian organizations such as Médecins Sans Frontières, Oxfam, and CARE.

Relations between INGOs and the UN Secretariat have become extensive: in 2002, Chadwick Alger noted more than ninety UN offices that were handling relations with NGOs. The Department of Information currently liaises with 1,549 INGOs for the dissemination of information and provides a directory of NGOs. The Non-Governmental Liaison Service (NGLS) also maintains a database; produces a handbook, a journal (Go Between), and other publications; and facilitates NGOs’ involvement in UN activities through conferences, events, training, and UN-INGO liaison meetings.

The interactions between INGOs and other components of the UN system vary considerably, but can be extensive. In the case of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, it has been claimed that five NGOs were invited to participate in the activities of the Programme Coordinating Board “not as observers, but as members.” Other UN organs, such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, rely on INGOs for effective delivery of many of their programs while initiatives such as the Global Compact aim to bring together NGOs, the United Nations, and the business community in
global economic governance. In addition, there have been established what Peter Willetts refers to as “governance networks” (e.g., the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations in Consultative Relationship with the United Nations), which aim to promote access for NGOs to UN organs.

UN conferences have been among the most crucial points of interaction between INGOs and the United Nations. Nongovernmental organizations have convened parallel summits to coincide with intergovernmental conferences, notably at the Stockholm and Rio summits in 1972 and 1992. The range of NGOs that have received accreditation as observers at UN conferences extends beyond those that have acquired ECOSOC consultative status. INGO representatives have also been incorporated into government delegations to conferences and thereby played a significant role in influencing decisions, such as Fred Sai, president of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, who was appointed chair of the Preparatory Committee for the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development.

The Covenant of the League of Nations did not make reference to consultative relationships with NGOs along the lines of Article 71 of the UN Charter (although there was a reference in Article 25 to encouraging “the establishment and co-operation of duly authorised national Red Cross organizations”). The term INGO entered popular usage only after World War II and, although some made a distinction between “private” and “public international unions” in the early twentieth century, it was common practice not to make a distinction between intergovernmental and nongovernmental international organizations. The experience of the League of Nations in dealing with INGOs was consequently highly experimental. In February 1920, the secretariat noted: “in all questions connected with international organizations and their relation to the League, it is exceedingly hard to find any general principles. It is hard even to find ‘very broad rules’ for guidance in action. But . . . if individual problems are dealt with one by one by the people who are intimately concerned with them, . . . general principles will gradually emerge from the conclusions to which such people come.” In its subsequent practice, the League of Nations secretariat set many precedents that were later seen in the work of the United Nations.

When the first secretary-general of the League of Nations, Eric Drummond, was setting up its secretariat in 1919, he remarked after a meeting with the British National Council of Women that “it would be very wise to secure a good woman on the Publicity Section through whom we can get in touch, for purposes of propaganda, with the various women’s organizations.” Lithuanian princess Gabrielle Radziwill was subsequently appointed to the League of Nations secretariat and developed extensive relations not only with women’s organizations, but with NGOs more generally, especially the League of Nations associations that had developed to
promote the organization. Secretariat officials also were frequently sent to attend the meetings of INGOs, and the League published a quarterly bulletin describing the activities of INGOs as well as a *Handbook of International Organizations*, which provided data on the major INGOs of the period that was much more extensive in coverage than that contained in the directories produced by its successor.

The League of Nations secretariat provided channels of access for INGOs not only to itself, but to the council and assembly. The letters, telegrams, and resolutions of INGOs were commonly published in the journals of the League of Nations assemblies: the *Journal of the First Assembly of the League of Nations* of 1920, for instance, published communications from organizations including the International Masonic Federation for the League of Nations, the International Olympic Committee, the International Red Cross, the Society of Friends, the Society for a League of Religions, the Society for World Culture, and the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom. From February 1924 onward, the secretariat also circulated to council members a list of the communications received from INGOs, with a summary of their content. This policy was a response to INGO pressure, which had led the council in December 1923 to instruct the secretary-general “to prepare and to present to the Council at the beginning of each of its sessions” these lists, which contained summaries of up to nine resolutions per list. Despite requests, this privilege was not extended to national NGOs. In addition, the presidents of the assembly and council on occasion received deputations from the representatives of INGOs and, in the early 1930s, the council and assembly made requests for INGOs to present information such as on the organization of peace and women’s status.

As with the United Nations today, relations between specialist organs of the League and INGOs were more extensive than with the council and assembly. One of the most noted interactions between the League of Nations and INGOs was its appointment of “assessors” from INGOs to specialist committees. The pioneer scholar of INGOs, Lyman Cromwell White, noted the role of nongovernmental representatives in League committees on communications and transit, social questions, League of Nations teaching, traffic in women, statistical methodology, refugees, and the protection and welfare of children and young people. The participation of nongovernmental representatives in other League-related bodies, such as the International Labour Organization, is well-known.

Also foreshadowing the contemporary UN experience, it was at international conferences set up by the League of Nations that INGOs often had particularly considerable influence. Steve Charnovitz has noted how the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), in particular, played an important role in international economic conferences. For instance, the ICC sent eight delegates as consultants to the 1923 International Conference on the
Simplification of Customs Formalities, several of its recommendations were included in the treaty, and “in a notable departure from diplomatic practice . . . [it] was permitted to sign the Final Act of the Conference.” INGOs were also given access to intergovernmental conferences on security matters. At the World Disarmament Conference of 1932–1934, for example, NGOs were allocated a special session at the start of the conference to present their petitions to delegates, INGO representatives were appointed to several government delegations (including those of the United States and Great Britain), and the president of the conference received deputations of INGO representatives. At this conference, a range of transnational lobbying techniques were pioneered by INGOs: the Disarmament Information Committee, for instance, may be seen as a precursor to the INGO documentation centers of today.

A range of “Liaison Committees” were set up by INGOs to exploit the openness of the League of Nations to their input, such as the Liaison Committee of Women’s International Organizations and the International Consultative Group for Peace and Disarmament. “Governance networks” also developed; for example, the Fédération Internationale des Institutions Internationales Etablies à Genève helped secure for select INGOs privileges with respect to the League of Nations that were similar to those later enjoyed by NGOs with consultative status at the United Nations, such as seating arrangements, documentation, and library access.

In the present day, it has been noted that “non-governmental organizations, external experts, scholars, consultants, and committed citizens” may constitute the “Third United Nations”; in the 1930s, private international actors such as these were viewed as constituting the “Greater League of Nations.” Eight contributions of private international actors to global governance in conjunction with intergovernmental institutions have been noted in the literature on the “Third United Nations”: “providing a forum for debate; generating ideas and policies; legitimating ideas and policies; advocating for ideas and policies; implementing or testing ideas and policies in the field; generating resources to pursue ideas and policies; monitoring progress in the march of ideas and policies; and occasionally burying ideas and policies.” This expands on Willetts’s earlier threefold distinction: “agenda setting, policy formulation, and policy implementation.”

In the League of Nations era, NGOs contributed toward each of these aspects of global governance. With respect to agenda setting, NGOs were a common source of novel ideas and policies. When governmental delegates reached a deadlock in discussions on security arrangements in the League’s Temporary Mixed Commission, for example, the British NGO the League of Nations Union played a crucial role in the design of a Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance that was subsequently passed in the fourth League of Nations assembly. Although the draft treaty subsequently failed
to obtain the necessary ratification, INGOs in the League era were commonly successful in lobbying for policies to be accepted internationally. In 1924, for instance, the League of Nations assembly adopted a Declaration on the Rights of the Child that was drafted and promoted by the Save the Children International Union. The League also relied on INGOs in attempts to legitimize its policies and asked INGOs to campaign for certain proposals: Lyman Cromwell White, for instance, “was told that the European Central Bureau for Inter-Church Aid was approached with a request that it launch a campaign for an Assyrian national home.” The League of Nations also asked INGOs to assist in implementation of humanitarian programs and in ensuring the ratification of conventions by member states.

As for INGOs’ contribution toward a forum for debate in the League era, this can be seen in the liaison and information committees already mentioned. Furthermore, precursors to present-day “parallel summits” took place, such as the convening just before the opening of the official governmental World Disarmament Conference of an unofficial nongovernmental world disarmament conference at the Trocadéro in Paris in November 1931. It was attended by representatives of 395 NGOs from more than half of the countries of the world and the head of the League’s disarmament section viewed it as “likely to give an insight into the possibilities” at the official conference. The theme of provision of a forum for debate is one component of the wider debate concerning the role of INGOs in conjunction with IGOs in the democratization of global governance, on which I will focus in the next section.

**International Nongovernmental Organizations, the League of Nations, and Democracy Beyond the State**

The contemporary debate concerning the role of INGOs and IGOs in the democratization of global governance comes in many forms. Some authors, such as Mary Kaldor and Jan Aart Scholte, have placed emphasis on the role of INGOs. For Kaldor, there is an important distinction between “formal” democratic institutions and “substantive democracy,” by which is meant “a process, which has to be continually reproduced, for maximising the opportunities for all individuals to shape their own lives and to participate in and influence debates about public decisions that affect them.” According to Kaldor, “in the context of globalisation, democracy, in a substantive sense, is undermined . . . because, however perfect the formal institutions, so many decisions that affect people’s lives are no longer taken at the level of the state.” INGOs, on the other hand, are seen as playing a central role in combating this problem as one of the key components of what has been termed “global civil society,” which has been defined by
some of its principal exponents as “the sphere of ideas, values, institutions, organisations, networks, and individuals located between the family, the state, and the market and operating beyond the confines of national societies, polities, and economies.” For Scholte, global civil society can contribute to the democratization of global governance in six ways: “by giving voice to stakeholders . . . through public education activities . . . fuel[ing] debate about global governance . . . [increasing] the public transparency of global governance . . . increasing the public accountability of the regulatory agencies concerned . . . [and] a sixth and more general basis of democratic rule: legitimacy.”

In a recent survey, Magdalena Bexell, Jonas Tallberg, and Anders Uhlin have identified three major models of democracy relevant to the role of INGOs in the facilitation of democracy at the global level: “representative democracy [which] emphasizes the opportunity for citizens to choose between competing political elites . . . participatory democracy . . . [which argues] it is highly unsatisfactory if citizens are reduced to being only voters . . . instead citizens must be brought back into the political process itself . . . [and] deliberative democracy . . . [which] argue[s] that democratically legitimate decisions best are achieved through an informed public debate.” They also identified a fourth model drawing on each of these: “cosmopolitan democracy . . . [which emphasizes] the construction of new democratic institutions at the global level, broad civil society participation in decisionmaking, and redistribution of power at regional and global levels along the lines of the all-affected principle.”

Bold democratic visions along the lines of those expressed in much of the literature on cosmopolitan democracy today were not unknown in the period following World War I. As the legal adviser to the US delegation to the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, David Hunter Miller, noted, “one proposal which was rather insistently pressed in some quarters at Paris was the creation of a third kind of League meeting, in addition to the Council and Assembly [which] would bring about a ‘League of Peoples’ rather than a League of Governments.” At the Berne Conference of the Labour and Socialist International in February 1919, for instance, the British Labour Party proposed that “representation in the central organs of the League shall be, not by delegates of the executive branches of the governments of the constituted states, but by delegates from the Parliaments representing all parties therein, ensuring thus, not an alliance of cabinets or governments, but an union of peoples.” The proposal made its way into the discussions of the commission formally charged with creating the League of Nations, and on 13 February 1919 British representative Lieutenant-General Jan Christian Smuts suggested that the second article of the proposed Covenant of the League of Nations should contain a provision that “at least once in four years, an extraordinary meeting of the Body of Delegates [i.e., the
League of Nations assembly] shall be held, which shall include representatives of national parliaments and other bodies representative of public opinion, in accordance with a scheme to be drawn up by the Executive Council" in order to satisfy “that element of public opinion which desired that the Body of Delegates might include representatives of the leading social groups.”

When Smuts’s proposal was discussed by the commission on the League of Nations it was quickly rejected—it was “hardly practicable,” Miller said at the time. Nevertheless, Woodrow Wilson and other delegates expressed the hope that governments would make their choice of delegates to the League of Nations assembly as representative as possible. The British Conservative delegate to the commission, Robert Cecil, for example, suggested that Britain’s delegation should consist of a member of the Labour Party, a religious leader, and a woman.

A dozen years later, a leading author on the League of Nations, Felix Morley, noted that the ideal of a “League of Peoples” had not disappeared. Morley describes how many governments had chosen to include opposition spokesmen in their delegations to the League of Nations assembly, in line with the suggestion put forward by Wilson and Cecil in 1919. Morley also describes how each year the League assembly gave close attention to the annual resolutions of the world’s main peace INGO of the period, the International Federation of League of Nations Societies, which were published in the assembly’s journal. The annual meetings of this INGO were even perceived as providing “the third chamber which was desired by so many in 1919.”

This is just one example among many of how in the period between World War I and World War II, statesmen and others concerned with international politics grappled with the issue of representing public opinion—and providing “democracy”—at the international level. There are some remarkable parallels between work on international voluntary associations and democracy from the interwar period and that on the relationship between NGOs and “global democracy” in the present day. For example, in 1930, Zimmern had in mind a distinction between formal and substantive democracy similar to that of Kaldor when he asked in the first issue of the journal Political Quarterly, “must we cease to conceive of democracy as a participation by the ordinary citizen in the work of government and acquiesce in a definition under which it means no more than that the elector exercises a choice, at stated intervals, between two or more rival groups of rulers?”

Kaldor is already quoted above as arguing that substantive democracy may be undermined by globalization processes that ensure that many decisions may be taken beyond the state; for Scholte, this meant that “it is no exaggeration to say that contemporary globalization has provoked a crisis of democracy.” Processes now referred to as globalization appeared to be taking place in the 1920s, too. As Harvard academic Manley Hudson argued in 1927,
two outstanding things in the past century have revolutionized the conduct of international relations. The first was the improvement in transportation and communication, of which the London–to–New York telephone service is the most recent testimony. . . . A second event of the past century which has greatly changed the world in which we live is the industrial revolution . . . broadly speaking the resources of the whole world are to-day available to all the peoples of the world. . . . These changes of the last hundred years have created a new world society. All the peoples of the world have been drawn into a single world community which bears little resemblance to the world of separate and self-contained states upon which the nineteenth century dawned.56

Foreshadowing Scholte’s claim, some interwar authors, such as the Berlin-based professor Moritz Julius Bonn writing in 1925, argued that these processes had helped bring about a “crisis of European democracy.”57 For such authors, in the words of Zimmern, democracy in the 1920s had a new Opposition to face. Its arch-enemy is not inherited privilege but private power . . . technically and officially the world is still divided into sections called states, but for the purposes of its very efficient economic system it is a single unit . . . if the industrial revolution has given us large-scale economic problems, the democratic movement proceeding from the French Revolution has given us small-scale political minds . . . in the economic sphere we have developed a great and widespread new system corresponding with some approximation to our modern economic needs. But this new system is private, not public: it is outside the constitution . . . private power, with its new and up-to-date type of organization, has an immense advantage over public power. In the sphere of government, we are, in fact, attempting to do twentieth century work with eighteenth century instruments.58

As Hudson concluded, this new world situation “demands, in consequence, a new kind of political organisation.”59 Authors such as Zimmern did not see the solution to this problem simply in the form of the League of Nations. In fact, Zimmern argued that “the League of Nations, which in the mind of President Wilson was to entrench democracy, if it has not actually weakened it, has certainly helped to make its existing weakness more manifest.” Instead, Zimmern claimed that there was a need for institutions of an entirely new type. The older institutions worked through the issue of commands from the centre of authority to the subjects of sovereignty at the circumference. The newer will be designed to facilitate the transmission and elucidation of ideas and policies so that all those affected by them can participate in their discussion. For the older institutions the sovereign at the centre was the driving force: for the newer the driving force is opinion, which is gathered up and diffused like electric power throughout all the living centres of the community.60
By the time that he was writing in 1929, Zimmern felt that such institutions had developed: “during the last decade . . . a whole new set of institutions has been silently growing up on lines corresponding with the needs of the age.” The League of Nations, he argued, “brought to the table both new subjects of international discussion and new types of men to deal with them,” including “nongovernmental experts” who had “recover[ed] control over private power” through their contributions to such significant developments as the Dawes Plan. In answer to the question “Where, amid these contending bureaucracies, in this play of experts and professionals, are we to look for democracy?” Zimmern argued that “we need to develop the new agencies of ‘liaison’ and interpretation until they extend their influence right down to the common man and woman.”61 Bertram Pickard, a Quaker representative in Geneva, the seat of the League, highlighted how such institutions had developed in the 1920s and 1930s, including the Liaison Committee of Women’s International Organizations, the Federation of Private International Organizations in Geneva, and the International Consultative Group.62 As Zimmern argued, democracy at the global level could be promoted by ensuring that bodies advising the League such as these “should be in touch with the individual citizens in each country,” which these bodies claimed was the case due to their often considerable memberships (e.g., the International Consultative Group claimed a combined membership of 100 million people in its constituent INGOs). Zimmern concluded that democracy “is an association, precarious yet ever renewed, between all the many and varied groups that make up the sum of the world’s public opinion.”63

Representatives of private international associations at the time were keen to claim that they reflected “the public opinion of the world.”64 Foreshadowing later arguments such as Scholte’s, Zimmern put forward a range of ways in which “international nongovernmental bodies” contributed toward democracy at the global level. This included overseeing IGO practice: “As local government is to national democracy,” Zimmern argued, “so voluntary international movements are to international government . . . If we want to have really efficient international government we must build it up from international voluntary societies, so that at every step voluntary associations watch over the work of the governments in those subjects in which they are dealing.”65 Zimmern also noted the vital role of international nongovernmental bodies in education to ensure that “there will always be a fine body of public opinion with high ideals, the right restraint, the right sanity and the right tolerance.”66

Not everyone agreed that private international associations were so representative or beneficial. For example, when presented with a communication of the president of a private association to the League of Nations’s Preparatory Commission for the World Disarmament Conference, British representa-
tive Lord Cushendun (previously Ronald McNeill) stated: “I consider it very improper that an outside individual, probably having no authority whatsoever, should attempt to influence the opinion of this Commission . . . on no occasion should we give publicity, by reading them here, to unsolicited letters received from external sources the value of which nobody knows.”

Interwar authors writing on the role of INGOs and democracy were aware of some of the problems with claiming that global democracy could be facilitated by nongovernmental networks. Zimmern, for example, noted that nongovernmental input in international decisionmaking “will become either obstructive or tyrannical unless it is subject to the influence of public opinion.” The US expert on international organization, Pitman Potter, stressed how in the field of NGOs “the extravagant amount of duplication, subdivision and recombination, multiplication and disappearance, of organizations, often without good cause, which goes on in this field, seems to cry aloud for regulation.” Paul Guggenheim, a Swiss specialist in the same field, argued that INGOs represented sectional interests and often were little more than the tool of governments for the promotion of their own aspirations. In no field was this clearer than in the use by governments of NGOs to emphasize minorities’ rights in interwar Europe; it was also evident in the work of the International Federation of League of Nations Societies, many of whose national branches were funded and controlled by their respective national foreign offices.

Zimmern was also aware of the tensions between the smooth functioning of League of Nations machinery and democracy. He argued in 1931 that “what the international civil servants in Geneva would like best is a Council of the League of Nations and an Assembly of the League, composed entirely of dictators. . . . It is much easier to deal with Italy from Geneva than with England, because if you persuade the Italian representatives and it is OK’d by a certain gentleman in Rome, the policy goes. That is efficiency in international affairs; the opposite is democracy.”

The interwar arguments concerning international democracy through transnational civil society organizations and their interactions with the League of Nations appeared particularly frequently in the late 1920s and early 1930s, after the apparent successes of the Dawes Plan, Locarno Treaties, and German entry into the League of Nations. Such arguments faded away after Adolf Hitler’s rise to power, once fascist governments wielded increasing control over national branches of INGOs, and as faith in internationalism and the League of Nations declined. The remark made by Arnold Toynbee upon receiving a draft of one of Zimmern’s manuscripts on international democracy in 1927 that “democracy never lasts, because as soon as the jigsaw puzzle has been put together somebody comes and breaks it up,” proved to be prescient.
The League of Nations also changed its practices as the 1930s progressed. Lyman Cromwell White commented that “in the last few years before the outbreak of the war there appeared a growing tendency to withdraw from collaboration with private organizations.” As examples, Steve Charnovitz noted the way in which the second World Economic Conference of 1933 failed to consult INGOs as had the first conference of 1927, and White mentioned the removal of nongovernmental assessors from the Committee on Social Questions in 1936. For some, such as Cecil, the idea that NGOs should see the League of Nations as their target actor had always been misplaced: “The League was not a supra-national organization; it was nothing more than the Governments represented on its Council and its Assembly. . . . Influence could, therefore, never be usefully exerted on the League as a corporate body, but only on the individual Governments which composed it.”

It became increasingly clear that the institutions of international civil society that claimed to represent world public opinion in fact represented only a portion of it, generally that of the liberal democratic and Anglo-Saxon sectors. Competing visions of international public opinion were especially apparent in the work of the communist and fascist internationals. An interesting example of the contrasting positions present in transnational civil society at the time is provided by the unofficial disarmament conference of November 1931 mentioned earlier, which aimed to “bring together the leaders of a more representative gathering of the great political, social, religious and cultural organisations of many nations than has ever taken part in any international meeting in the past.” More than 1,000 representatives of NGOs took part in this conference, which was intended to unite international public opinion around the objective of international disarmament. However, as the League of Nations’s observer noted, the delegates “sustained the particular theses of their own countries” and, on the final night, 700 members of the nationalistic French veterans’ organization, the Croix de Feu, forced the meeting to close early by provoking fights with the delegates, raiding the platform, and assaulting the visiting dignitaries. With the proceedings having been broadcast internationally, the French government subsequently faced a confidence vote in the Chamber of Deputies on how the police handled the matter. The government won by only a narrow majority and Prime Minister Pierre Laval failed to apologize because he believed that the organizers should have anticipated what was coming. Much of E. H. Carr’s book The Twenty Years’ Crisis, 1919–1939 spoke of the interwar “fallacy of belief in the efficacy of an international public opinion divorced from national power.” The experience of the Trocadéro conference highlights a complementary fallacy: belief that the common demands of “international public opinion” could be divined.
Conclusion
The experience of the League of Nations era was not only—as Cecil argued—a “‘Great Experiment’ in the maintenance of peace,” but also an experiment in governance and democracy beyond the state.81 Both the practice of the League of Nations’s relationship with INGOs and the political thought of interwar authors on democracy foreshadowed many aspects of the post–Cold War debate on INGOs, IGOs, and the democratization of global governance.

Those responsible for designing the UN’s original arrangements for consultation with NGOs concluded from the League of Nations’s experience that consultative status should be restricted to ECOSOC.82 In the very different circumstances of today, an alternative assessment of the implications of the interwar experience is necessitated. Although any effort to derive lessons from the past needs to be treated with caution, the recently observed possibility that there may be “a retreat in civil society access to the UN” renders the experience of the League of Nations—which reduced access in the 1930s—all the more pertinent.83

One conclusion that may be drawn from the interwar attention to the issues of “private power,” “international voluntary societies,” and their relationship with “democracy” in “international government” is that such issues cannot be dismissed as transitory concerns of the contemporary era, as has all too commonly been suggested. Instead, they are inescapable issues that have demanded attention even in periods when it is often (and incorrectly) assumed that international relations could be understood almost exclusively in terms of the interactions of states.

More significant for our understanding of the problems of democracy in global governance in the contemporary era are the specific ways in which those who handled similar issues before World War II dealt with—and more importantly failed to deal with—these concerns. Two problems with interwar thought and practice are especially noteworthy: (1) the excessive reliance on international-level INGO interactions with the League of Nations as the site of democratization of international governance; and (2) the lack of attention to the issues of accountability, legitimacy, and representativeness of INGOs.

With respect to the first point, it was a source of considerable frustration to both officials of the League of Nations secretariat and representatives of member states that interwar INGOs dedicated much more attention to lobbying League officials than did the governments that comprised the organization. Rather than considering the role of INGOs in the democratization of international affairs on multiple levels, interwar authors and INGO leaders tended to focus on the international-level relationship between the League of Nations and private international associations. The result was that INGO lobbying was all too commonly ineffectual because insufficient attention had been paid to the mobilization of public opinion
and lobbying of governments at the national level. This problem was particularly evident in the case of INGO mobilization for general disarmament, which succeeded in bringing together in the International Consultative Group the leaders of INGOs with a combined membership of 100 million, thus providing an appearance of unanimity that disguised the considerable differences among the national branches of these INGOs on which objectives were to be promoted. The mismatch between what INGO leaders claimed to represent and the reality of the considerable differences at the national level evident at the Trocadéro conference rendered hollow the claims of INGO leaders to be standing for international public opinion. This leads to the second key insight from the interwar experience, which is that it was far too common for the leaders of INGOs in the 1920s and 1930s to claim to speak on behalf of “the public opinion of the world” and for political thinkers of the time to claim that private international associations “make up the sum of the world’s public opinion” without paying sufficient attention to the basis for such claims. The belief that such claims were unjustified contributed toward the subsequent reduction of access of INGOs to the League of Nations.

A significant difference between much of the literature and practice of the interwar years and that of the present day is the level of attention paid to the accountability and legitimacy of INGOs. In the interwar years, it was common to justify a claim to speak for world public opinion on the basis of significant INGO membership, without considering the many wider aspects of representation, legitimacy, and accountability that are now central to debates on the subject. Recent efforts by INGOs in the contemporary era to address such issues (e.g., the INGO Accountability Charter) go some way toward addressing concerns that interwar INGO leaders and thinkers crucially neglected to consider. It may also be argued that many contemporary transnational civil society actors have made an effort to adopt more horizontal organizational forms than the hierarchical structures that were common in the interwar years; that is, ones ranging from “global bumblebee”–structured development INGOs to explicitly horizontal bodies such as the World Social Forum. With its turn toward liaising with civil society rather than simply with NGOs, the UN has also made some steps toward addressing these issues, although its engagement with less formally organized bodies such as the World Social Forum has been limited. Indeed, many of the efforts toward enhanced INGO accountability and legitimacy in the present day remain too limited. Only twenty-five INGOs are currently full members of the Accountability Charter and INGOs in consultative status remain susceptible to the accusation that they “reproduce the North-South divide of the governmental world,” just as interwar INGOs reproduced the predominance of Great Britain and France in the League of Nations.
Notes

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6. The pioneering work on thinkers of the interwar era is David Long and Peter Wilson, eds., *Thinkers of the Twenty Years Crisis: Inter-War Idealism Reassessed* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995).
20. Ibid., p. 258.
25. A list is provided in “Représentation du Secretariat aux divers congrès, conférences, etc. auxquels il a été invité,” R.1600, League of Nations Archives, Geneva.
27. The quotation is from the resolution adopted by the council on 10 December 1923, after Drummond had brought the issue to the attention of council members in November 1923 following a request from the International Federation of League of Nations Societies. The correspondence relating to this and the lists of resolutions are in Dossier 27124, R.1598, League of Nations Archives, Geneva.
28. See the discussions in Dossier 6722/2387, R.3568, League of Nations Archives, Geneva.
33. “Relations with Private Organisations,” U9333/5202/70, Foreign Office General Correspondence, National Archives, Kew.
43. Ibid., p. 37.
47. Ibid., p. 84.
49. Ibid., p. 273.
52. “Minutes (English) of the Commission on the League of Nations,” p. 300.
60. Zimmern, The Prospects of Democracy, pp. 329, 335. It should be noted that, as Paul Rich has pointed out, this argument was put forward during a particularly idealist stage of Zimmern’s career. See Paul Rich, “Reinventing Peace: David Davies, Alfred Zimmern and Liberal Internationalism in Interwar Britain,” International Relations 16, no. 1 (2002): 124.
66. Ibid., p. 8.
69. Pitman Potter, The League of Nations and Other International Organizations


72. Toynbee to Zimmern, 5 December 1927, folio 15, box 20, Alfred Zimmern papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford.


75. Quotation from the twenty-seventh meeting of the council on 10 December 1923, Dossier 27124, R.1598, League of Nations Archives, Geneva.

76. Untitled, undated, anonymous memorandum contained in files 5/144 and 5/146 of the Noel Baker papers, Churchill Archives Centre, Cambridge.


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When Experts and Diplomats Agree: Negotiating Peer Review of the UN Convention Against Corruption

Matti Joutsen and Adam Graycar

The UN Convention Against Corruption is the only truly global convention in corruption control. Separate and rather difficult negotiations were conducted on a mechanism for the implementation of the treaty. These negotiations broke ground by providing, for the first time, peer review of a United Nations treaty. This article, which is based on the authors’ close observations and interviews with key participants, seeks to show how the dynamics between technical experts and diplomats led to a resolution that would not have occurred if either the technical experts or the diplomats had acted alone. Keywords: corruption, peer review, United Nations, negotiation impasse, experts, diplomats.

THE UN CONVENTION AGAINST CORRUPTION (UNCAC) ENTERED INTO force in 2005.1 As of February 2012, it had been ratified by 159 states parties, making it the only truly global convention on the prevention and control of corruption.2 As such, it allows for cooperation between industrialized and developing countries as well as South-South cooperation. It therefore can assist countries that have extensive corruption in developing an anti-corruption framework. It also offers a comprehensive framework that may help them to receive targeted technical assistance. Additionally, UNCAC can provide a framework for bringing pressure to bear on countries that have so far chosen to retain a hands-off policy toward corrupt practices in international trade and development.

UNCAC contains both mandatory and nonmandatory provisions. Among the mandatory provisions (“each State Party shall . . .”) are those requiring the criminalization of active and passive bribery, embezzlement by a public official, and money laundering. There also are several mandatory provisions on extradition and mutual legal assistance. States parties are obliged, for example, to “afford one another the widest measure of mutual legal assistance in investigations, prosecutions and judicial proceedings in relation to the offences” covered by UNCAC.3 Given the fact that kleptocratic officials have siphoned off billions of dollars from developing countries, and that large sums of money have been transferred to bank accounts abroad,4 it is not surprising that developing countries have worked to ensure that many of the provisions on asset recovery are mandatory.
However, the impact of UNCAC is potentially weakened by the fact that it is not self-executing. Each state party has to take domestic action (legislation, policy formulation, allocation of resources) in order to implement the provisions of UNCAC, both mandatory and nonmandatory. While the objectives of UNCAC are specified throughout the treaty, agreement could not be reached (with one exception) during the negotiation phase on how to review this implementation, on how the states parties could ascertain that implementation in their own country and elsewhere was on track and in line with the objectives, and on how that success was in fact being achieved.

The one exception is Article 63 of UNCAC, which simply provides for a Conference of States Parties (CoSP) that is to “promote and review” implementation of UNCAC. However, the CoSP meets for only five days biennially. It does not have the capacity to collect and analyze information on implementation. The CoSP realized quite quickly that a supplementary review mechanism is needed to do this work and prepare recommendations for the CoSP.

Peer review offers one tried-and-true supplementary review mechanism. The review of the implementation of the recent anticorruption treaties prepared by the Council of Europe and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has shown that direct consultations among experts doing an on-the-ground review provide an effective learning experience. Talking with experts from other systems often helps experts understand their own system better and realize that there are other—and perhaps more effective—ways to deal with an issue.

Despite many observers seeing this as an obvious way forward in connection with UNCAC as well, initially the concept of peer review was not widely embraced in Vienna where the negotiations on the supplementary review mechanism were held. Peer review had not previously been used in connection with the implementation of any UN treaty and, thus, there was no UN precedent. As recently as the second session of the CoSP held in 2008, there appeared to be firm and widespread opposition to peer review. Less than two years later at the third session of the CoSP, agreement was reached on a peer review mechanism. How was implacable opposition turned into tacit agreement and what can we learn from this exercise?

Our argument in this article is twofold. Negotiations require both technical experts and diplomats. The technical experts can set out the substantive issues and identify the options. The diplomats can identify the political sensitivities (in this case, the concept of peer review), thus showing where compromises might be needed. As long as one side viewed the need for a UNCAC review mechanism as primarily a technical matter, the negotiations drifted. It was not until both sides understood the political dimensions that progress could be achieved, which allowed for the negotiators to break through what appeared to be an impenetrable barrier.
**Deadlocks**

In the literature, the *negotiation process* has been described as “a sequence of actions in which two or more parties address demands, arguments and proposals to each other for the ostensible purpose of reaching an agreement and changing the behaviour of at least one actor.” There is significant literature on negotiation strategies and on the breaking of deadlocks. A *deadlock* occurs when parties stand firm on inconsistent positions. James Sebenius, for example, maps the field comprehensively in his examination of negotiation analysis. By building on experiences and strategies, he takes us from game theory to statistical decision theory where analysts rely on objective probabilities. Sebenius says that negotiation analytic prescriptions typically expect intelligent, goal-seeking action by the parties whereas negotiation analysis seeks to decompose the problems into characteristic elements. Throughout the rest of this article, we find this mode of analysis to be very useful.

John S. Odell demonstrates how negotiations that seem to have landed in an impasse can be turned around. Looking for the causal mechanisms that tip the process one way or another, he explores two case studies, the World Trade Organization negotiating rounds of 1999 and 2001. The 1999 round held in Seattle was spectacularly unsuccessful while the 2001 round held in Doha achieved results. After description and empirical analysis, Odell concludes with three propositions:

1. If a party perceives that its alternative to agreement has worsened, it will shift strategy in the integrative direction, and vice versa.
2. The odds of breaking a deadlock will be greater if parties use some integrative tactics than if they use strictly distributive strategies.
3. The odds of breaking deadlocks will rise when a good mediator is involved.

In this article, in turn, we present original evidence regarding how the UNCAC negotiations that ultimately resulted, for the first time in connection with any UN treaty, in the adoption of peer review moved from impasse to agreement.

**The First Session of the Conference of States Parties**

When the first session of the CoSP was held in Amman, Jordan, in December 2006, the discussions on a review mechanism were long and convoluted. Nonetheless, this dialogue resulted in the crucial political agreement that CoSP itself was not enough and that a supplementary review mechanism was needed.

The difficulties were in pinning down exactly what such a mechanism should look like. The delegates agreed on some of the key features of this
mechanism: it should be transparent, efficient, nonintrusive, inclusive, and impartial; it should not produce any form of ranking; it should provide opportunities to share good practices and challenges; and it should complement existing international and regional review mechanisms in order to avoid duplication of effort. The formulation of more specific terms of reference for the mechanism was delegated to an “open-ended intergovernmental expert working group.”

Even though at first glance these are rather bland characteristics, there was vigorous debate over them in Amman, which revealed that in some key respects the different sides understood certain concepts differently. For example, transparency was understood by some to mean that all the states parties would be involved throughout the process. In effect, the review was to be carried out by a plenary body, as opposed to a smaller expert body. Others understood transparency to refer to the ability of all stakeholders (including, e.g., representatives of civil society) to follow and possibly even provide input to the review process. Still others understood transparency to refer to whether or not the reports that are produced as a result of the review process are available to all states parties or, indeed, are made public.

A second example was the concept of nonintrusiveness. The UN Charter stipulates that the United Nations may not “intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state.” The concept is generally used in international law to mean that the UN has no authority with respect to disputes that are essentially within domestic jurisdiction. There appeared to be different views as to what constitutes such intervention. At various stages in the negotiations, arguments based on nonintrusiveness and the protection of sovereignty were used to counter proposals for, inter alia, the use of independent experts, the arrangement of country visits, the use of any information not provided by the government of the state party under review, and the publication of the full report—all elements that other negotiators regarded as part and parcel of the peer review process.

Seeking Common Ground at the Second Session of the Conference of States Parties

In preparing for the second session of the CoSP in Bali at the beginning of 2008, the Secretariat looked at existing review mechanisms and, on that basis, set out what it regarded as elements that could be incorporated into the UNCAC review mechanism:

- *self-assessment* (each state party would fill out a questionnaire on what implementation steps it had taken);
- *review* (by which the Secretariat meant that the process should be carried out by groups of experts or peers);
- dialogue (a “process of constructive dialogue” between the Secretariat and the country concerned, or between the experts or peer reviewers and the country concerned);
- cooperation with existing review mechanisms;
- country visits (the Secretariat carefully noted that “the approach taken by existing review mechanisms with regard to country visits ranges from no visits at all to visits only where necessary to compulsory country visits”); and
- benchmarking and technical assistance.\(^{15}\)

Despite the efforts of the Secretariat to stake out common ground, the discussions at the second session of the CoSP can be characterized as drawn out and difficult. The elements identified by the Secretariat in its background report appeared to meet acceptance on a general level. Once the discussion entered into details, however, two opposing positions seemed to emerge. These two positions could be called the open review and the controlled review positions.

The open review position incorporated many elements found in peer review within the framework of the OECD or the Council of Europe: a team of experts collects information from a variety of sources; the team then visits the country under review in order to meet a wide range of stakeholders; the team prepares a country report that contains recommendations; the team submits this draft report to the country under review for comment; the amended country report together with recommendations is sent to a plenary body for discussion and adoption; the report is published; and there is some mechanism for follow-up by the plenary body to see whether the recommendations have been implemented.

According to the controlled review position, a team of experts (who, according to some who espouse this position, also includes experts representing the country under review) uses information received from the government to prepare a country report; the report is finalized on the basis of a dialogue between the experts and the representatives of the country under review; and the Secretariat prepares a general report for the plenary body that does not contain references to individual countries. The plenary body decides by consensus on the publication of the general report; whether or not the country report is published is decided by the country under review.

At the start of the second session of the CoSP, the open review position was articulated by Portugal, speaking on behalf of the European Union, but it was also espoused, for example, by the United States and Canada.\(^{16}\) The delegations of many countries consisted of a mix of experts from the capitals and of career diplomats who in many cases had come to Bali from their current posts at the UN headquarters in Vienna. The experts tended to be familiar with the workings of such an open review model within the frame-
work of the OECD, the Council of Europe, and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

The controlled review position was articulated by Pakistan, speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.\textsuperscript{17} According to the official report of the session, the statement by Pakistan “highlighted that the Conference should be the only body responsible for the review and that any mechanism or body to be established should be subsidiary to the Conference.” Further the Pakistani delegate indicated that the review mechanism should base its reports exclusively on information provided by states parties and that the conference should be the competent body to approve and issue reports on the review of the implementation of the convention.\textsuperscript{18} Most of the delegations from the Group of 77 and China were small, with a heavy preponderance of career diplomats from Vienna.

Due to the deadlock between the open review and controlled review positions, little progress could be achieved at Bali. The resolution that emerged began by essentially repeating what had been decided two years earlier: if indeed a supplementary review mechanism was to be established, it should be transparent, efficient, nonintrusive, inclusive, and impartial; it should not produce any form of ranking; it should provide opportunities to share good practices and challenges; and it should complement existing international and regional review mechanisms in order that the conference may, as appropriate, cooperate with them and avoid duplication of effort. The resolution continued with a number of general statements about effective implementation, a balanced geographical approach, the need to be non-adversarial and nonpunitive, and that implementation should be of a technical nature and promote constructive collaboration.\textsuperscript{19}

The Governmental Working Group of 2008
The debate shifted from Bali to the UN headquarters in Vienna, where an open-ended intergovernmental working group met in September 2008. By the time of that meeting, thirty-one countries had responded to the invitation of the Secretariat to submit proposals for the review mechanism.\textsuperscript{20}

The submissions continued to reflect the divide between the open review and the controlled review positions. Proposals in line with the open review approach came from member states of the European Union, the United States, and several other countries. These proposals tended to repeat the following elements:

- each state party should be reviewed by experts from other states parties;
- the reviews should preferably involve on-site visits for direct discussions with a wide range of stakeholders;
- a variety of different sources should be used when gathering information;
• civil society and the private sector should be involved;
• the reports should be published; and
• there should be some type of follow-up on the implementation of any recommendations made.

Many proponents of the open review position tended to take a technocratic view of implementation and many delegations espousing this view included technical experts in addition to career diplomats. To these proponents, the review was a technical exercise in reporting and accountability, and the results should be transparent and available immediately for the world to see. The experts conducting the review should be free to gather information on implementation from a variety of sources in order to familiarize themselves with the situation and engage in discussions with a number of different stakeholders. Armed with this knowledge, they would be able to suggest best practice to the experts of the country under review.

The Group of 77 and China submitted a working paper to the September 2008 meeting, laying out in greater detail their vision of the controlled review model. Among the points made in that paper were the following:

• the reports should be based only on information provided by the states parties;
• the information provided by the states parties may not be disclosed to any person or entity without the prior consent of the state concerned;
• the information should be used only for analytical purposes and to promote effective implementation of UNCAC. In particular, this information should not be used for political or economic purposes;
• the mechanism should “avoid bringing about political difficulties, or some kind of selectiveness between Member States”;
• the mechanism should be consistent with the principle of the sovereignty of states;
• the mechanism should be transparent and participatory, with all states parties enjoying equal footing; and
• the operation of the mechanism should be paid on the basis of the regular UN budget.21

The proponents of controlled review tended to see the process as involving a number of serious political risks that had to be identified and defused. Since outside experts lack local understanding, they might receive a distorted view of how the legal and administrative system actually operates in the country under review. Information obtained during the review process could be misused for political purposes and, thus, there was a need to keep tight governmental control on what and how information is used. Non-governmental actors could in fact be hostile to government policy and might
use involvement in the review process for their own ends. If the reports produced as a result of the review process became construed as “UN-endorsed” assessments of the extent of corruption in a certain country, this could have a negative impact on foreign investments in that country: donors might seek to attach a variety of conditions on any offers of technical assistance. There were also considerable concerns about the expense of on-site visits and other aspects of peer review, and that the necessary funds would then not be available for direct technical assistance.

The Gulf Between the Open Review and the Controlled Review Positions

It is clear, then, that there was a great gulf between the two positions. It seemed as if the two sides were in fact speaking different languages and represented quite different concerns that were not being openly addressed.

Part and parcel of the open review position seemed to be the view that any efforts to oppose such openness were nothing less than a wish to avoid scrutiny, and that the controlled review group was not really committed to the objectives of UNCAC.

The controlled review position seemed to regard proposals for conducting on-site reviews, contacting local civil society organizations, publishing the reports, and so on as politically based violations of sovereignty and as attempts to force countries to change their policies through naming and shaming.

The open review position seemed to revolve around technocratic, substantive interests that centered on finding the best way to collect and analyze information on implementation. The controlled review position seemed to revolve around political interests that focused on finding a politically legitimate way to evaluate implementation in a sovereign state.

The ensuing negotiations gradually saw the two rigid positions soften. The initial catalyst for this was that the apparently solid Group of 77 and China position in support of controlled review soon suffered from defections. The above-mentioned working paper submitted by the Group of 77 and China in September 2008 did not use the language of peer review at all. However, a number of developing countries did in fact have favorable experience with peer review. Most Latin American countries were using peer review in connection with the implementation of the 1996 Inter-American Convention Against Corruption. In addition, several developing countries were familiar with peer review in the context of the FATF. As a result, the debate could not be painted as a North-South one, in which the Western industrialized countries were opposed to the more numerous developing countries. Those supporting the controlled review position gradually realized that holding out against any form of peer review was
not a sustainable position, and that some workable format had to be found so that the long negotiations of UNCAC itself would not prove to be a waste of time and effort.

Once several developing countries began to express their support for some elements of peer review, they were understandably received with open arms by the other camp. The proponents of open review tried to leverage this trend by building a growing consortium of like-minded countries based on a fairly hard-line technocratic position. Their view remained that peer review should occur on their terms.

In the year following the September 2008 meeting of the intergovernmental working group, three more working group meetings were held. In addition, some informal meetings were held in Vienna, which were attended almost solely by the diplomats posted there. Progress remained achingly slow.

By the time of the last working group meeting in August–September 2009, the list of issues that had to be solved remained rather long. The next session of the CoSP was scheduled to be held in only two months, and consensus was not in sight. It was at this stage that movement could be discerned among the proponents of open review. What had originally been seen by many of them as essentially a technical exercise (how to collect and analyze information most effectively and how to encourage member states to take the necessary implementation steps) had obviously become imbued with political sensitivities. One or more informal meetings of the like-minded group supporting open review were held each week during those two months. At these meetings, the debate raged and the cohesiveness of the group began to break down. While some (primarily a few of those delegations that included technical experts) wanted to go to the wire, others (usually career diplomats) argued that the only way to reach the necessary consensus in Doha was by stepping away from the hard-line technocratic position. The talk shifted to the potential for compromise with the closed review proponents and to redlines that should not be crossed.

The stage was thus set for compromise.

Compromise at the Third Session of the Conference of States Parties

The debate at the third session of the CoSP, in Doha in November 2009, took place not so much in the plenary room, but in a small room where about a dozen participants (primarily diplomats), who represented the two views, worked their way through the issues. In these discussions, the focus was on finding options that would allow for various elements of peer review (thus satisfying the concerns of the open review proponents) while defusing the political risks raised by peer review (thus satisfying the concerns of the controlled review proponents).
The outcome at Doha can be considered a delicate balance between the two views. The elements of the mechanism are as follows:

- An implementation review group is set up for the review process. This body is, to use the UN parlance, intergovernmental and open, which means that any and all states parties may participate.
- Each state party is to be reviewed by two other states parties.
- Each state party is to designate governmental experts who would actually conduct the reviews. (Disagreement arose over the definition of a “governmental expert.” Those opposed to the peer review concept generally stressed that these experts must be civil servants and that they reserve the right to refuse to accept anyone whom they regard as biased.)
- The review process consists, basically, of four stages: a self-assessment conducted by each state party on the basis of a checklist prepared by the Secretariat, discussions between the experts and the representatives of the authorities of the member state, preparation of a country report, and discussion at the implementation review group of consolidated thematic and regional reports.
- In responding to the self-assessment, each state party should seek to engage in wide consultations with relevant individuals and groups outside the public sector.
- The experts may also use information produced by other corresponding evaluation mechanisms.
- On-site visits may be arranged with the consent of the state party under review. However, the costs of these must come from voluntary funding, not the regular UN budget.
- In connection with on-site visits, the state party under review is encouraged to promote discussions with all relevant national stakeholders.
- On the basis of the evaluation, the experts prepare a country report and an executive summary. The report and its executive summary require the approval of the state party under review.
- The Secretariat prepares thematic and supplementary regional geographical reports for the implementation review group.
- These thematic and regional reports will serve as the basis for the analytical work of the Implementation Review Group. The executive summary of the country reports are submitted to the implementation review group for informational purposes only and not for discussion. (Those opposed to peer review did not want the implementation review group to be able to open discussion on implementation in a specific state party, where the authorities of that state party would be required to respond to questions.)
- The country reports themselves are confidential and thus, for example, are not submitted as such to the implementation review group. However, the states parties in question are encouraged to publish these
reports themselves. In addition, “States parties shall, upon request, endeavour to make country review reports accessible to any other State party. The requesting State party shall fully respect the confidentiality of such reports.”

The fact that the outcome is indeed a compromise is borne out by the interviews that we conducted with key negotiators for the purposes of this article. Negotiators on both sides appeared to believe that it was their side that won. For example, a negotiator for the controlled review side estimated that some 80 percent to 90 percent of what they proposed was approved “without significant change.” Negotiators for the open review side stressed that the Doha result clearly leaves the door open to a full peer review procedure (including, e.g., on-site visits, involvement of civil society, and publication of the reports) and that, once state parties have more experience with and confidence in the review mechanism, more and more elements of peer review will come into play.

How the Negotiations Worked
The negotiations on the mechanism for the review of the implementation of UNCAC showed the difficulties that arise when one side stresses technical aspects while the other side stresses political aspects, and neither side is able to bridge this difference in approach. Peer review is gradually becoming an established and valued element of the review of implementation, but it does present risks of misuse. On the other hand, attempts to trim peer review of some of its essential elements (e.g., on-site visits, the involvement of civil society, and the publication of reports) may sap it of its vitality.

The negotiations also showed both the benefits and the drawbacks of negotiating as blocs. Having two clear blocs—the open review proponents and the controlled review proponents—helped to crystallize the issues on the table. At the same time, since both of the two sides transcended regional coalitions, the blocs helped to generate more global support. On the other hand, both sides appeared to suffer to some degree from a loss of credibility as a negotiating partner. The Group of 77 and China, as noted above, suffered from early defections and various developing countries became vocal supporters of open review. The European Union had a more organized structure for decisionmaking and negotiation; yet not only was it unable to maintain a coherent position that would retain other open review supporters, but at times different members of the European Union sent out mixed signals in the negotiations (e.g., on the issue of the need for on-site visits) that complicated the position of the lead negotiator.

According to one observer of the negotiations, at a certain stage a sense of inevitability evolved that the mechanism would be established. It was primarily a question of where the compromises would be found. These
compromises could not be found until the two sides gradually realized the importance that each of the sides attached to its own proposals and redlines: on the one hand, the use of peer review, and on the other hand, the concepts of sovereignty, transparency, and nonpunitiveness.

The open review proponents had to convince the controlled review proponents that peer review was not intended to identify shortcomings as part of a political agenda or to make people look bad. Instead, the key element is ownership: the country under review should recognize that it has problems it needs to overcome and that there are politically acceptable ways to overcome them. The controlled review proponents had to convince the open review proponents that the concerns about political risks were valid ones and that these must be respected.

Conclusion
Reflecting on the theoretical analyses that we discussed in the first part of this article, it is instructive to see what lessons can be learned from previous case studies and how propositions might be tested in the future. Statistical decision theory, which is found extensively in the literature, is not applicable to this case study because objective probabilities were not evident and there was no basis for objectivity. There were certain subjective probabilities; namely, coalitions of interests and a wish at times to shift the focus of the argument.

Turning to Odell’s three propositions (see the section “Deadlocks”), this case study shows how integrative tactics aided an agreement, and especially the mediators (diplomats) were able to find an agreement by agreeing to a text by consensus, consulting more inclusively, and taking the argument above that of specialist and instrumental operations and focused solutions.

The compromises were not found as much by the technical experts who came from the capitals. The role of the technocrats was largely to indicate what options were to be found in the peer review model and to allay the concerns of those who were less familiar with the concept. The compromises were more often found by the Vienna-based diplomats through an intensive process of informal consultations during which the two sides came to better understand one another’s positions. One observer noted that the bonding between the key negotiators also took place outside the meetings at occasions such as lunch, dinner, receptions, and smoking breaks. Moreover, because the negotiations lasted for several years, the diplomats came to have a real and detailed knowledge of the convention itself and of peer review.24

The main lesson of the UNCAC negotiations is perhaps best encapsulated by one participant: “You should not approach the negotiations from the point of view that I am right and you are wrong, that you should listen
to me because I know better. It is better to try to accommodate the different general concerns of the state parties. We are all equals and we all have an interest in the implementation of the Convention.\textsuperscript{25}

**Notes**

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3. UNCAC, art. 46(1).

4. One former head of state who has gained notoriety in this respect is Jean-Claude Duvalier, who is alleged to have extracted between $300 million and $800 million from Haiti, one of the poorest countries in the world. Other kleptocratic former heads of state operated in countries that were richer in natural resources and the sums were correspondingly larger. Sani Abacha is alleged to have extracted between $2 billion and $5 billion from Nigeria, Mobute Sese Seko about $5 billion from Zaire, and Ferdinand Marcos between $5 billion and $10 billion from the Philippines. Former president Mohamed Suharto has the dubious distinction of being credited with the greatest criminal extraction: between $15 billion and $35 billion from Indonesia. See http://iuhuru.com/2010/09/top-10-corrupt-world-leaders-history (accessed 21 February 2012).

It should be noted that when kleptocrats extract resources on this scale, much of it does not leave the country but instead is used to maintain and strengthen the kleptocrat’s power base; for example, by rewarding supporters and ensuring the allegiance of the military and security apparatus. Nonetheless, many kleptocrats have transferred money abroad as a hedge against a fall from power—as most
recently claimed in respect of Muammar Gaddafi and Hosni Mubarak, following their ouster from Libya and Egypt, respectively, as a result of the Arab Spring. See, for example, www.africandictator.org/?p=1461 (accessed 21 February 2012).

5. For an overview of methods of evaluating the implementation of international treaties and on the expansion of the use of peer review, see in particular Merja Norros, Judicial Cooperation in Civil Matters with Russia and Methods of Evaluation (Helsinki: Kikimora Publications, 2010).

6. Regarding the implementation of the Council of Europe’s Criminal Law and Civil Law Convention on Corruption, see www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/greco/default_en.asp. Regarding the implementation of the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions, see www.oecd.org/document/20/0,3343,en_2649_34859_2017813_1_1_1_1,00.html.

7. The article is based on our extensive experiences with the United Nations crime prevention and criminal justice programme in general and with the negotiations on the UNCAC review mechanism in particular. In the preparation of this article, the first author conducted interviews with a number of key negotiators. In addition, the first author was privileged to be able to participate in the core negotiations, up to and including those held in the small room in Doha, mentioned at the beginning of the section entitled “Compromise at the Third Session of the Conference of States Parties.”


13. Odell affirms that case studies are of fundamental importance, but he goes on to stress that we cannot ever be certain that any case studies are necessarily typical of situations that are being negotiated or that any pair of case studies can establish causality or eliminate alternative explanations. Odell, “Breaking Deadlocks,” p. 295.


17. The Group of 77 and China is a coalition of developing countries that promotes the interests of its members at the United Nations. Nonetheless, it should be emphasized that the negotiations on the review mechanism dealt with in this article should not be seen as a North-South debate between the industrialized countries and the developing countries. The borderlines were more fluid and the national positions often more nuanced.

19. Ibid.

20. The states parties that submitted written proposals were Austria, Chile, China, Ecuador, El Salvador, Finland, France, Hungary, Indonesia, Jordan, Kuwait, Latvia, Mali, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Peru, Slovakia, South Africa, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Uruguay. The signatories that submitted written comments were Brunei Darussalam, Germany, Iran, Japan, Switzerland, Thailand, and Tunisia. These are available at www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CAC/working-group1-meeting2.html.


23. Confidential interviews conducted by Matti Joutsen.

24. One coincidental feature of both our case study and Odell’s is that, after failure in multilateral meetings in various cities, agreement was finally reached at Doha. Odell, “Breaking Deadlocks.” Could it be that, when faced with difficult negotiations, organizers might consider scheduling meetings in Doha?

25. Confidential interviews conducted by Matti Joutsen.
2nd Edition

Western Sahara: Anatomy of a Stalemate?

Erik Jensen

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When future historians consider the global governance role of the G8, they would do well to consider its approach to Africa. For the first decade of the new millennium, G8 summits sustained an extraordinary focus on the continent. Responding to African governments’ proposed New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), G8 governments produced a succession of agreements and initiatives, anchored by the 2002 Africa Action Plan and the 2005 Gleneagles declaration on Africa and development. These initiatives were framed by a motif of “partnership.” They provided elite impetus toward a more comprehensive “Third Way” bargain for Africa. Collectively, they illustrate some stark limits to designs for a transnationally hegemonic approach to global challenges. In consequence, they have contributed to the erosion of G8 purpose and legitimacy.

**KEYWORDS:** G8, Africa, NEPAD, hegemony.

At the Group of 8 (G8) summit at Camp David in May 2012, the leaders of the world’s still-dominant but embattled capitalist states, struggling to forestall relative decline in relation to the rising states of the Brazil, Russia, India, and China (BRIC) and Group of 20 (G-20) forums, once again turned their attention to the world’s poorest continent. In an abbreviated summit agenda of just over one day, they devoted a working lunch to the now traditional Africa Outreach Session, in which the leaders of Ghana, Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Benin participated and were present for the launch of the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition—itself an elaboration on (some would say an attempt to rescue) the 2009 l’Aquila Food Security Initiative (AFSI). The New Alliance received predictably mixed reviews, with summit enthusiast John Kirton labeling it a “strong success,” and Oxfam International describing it as “a nice complement at best, a deflection at worst . . . [that] will not be able to make up for the G8’s broken promises.” For purposes of the following Special Focus contributions, however, two elements of the Camp David Africa focus are particularly significant. The first is that, in the tumultuous midst of Europe’s ongoing financial travails, the crisis in Syria, the planning for withdrawal from Afghanistan, and myriad other global challenges, the G8 saw fit once again to give a prominent place on its agenda for action to African leaders and
issues, as it has done almost continuously since 2000. The second is that, despite deep global misgivings about the previously dominant neoliberal model, the G8 stuck closely to its decade-long ideological and prescriptive script, stressing the need to use public funds in partnership with an enlarged and enhanced private sector role, the need to conform to African country plans that are themselves carefully vetted by Western-dominated international financial institutions, and the leveraging of maximum visibility and influence from relatively marginal resource commitments.

Indeed when future historians consider the global governance role of the G8 concert of the world’s wealthiest and most powerful liberal democracies that bestrode the world stage in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, they would do well to consider its approach toward Africa. For the first decade of the new millennium, the G8 summits sustained an extraordinary level of focus on and engagement with the multiple challenges of this continent. Responding to the African governments’ proposed New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), G8 governments produced a succession of agreements and initiatives, anchored by the 2002 Africa Action Plan and the 2005 Gleneagles declaration on Africa and development but extending considerably beyond them. These initiatives and engagements were framed by a motif of “partnership,” understood selectively. In this regard, they were consistent with, and provided elite impetus for, global efforts toward a more comprehensive Third Way bargain for Africa, including the Aid Effectiveness Agenda anchored by the 2005 Paris Declaration, the 2005 Africa Strategy of the European Union (EU), and the US Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, among others.

Now, as the G8 appears headed toward possibly terminal decline, and with the concomitant rise of the G-20, it is appropriate to take stock of the legacies of this decade of African activism. The three short articles that follow provide a partial reckoning, focusing on the policies of several G8 governments that, at different stages, played key instigating or orchestrating roles and that found it politically compelling to spotlight their Africa policies. It is partial insofar as it does not include accounts of all G8 governments—notably the United States and France—and does not specifically track the results of the various agreements reached at successive summits. It does, however, underscore the important point that G8 initiatives (like other multilateral endeavors) are often critically dependent on the efforts and aspirations of secondary member states. How have the policies of these governments been shaped by their participation in the collective G8 effort? What can we conclude regarding the logic and limits of G8 efforts, individually and collectively, particularly for African governments and peoples? In these brief reflections, we can provide only partial responses to these questions. We can, however, conclude that their policies illustrate some stark limits to designs for a transnationally hegemonic approach to
global challenges. In consequence, they have contributed to the eroding sense of the G8’s purpose and legitimacy.

**Africa as Hegemonic Work**

Kendra Coulter has argued that Third Way social actors have aimed to “remake the political terrain by proposing technocratic solutions to problems, inadequacies, and inefficiencies, not identifying and certainly not challenging structural or systemic causes.” This effective denial of the neoliberal ideological underpinnings of such kinder, gentler, “post-ideological” projects is, she asserts, “hegemonic work.” The G8’s sustained engagement with Africa over the course of the 2000s can be understood as such a Third Way effort to forge a hegemonic project, in the neo-Gramscian sense popularized by Robert Cox—fostering a relatively stable and widely accepted order based on an “inter-subjective sharing of behavioural expectations.” In short, to what extent, and on what basis, was it possible to forge agreement among G8 and African elites concerning the necessary steps toward Africa’s escape from what James Ferguson has termed the “Global Shadows” of world politics and the world economy? This was a particularly important challenge in view of the vast inequalities of wealth and power that had been exacerbated between the members of the G8 and the governments and peoples of Africa during the previous two decades of neoliberal globalization as well as growing doubts concerning the effectiveness of traditional development assistance and neoliberal structural adjustment policies, respectively. A continent that had been relatively and in some respects absolutely diminished by its limited and often pathological encounter with globalization posed an acute challenge to the governments that had been the principal carriers and beneficiaries of that order. The need to be seen as responding to this challenge was heightened at the start of the new millennium by the increasing scale and intensity of antiglobalization protests at G8 and related meetings in Genoa, Seattle, Quebec City, and beyond.

In the face of this challenge, several of Africa’s then most prominent leaders, including Presidents Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, and Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, followed up an earlier appearance at the 2000 summit in Okinawa with a proposal for a New Africa Initiative at the Genoa G8 summit in 2001—the basis for a comprehensive new “partnership.” G8 governments, led by legacy-minded leaders of Canada, the United Kingdom, and France, responded quickly and positively, agreeing to the appointment of African personal representatives to craft a concerted G8 response to what became NEPAD. A particularly attractive feature of NEPAD for the G8 was its foundational acceptance by African governments that they bore primary responsibility for the conti-
nent’s challenges and the solutions to those challenges. This suggested to G8 leaders the basis for a more attractive “bargain” than had been possible in the past, including implied absolution for their own historic role(s) in the continent’s trials. Whatever the historical and analytical shortcomings of this understanding, its political appeal for G8 leaders was obvious.

Substantively, both the relatively spare Africa Action Plan (AAP) that was orchestrated by Canadian prime minister Jean Chrétien at the Kananaskis summit in 2002 and the massive report of the Commission for Africa that anchored the G8’s next big push on Africa at the behest of then British prime minister Tony Blair during the Gleneagles summit of 2005 reflected and reinforced a set of assumptions about the challenges facing the continent and the prescriptions to deal with them. These assumptions rested firmly within the dominant post–Washington Consensus. They represented an elaboration and softening of the Draconian market-oriented structural adjustment reforms that had been imposed across the continent since the early 1980s. They included a new emphasis on governance, security, social development, water, agriculture, and “aid effectiveness,” without altering the market- and growth-oriented core of the earlier approach. In this sense, they represented the extension of Third Way logic to the global level, assuming a pragmatic, postideological consensus on the way forward that sought to assume away the possibility of structural conflict or contradiction. The AAP explicitly took its lead from elements of NEPAD, thus reinforcing the sense that this was a new and genuine partnership. It also sought to positively reinforce preferred Western reforms by rewarding governments that conformed to the “NEPAD vision” through an emphasis on support for “Enhanced Partnership Countries” that could serve as “a beacon of ‘best practices’” for other governments that “still do not understand or accept what must be done to help themselves.”

The G8’s engagement with African issues has proved surprisingly durable. The process leading to and from the AAP was reinforced by the institutionalization of African personal representatives, which ensured a measure of follow-up and accountability. At the Evian summit in 2003, a new African Partnership Forum (APF) was initiated, including, in addition to G8 African personal representatives, representatives of eleven other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development donors with a strong presence in Africa, the members of the NEPAD Implementation Committee, and representatives of key African and international organizations. The APF’s biannual meetings had as their stated objective to serve “as a catalyst for cooperation in support of NEPAD and as a forum for information sharing and mutual accountability.” At Sea Island in 2004, the US hosts overcame their habitual reluctance to participate in concerted initiatives by orchestrating a more precise and expansive commitment to African capacity building for peace and security, including the training and equipping of
75,000 peacekeepers, mostly African, by 2010.¹⁴ Beyond the high-water mark of Gleneagles in 2005, anticipated by the Blair government–initiated report of the Commission for Africa and accompanied by unprecedented “celebrity diplomacy,” civil society mobilization, and popular Live 8 concerts in the so-called Year of Africa, there was widespread concern that momentum would be lost at the St. Petersburg summit in 2006. Yet German chancellor Angela Merkel restored the focus on Africa at the Heiligendamm summit in 2007 and the Japanese and Italian hosts retained it in 2008 and 2009. In short, a focus on Africa was institutionalized.

**Taking Stock**

The impacts of this process are analytically complex. Counterfactually, it is safe to conclude that considerably less would have been done in response to NEPAD, and on shared policy priorities related to governance, aid, security, and trade for example, in the absence of this ongoing focus and the opportunities for accountability that it generated. Each summit became an occasion to hold the G8 governments’ feet to the fire, individually and collectively. Yet at another level, this is a deeply discouraging assessment for, as the articles in this Special Focus show, it is remarkable how little of substance was produced from this sustained engagement by the world’s wealthiest countries. Collectively, a main summit story line continues to be the failure to meet the target set in 2005 of doubling aid to Africa by 2010, while progress on the Doha Development Agenda at the World Trade Organization has been even more desultory.¹⁵ Moreover, as Ian Taylor shows, even “star performers” like the UK burnished their Africa policy credentials through an almost exclusive preoccupation with aid and (limited and qualified) debt relief, leaving contradictory dynamics related to trade, investment, and governance virtually untouched. Japan, Scarlett Cornelissen argues, found the G8 platform useful in articulating a distinct bilateral agenda vis-à-vis Africa, but set its collective commitments aside with alacrity when domestic imperatives pressed. Germany has seen a steady increase in its Africa emphasis and presence, and has significantly multilateralized these efforts since the start of the new millennium. Yet this is more due to EU than to G8 incentives, Ulf Engel asserts, and its peace- and security-focused G8 commitments remain modest.

In the final analysis, these contributions serve to illustrate that the hegemonic aspirations of the G8’s African “project” not only have been undermined by the policy limitations of the summit’s most powerful member states, but they also have been compromised by intrahegemonic differences over tactics, strategy, and optics as well as by the political exigencies and course changes of “secondary” powers that have undermined the consistency and success of their hegemonic roles. In this sense, the history of
the G8’s still ongoing engagement with Africa illustrates the instability and contingency of transnational efforts to build a new common sense on the way forward for the continent. It remains to be seen how the changing institutional contours and normative frames of a post–global financial crisis (and post-G8?) world will tackle this challenge.

Notes

David Black is professor of political science and international development studies and director of the Centre for Foreign Policy Studies, Dalhousie University, Halifax. He has published extensively on Canadian and comparative policies toward sub-Saharan Africa. Much of this discussion is adapted from a longer chapter on Canada’s role on Africa in the G8 context. See David Black, “Canada, the G8 and Africa: The Rise and Decline of a Hegemonic Project?” in D. Bratt and C. Kukucha, eds., Readings in Canadian Foreign Policy: Classic Debates and New Ideas, 2nd ed. (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2011).

1. The l’Aquila Food Security Initiative was a centerpiece of the 2009 G8 summit in l’Aquila, Italy. In the face of rapidly rising food prices and shortages the G8 agreed, in part, to commit $22 billion over three years to programming for enhanced food security. By early 2012, donor governments were well short of meeting this target. See “From l’Aquila to Camp David: Sustaining the Momentum on Global Food and Nutrition Security,” Briefing Paper No. 17 (Washington, DC: Bread for the World Institute, May 2012).


15. See, for example, the annual Compliance Report of the G8 Information Centre, www.g8.utoronto.ca/evaluations/2010compliance-interim/index.html. Moreover, some governments that met the doubling target, such as Canada’s, are now retreating from it, with real cuts to bilateral aid.
The World Food Programme in Global Politics
SANDY ROSS

“Ross makes an important contribution to the literature on food aid and the fight against hunger, and he provides an in-depth insight into a side of the World Food Programme that is not often seen.”
—Daniel Maxwell, Tufts University

How has the World Food Programme come to be so well-regarded—even in the US—despite being part of the much-maligned UN system? What are the political and institutional conditions that have enabled it to accrue legitimacy as an international organization? And how much substance lies behind the perceptions of its effectiveness?

Finding the answers to these questions in his analysis of the institutional politics of the WFP, Ross illustrates important larger issues about international institutions and global governance. He also shows that the very terms of its success limit the WFP’s capacity to change the systemic problems that generate large-scale global hunger.

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SPECIAL FOCUS

Spinderella on Safari: British Policies Toward Africa Under New Labour

Ian Taylor

Under New Labour, the British government was claimed to be operating under guidelines that sought to have an ethical dimension to British foreign policy. A particular focus of New Labour’s foreign policy, rhetorically at least, was Africa. During this period, London sought to bring the G8 in line with London’s claimed policies vis-à-vis the continent. However, upon closer analysis, vocal flourishes and presentations aside, policy was never adequately supported by, and in many respects was contradicted by, much of what Blair’s government actually did in relation to Africa. The disparity between the high-profile media presentation of policy and what was actually delivered by Blair and company in Africa reflected a wider problem in the British polity that New Labour and its spin doctors came to symbolize. Keywords: Africa, Tony Blair, United Kingdom, New Labour.

In 2005, Great Britain hosted the Group of 8 (G8) summit at Gleneagles, Scotland. In the immediate run-up to the summit and afterward, a great deal of effort was ostensibly (and ostentatiously) expended by the Tony Blair government’s focus on Africa. While New Labour’s stance on Africa before, during, and after the Gleneagles summit was often portrayed as emblematic of London’s new tilt toward an “ethical” foreign policy, the G8 flourish was never adequately supported by, and in many respects was contradicted by, most of what Blair’s government actually did in relation to the continent. The disparity between the high-profile media presentation of policy and what was actually delivered by Blair and company in Africa reflected a wider problem in the British polity that New Labour and its spin doctors came to represent. In discussing how British policy toward Africa played out under Blair and how the G8 was drawn into the process, I will bring the contours of contemporary British political life into sharp focus.

Great Britain and Africa: A Problem Best Avoided

In contrast with other former colonial powers (notably France), for a relatively extended period, Britain showed limited interest in postdecoloniza-
tion Africa. Rather, as Paul Williams suggested, British policy sought to “turn its imperial legacies from liabilities into assets,”¹ and perceived the continent principally as a “source of trouble rather than an opportunity.”² Under New Labour (1997–2010), however, there was a relative prioritization of the continent in official British foreign policy. Indeed, under Blair and, to a lesser extent, his successor Gordon Brown, New Labour formally elevated Africa to a major policy concern for London. Much of this was personality driven, with Blair being the most media-obsessed leader Britain had had in modern times. Projecting himself as a personal savior of Africa came, for a time, to be a core on-message for London. However, when one examines the results of this policy rather than the rhetoric, it seems apparent that New Labour’s Africa policies largely continued on the same path as previous governments, preserving a “calculating eye to the national interest and Britain’s international reputation.”³ In order to come to this conclusion, I will discuss the main features of New Labour’s Africa policies and contrast the substantial media spin that accompanied almost everything that Blair and his government did, then follow with an evaluation of the results and subsequent legacy.

**New Labour and Media Presentation**

A defining characteristic of New Labour was a strong focus on presentation and the careful control of the public representation of policy—in colloquial terms, “spin.” Early on, the customarily Blair-approving *Independent* newspaper depicted New Labour as “Spinderella: A People’s Pantomime in Two Acts.”⁴ Without doubt, under New Labour, “public statements [were] no longer fact-based, but operational. Realities and political narratives [were] constructed to serve a purpose, dismantled, and the show move[d] on.”⁵ British foreign policy was no exception, and “never before ha[d] the public of a democratic state been subject to such a tirade of propaganda about a government’s moral motives than Britain under New Labour.”⁶

In the early stages of the Blair government it has to be admitted that a change in British policy toward Africa was in the offing, most graphically illustrated in the 1999 intervention in Sierra Leone.⁷ The intervention succeeded, rescuing British citizens, decisively defeating rebel forces, and reestablishing both UN authority and the incumbent government of Ahmad Tejan Kabbah. Britain remained in-country and dispensed a substantial assistance program to post–civil war Sierra Leone. Yet “while the Sierra Leone intervention . . . demonstrated the government’s commitment to global responsibilities, it . . . also illustrated various contradictions in New Labour’s international agenda, stemming from a reluctance to match rhetoric with action.”⁸ Though publicly forceful in its calls to end corruption and malgovernance in Africa, Britain “proved reluctant to speak out about Kab-
bah’s own rather poor record on human rights and corruption,” provoking questions about Britain’s level of commitment to “good governance.”9 Such questions remained unresolved even as New Labour left office.

The other key African situation that Blair sought to resolve, Zimbabwe, proved to be an unmitigated failure. London found itself hidebound in how it could act toward Robert Mugabe, being frustrated by the broad refusal of African leaders to criticize Mugabe’s behavior. Other than pushing for Harare’s suspension from the Commonwealth and “smart” sanctions against the Zimbabwean regime, New Labour found itself impotent.10 As one commentator noted, “It was in Zimbabwe where the limits of British influence were most sharply exposed . . . ultimately Britain was shown up as having responsibility but not power.”11

In retrospect, it seems clear that Blair had a wholly naïve and idealistic view of Africa, one where a grateful continent was enthusiastic to lap up the largesse and vision of the British leader. With his famed projection of Africa as a scar on the conscience of the world (which he would heal), Blair’s evangelical approach to the continent was inappropriate for dealing with the matters at hand. In fact, once Blair’s charismatic approach floundered and he was confronted with the complexities of Africa rather than the projected caricature, he simply gave up. Zimbabwe was a case in point: “a political researcher who works closely with MPs involved in Africa suggested: ‘Blair found the whole subject so painful, that he wouldn’t allow officials to brief him. . . . If you’ve got a bit of an idealized view of Africa it [Zimbabwe] really buggers it up.’”12

Claiming to advance a Third Way between socialism and capitalism, stated policy was early on framed by New Labour’s first foreign minister, Robin Cook, who famously claimed that British foreign policy would henceforth have an ethical dimension to it, in which London would focus “more sharply on issues like political governance and human rights, and . . . tighten up on arms exports to regimes with poor records in these areas.”13 The media spin put on this argued that an “age of internationalism” had dawned, where Britain (and by extension, the West) were “obliged to accept moral responsibility” for activities occurring beyond borders. In this formulation, “foreign policy is not divorced from domestic policy . . . our foreign policy must have an ethical dimension and must support the demands of other peoples for the democratic rights on which we insist for ourselves.”14

Hoisted on their own petard, New Labour’s Africa policies were ultimately shown to have fallen far short of such claims. Under New Labour, no attention was seriously paid to which actors and processes were responsible for the “inequality, economic decline, state collapse [or] history” of Africa.15 Certainly, how and in what ways London might have needed to change its own policies if it truly wished to promote positive change on the continent were never considered. Instead, like most of his G8 counterparts,
Blair was entirely dedicated to a “neo-liberal interpretation of global economics which aimed to protect and spread free markets in order to increase worldwide prosperity.” Part of this commitment to free trade was a persistent support for British weapons manufacturers and exporters.

Great Britain: Arms Supplier to the World

Britain’s role in the international arms trade is controversial and this controversy embroiled New Labour’s Africa policies. Soon after assuming office, Blair visited South Africa to “lobby for a British chunk of a 4 billion pound arms deal that South Africa defense officials signed. In the same year, Clare Short’s DFID [Department for International Development] granted a miserly 4.7 million pound aid package to Pretoria.” This pattern “completely undermine[d] the [British] government’s professed agenda of global development.”

In spite of its public commitment to an ethical dimension to its foreign policy, British arms exports under New Labour accelerated. Export licenses were freely granted by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to Eritrea, Ethiopia, Algeria, Sudan, Zambia, Uganda, Namibia, and Somalia, four of which were at the same time listed as priority countries for poverty reduction by DFID. Despite claims to be “different,” under Blair and Brown, Britain remained among the top tier of weapons exporters, supplying billions of dollars’ worth of military matériel to Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa, among others. The receipts from such sales and the 400,000 people in the United Kingdom employed by the arms industry obviously explained why “national interests” systematically trumped the promises of the British government, even while New Labour was asserting how qualitatively different it was from previous British administrations. Under New Labour, “British commercial interests, including arms sales, [were] promoted in Africa with little regard for human rights and governance.” According to Cook, Dick Evans, then chairman of British Aerospace, seemed to have “the key to the garden door of No 10.” Arms export licenses and ethics in general do not go side by side and this was a constant source of criticism of New Labour’s Africa policies. Former secretary of state for international development Short was quoted as saying that “my dear friend Tony Blair . . . absolutely, adamantly, favoured all proposals for arms deals.” Consequently, in the periods 2001–2005 and 2006–2010, the volume of British arms export orders increased by 67 percent.

In its defense, the Blair government continually asserted that “tackling the [arms trade] problem [would] require comprehensive action that not only addresse[d] the issue of illegal transfers, but also ensure[d] large scale destruction of surplus weapons.” New Labour’s policies belied this appar-
ent concern, however. Although London “introduced a number of progressive policies on arms exports . . . its apparent reluctance to enforce its own guidelines, and its willingness . . . to flout them . . . undermined the potential improvements that these policies seemed to promise.”25 Put bluntly, when British jobs (and votes) were dependent on Britain remaining a premier arms exporter, the ethical dimension to New Labour’s Africa policies was quietly set aside. Reportedly, Blair “considered it [his] duty to promote British arms sales whenever possible.”26 In fact, New Labour was exposed as being split on the issue of selling questionable equipment to some of Africa’s poorest states. Infamously, in 2001, Tanzania signed a contract for a £28 million military air-traffic control system with London-based BAE Systems, which many, including the World Bank, said was “both unnecessary and beyond Tanzania’s means.”27 It was subsequently discovered by the Serious Fraud Office that a third of the contract’s price had been diverted into secret offshore bank accounts that had been “used to pay bribes to Tanzanian politicians and officials.”28 Pushed through by Blair against the wishes of both his foreign secretary and development minister, the deal was “in clear breach of a revised EU [European Union] code for arms sales negotiated by Robin Cook to honour a 1997 manifesto promise to tighten controls on arms exports.”29 The Tanzanian deal became emblematic of a government that was good on rhetoric, but short on subsequent implementation. As Short noted:

Every way you looked at it, it [the deal] was outrageous and disgraceful . . . It was an obviously corrupt project. Tanzania didn’t need a new military air traffic control system, it was out-of-date technology, they didn’t have any military aircraft—they needed a civilian air traffic control system and there was a modern, much cheaper one. Everyone talks about good governance in Africa as though it is an African problem, and often the root of the “badness” is companies in Europe.30

Under New Labour, “specific licences for arms sales to Africa [totalled] more than £631 million since 2000. But experts believe that the true figure is closer to £1 billion when the values of ‘open’ licenses are taken into account.”31 Through such clear contradictions between an ethical foreign policy and an activist arms-exporting regime, London under Blair was continuously placed in a “contradictory position: trying to keep the peace, while simultaneously supplying the warriors with weapons.”32

The contradictions between rhetoric and reality were further revealed when looking at British trade policies toward Africa. In fact, “Trade, as before, comes first, second and third in importance even when it is a trade in arms; [meanwhile] human values, and coherence, come amongst the also-rans.”33
British Trade and Africa
Under New Labour, British policy sought to foster favorable “business climates” for British companies internationally. A government-supported arm, Business Action for Africa, was launched in 2005 aimed at promoting British corporate interest on the continent. While active in promoting the accumulation aspect of trade with Africa, “on the issue of labour standards in international trade, the New Labour silence [was] deafening.” The “primary concern [was] with winning arms contracts, securing export credits and maintaining stable trade relations with African countries.” New Labour never exhibited “enthusiasm for regulatory measures that would make it harder for UK businesses to get involved in or facilitate the abusive exploitation of African resources.”

The Export Credit Guarantee Department (ECGD) served to insure British foreign trade. The department’s remit is to help exporters of British goods and services to win contracts and to facilitate British companies investing overseas by providing guarantees, insurance, and reinsurance against loss. In practice, through the ECGD, “arms companies pursue deals to countries which may well default on payments, and the debt itself is then owed to the exporting government.” Where African countries have become indebted to the ECGD, debt has at times been canceled through being written off “against the overseas development aid (ODA) budget.”

Since “most of the debt owed to the ECGD involves arms deals, in effect the ODA [was] being used to finance the arms, something it’s not supposed to do.” One report noted that, under New Labour, “the ECGD . . . merrily used public money to back what were in fact bent deals, and . . . successfully investigated none.” Instead, over £2 billion of “toxic debts” from failed British exports had to be repaid by developing countries, making up 96 percent of third world debt to the United Kingdom.

Under New Labour, the unfair trading practices engendered by mass subsidization for European producers continued. While on the one hand New Labour claimed to promote agricultural development in the developing world, on the other hand, “UK wheat exports [were] being sold at 30% less than the cost of production, whil[e] white sugar [was] being sold at 40% below production costs.” In such circumstances, how “can African agricultural exporters hope to compete in the West when it is estimated that Western nations pay their farmers $350 billion per year in subsidies (nearly $1 billion per day)?” In fact, Britain was at the “forefront of pushing this trade liberalisation on Africa, and remain[ed] one of the most ardent proponents of the ‘free trade’ model.” As one commentator noted on British trade policies toward Africa, London’s stance reflected “an ever-widening gap between the noble rhetoric of Western politicians on the links between trade and development and the reality of what their governments were actually pushing for on behalf of domestic farming and manufacturing interests in world trade negotiations.” New Labour was no exception.
This reality was perhaps no better exemplified than when French president Jacques Chirac, with an eye to hosting the 2003 G8 summit in Evian, approached the George W. Bush administration to propose that the EU stop subsidizing its food exports to Africa if the United States did likewise. For years, the EU subsidized food production, creating unfair competition and largely undermining any developmental goals made under the various trade agreements between the EU and the developing world, such as the Lomé and Cotonou Accords. Bush, however, was unprepared to match Chirac’s offer. According to one report, “had the European Union, and in particular the member which claims to act as a bridge across the Atlantic [i.e., London], supported France, the moral pressure on Bush might well have become irresistible.” Instead, Blair made it clear that he would not support Chirac’s plan: “thanks to our conscience-stricken prime minister . . . Africa is now well and truly stuffed. Every trade distortion Blair once promised to address remains in place.”

The British Aid Policy

Official rhetoric under New Labour had it that DFID exemplified the “moral aspect of the UK government, claiming a relationship of partnership between the UK and developing countries based on a common concern for poverty reduction and respect for human rights.” DFID was created as an independent ministry in 1997 by the Blair government, replacing the previous development agency that had been based in the Foreign Office. However, despite the creation of DFID by New Labour and the claim to have placed Africa at the center of British foreign policy, there was a continuous “tension between the liberal internationalism of the Third Way and traditional concerns for the national interest.”

New Labour asserted that British developmental assistance was to be untied from British commercial interests. However, the notion of untied aid usually suggests that the delivery of aid is neither bilateral nor required to be expended on given areas, both of which DFID actually stipulated. While asserting that British “aid should no longer have the parallel aim of promoting UK business interests,” by using “the concepts of human rights, humanitarian principles and a poverty focus, DFID developed a terminology that was seductive domestically, being ostensibly ethical, long term and positive sum.” In fact, Blair “introduced a policy of political conditionality whereby British aid [was] linked to political reforms by African governments.”

Under New Labour, there was a recurrent strategy of double counting budget streams and issuing deceptive press statements concerning Britain’s aid contributions and initiatives. For instance, when the issue of heavily indebted poor countries (HIPCs) was addressed, “the UK proposal use[d] money from existing aid budgets, rather than providing genuinely new
money to fund debt relief.”54 While claiming to be “passionate” about poverty alleviation and development, British aid figures “include[d] debt relief, often on loans that were taken out for purposes unrelated to poverty reduction.”55 Furthermore, despite loud claims to have a set of development policies qualitatively superior to that of previous British governments, aid devoted to Africa in 2005/2006 was only equivalent to the 1989 figures.56

As mentioned, Britain famously hosted the 2005 G8 summit. Then chancellor of the exchequer Brown early on declared that 2005 would “be a milestone in our campaign to meet the UN Millennium Development Goals to reduce poverty, illiteracy and disease across the world.”57 However, the proposals advanced by London at the time of the G8 summit were unsurprising and essentially centered on the doubling of the G8’s development aid. Specifically, £26 billion was to be collectively added for that purpose each financial year. The plan also included getting wealthy countries to meet the UN target of spending 0.7 percent of their gross national income on overseas aid. Brown set out detailed plans to use the International Monetary Fund’s gold to write off debt owed to the institution and to request from World Bank shareholders that they take over the debts owed them by up to seventy of the poorest states.58 Brown also advocated that an International Finance Facility (IFF) be set up to generate $50 billion annually between now and 2015. The IFF was to be instituted on the basis of long-term donor commitments from the Group of 7 (G7). Yet the spin around the IFF at the time of the summit that it would create “additional” aid money was proved false. The IFF would merely bring forward future aid promises in a supposedly binding manner to ensure that donors keep their pledges. Indeed, the IFF’s structure meant that it could actually eat into future aid budgets.

Problematically, over New Labour’s tenure it became clear that DFID (despite the plethora of well-paid development “experts” employed as consultants—the department’s budget for consultants for the period 2008–2013 was around £1 billion) failed to comprehend the political dynamics behind Africa’s poverty.59 In its landmark 2000 White Paper,60 the most explicit acknowledgments by DFID of the “problem of corruption” were stated thus: “More effective government and greater benefits from markets require tougher action by developing and developed countries to deal with corruption. The evidence suggests that investment levels are lower in countries with high levels of corruption, due to the uncertainty created, the cost of bribes, and time-consuming bureaucracy. . . . It is poor people who suffer most from corruption.”61 Weak and ineffective states, “with problems of corruption, inadequate infrastructure and cumbersome bureaucratic procedures, are not an attractive destination for [private capital] flows.”62

These meek comments were essentially side thoughts, tacked on incidentally. DFID naïvely treated the neopatrimonial norms prevalent across
Africa as minor “corruption problems” to be healed (like everything else) with the simple bandage of “more effective government” and liberalization. DFID’s resulting technocratic prescriptions, “requiring tougher action on corruption” by those who were themselves corrupt, were doomed to fail. A real and deep focus on the politics involved, rather than “governance” symptoms, was needed: “The donor community has played down the significance of clientelist politics as anything more than ‘incidental,’ focusing instead on the symptoms of weak capacity and corruption. This leads to a technical approach, with capacity building programmes and anti-corruption reforms that promote greater administrative ‘hygiene’ and technical expertise. This ignores the real nature of the hybrid neo-patrimonial system.”

On the basis of its superficial analysis of Africa, then, DFID’s practices in the field under New Labour left much to be desired. Instead, going for the headlines, New Labour focused on issues more obviously recognized by the media, rather than structural issues such as the roots of inequality in Africa and social justice. While this was understandable for a media-conscious regime, it did not greatly assist in identifying Africa’s real problems. A simplistic desire to increase aid became central to New Labour’s Africa strategy and, by extension, the core of the G8 agenda.

Conclusion
Britain’s foreign policy toward Africa under New Labour consistently found “itself caught between rhetoric and performance.” A major issue when disentangling British policies toward Africa under Blair and Brown was getting behind the media presentations and spin. It was true that after the 2005 G8 summit, the British seemed to have extracted apparently new commitments. But when one dug behind the headlines, there was a whole host of difficulties with what was “achieved” at Gleneagles. First, the G8 initially appeared to have agreed to increase aid by $48 billion a year by 2010, along with canceling 100 percent of the multilateral debts of the most indebted countries. But later on it emerged that the aid “increase” included money put aside for debt relief. In fact, Russia’s increase in aid was made up entirely of debt write-offs while one-third of France’s aid budget was money for debt relief. In short, the debt deal was not in addition to the aid increase, as Blair asserted, but part of it. And the “100 percent debt write-off” applied to only eighteen countries, saving only around $1 billion a year in payments. The deal also involved only debts to the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and the African Development Bank. Yet the G8 summit is usually held to be Blair’s crowning glory vis-à-vis Africa.

Much of New Labour’s much-vaunted plans for Africa seemed more headline grabbing than well thought through. Though the profile of Africa was undoubtedly raised during the New Labour period, the easy solutions
proffered to intractable—and complicated—problems were ultimately self-defeating. Furthermore, the cynicism that the British public developed toward the political spin and manipulation of the media by the government in office seriously damaged public confidence in its own government, something that continues to this day. Notably, in 2010 it was revealed that only 9 percent of British people polled had any trust in politicians, ranking Britain’s political parties in twenty-first place among the twenty-seven EU members, below Romania and Bulgaria. It is a fact that the gap between rhetoric and practice, “political lying” as it has been otherwise called, became acute under New Labour and a defining aspect of Blairism. It is perhaps this residue that will live on, long after talk of making poverty history has subsided.

Notes

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7. See Paul Williams, British Foreign Policy Under New Labour (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2005); Andrew Dorman, Blair’s Successful War: British Military Intervention in Sierra Leone (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009).
18. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
30. Quoted in ibid.
37. Campaign Against Arms Trade, G8: Arms Dealers to the World (London: Campaign Against Arms Trade, 2005).
39. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
49. Abrahamsen and Williams, “Ethics and Foreign Policy,” p. 249.
55. Ibid., p. 8.
61. Ibid., p. 25.
62. Ibid., p. 23.
Japan has been an important actor in Africa’s international relations over the past two decades, although its role tends to be understated in most analyses of Africa’s ties with the large powers. This article reviews one facet of Japan’s engagement with the continent, as enacted through the platform of the Group of 8. There have been significant overlaps between Japan’s Africa diplomacy and its wider multilateral objectives and, since the end of the Cold War, the G8 has been an important forum where these aspects have converged. The article assesses past patterns and contemporary dynamics in the evolving relations between Japan and the continent.

**KEYWORDS:** Japan, Africa, Group of 8, Official Development Assistance, TICAD, multilateral diplomacy.

Japan’s economic and aid relationship with the African continent has been highly variable over the past two decades, shaped by changing foreign policy objectives and internal political conditions in Japan as well as reorientations and expressions of agency in African diplomacy. In recent years, the emergence of new players from Asia in Africa’s economy and politics (most notably the People’s Republic of China) has largely overshadowed the role that Japan has played on the continent; this eclipse of Japan has been reinforced by the country’s relative decline as a major aid power.

Yet Japan remains an important partner for the continent as the source of a significant volume of development assistance and, for some African countries, of investments in key sectors. In the past, Japan has also put its status as a member of the Group of 8 (G8) to effective diplomatic and strategic use in its relations with the African continent. It was on the initiative of the government of Japan as host of the Okinawa summit in 2000, for instance, that African leaders were first invited to be present at G8 proceedings, an early progenitor of the G8’s later Outreach Program. Following and sometimes setting the example for Western G8 members, Japanese leaders also tended to use the G8 venue for pronouncements about Africa’s plight and for pledges of aid doubling.
Although the reality has been somewhat different, such pronouncements and many of the diplomatic actions that have flowed from the G8 summits have linked in significant ways with other facets of Japan’s ties with Africa. In this brief article, I reflect on the past patterns and contemporary dynamics of Japan’s relationship with the African continent through the prism of Japan’s G8 and wider multilateral politics. I consider some of the substantive underpinnings of this relationship and the way in which they relate to key political processes under way in both Japan and Africa. I focus on Japan’s bilateral and multilateral engagements with the continent, the significance of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) process, and the manner in which the rise of the new powers, along with other geopolitical shifts, is helping to reshape Japan’s ties with Africa.

Over the years Japan has often used the G8 as one among a number of multilateral forums to signal foreign policy orientations and distinctions, of which activism around African development issues was a key component. In this regard, Japan’s Africa diplomacy has at times converged with—in fact, reinforced—the country’s G8 politics. By adopting certain rhetorical stances on the “cause” of Africa, Japan has found ways to express its (now possibly dwindling) middlepowership. Questions about the future of the G8 have implications not only for Japan’s claim as a major power, but indeed also for the way in which the country seeks to operationalize objectives around Africa.

**Trends and Dynamics in Japan-Africa Relations**

The recent history of Japan’s involvement with Africa reflects a curious mix of aloofness, paternalism, pragmatism, and—most recently shaped by Japanese foreign policy ambitions—rapprochement and partnership. Lacking a colonial past with the continent, Japan has been a major power that never displayed typical major power behavior toward it. Instead, it has fostered relations with the continent that were both strategic and opportunistic, and normative in their goals.

This is perhaps best exemplified by a statement by former prime minister Junichiro Koizumi, who, a few months after the conclusion of the G8’s 2005 Gleneagles summit, portrayed Japan’s commitment to increase its African official development assistance (ODA) as the Asian country’s attempt to help Africa transform itself from “the home of issues” to “the home of self-endeavor.” Koizumi’s claim reflects well the tone of the relationship that had been established between Japan and the continent over the years and the way in which the country had styled itself as a donor. Advocating an ethics of self-help and ownership, Japan has promoted values and norms about development—in Africa and elsewhere—that diverged from...
Western discourse and that were premised on its own latecomer experiences of modernization.²

For most of the twentieth century, Japan’s aid relationship with Africa was shaped by priorities that for Japan originated from beyond the continent. In the wake of the energy crises of the 1970s, Japan developed aid ties with oil-producing African states as a way to ensure more stable supplies of energy resources.³ This aid diplomacy was part of a broader strategic use of aid that started for Japan in the late 1960s, intensified during the 1970s and 1980s, and mostly centered on the Southeast Asian region.⁴ During the 1980s, Japan’s African aid recipients came to include more states with diplomatic clout on the continent, as Japanese foreign policy became more global and multilateral in outlook and as the country set out to secure tenures on the UN Security Council.⁵ And by the late 1980s, Japan yielded to Group of 7 (G7) pressure to weaken the value of the yen by offsetting the surplus capital that bolstered its export strength into an expansive international aid program. This program served its foreign policy interests, as Japan realized that prominence as an aid donor held some status. The country’s trade surplus of that time gave it the financial capability to seek soft power through aid, simply because the aid was available.⁶

These factors set the conditions for Japan’s emergence as the world’s top ODA donor in absolute volume in 1989, and its position as the major donor to a significant number of African countries by the mid-1990s. At the peak of Japan’s aid “career” in Africa, net ODA disbursements to the continent totaled $10.3 billion in 1999 and the continent drew around 12 percent of Japan’s overall aid.⁷ The start of Japan’s prolonged economic recession and the country’s dwindling economic fortunes since then have been reflected in its aid program: there have been major cuts to both bilateral and multilateral ODA budgets and Japan’s disbursements to Africa have fluctuated. In 2002 and 2003, for instance, bilateral ODA dipped below 10 percent of Japan’s overall disbursements,⁸ the first time since the 1970s resource diplomacy ushered in a new era in Japan-Africa relations. Following the Gleneagles undertaking in 2005—by which Japan committed itself to expand ODA cumulatively by $10 billion until 2015—and other, later commitments to aid increases, Japan’s net ODA to Africa stood at around $1.4 billion in 2009, approximately 20 percent of its total ODA budget.⁹ When one considers that Japan’s aid to Africa is around one-third of all aid to the continent from the Development Assistance Committee (DAC),¹⁰ it is clear that Japan is still a significant aid contributor.

Yet comparative ODA figures tell only a part of the tale of a complex aid relationship with the continent, witnessing both stagnation and innovation over the past two decades, and which has become, for Japan, an important auxiliary to an evolving set of multilateralist aims. The country’s initiation of TICAD in 1993 exemplifies this. Although TICAD is often
described in unflattering terms as a talk shop, its launch came at a time when cynicism and donor fatigue saw declining interest in the continent’s plight in Western aid circles. In contrast, Japan proclaimed itself a partner in Africa’s quest for development, lobbied through international forums for African issues, and introduced in those forums a vocabulary about the need for African-initiated efforts and African ownership of its futures. This resonated with the emergent neoliberal and managerialist thinking in major donor institutions like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Moreover, TICAD was a prototype for today’s manifold development summits among Africa, China, India, and Western actors such as the European Union and France.

The TICAD process (with successive five-yearly meetings) has been the principal framework under which Japan’s aid and other types of economic involvement with Africa have been determined, even as the latter have evolved in nature and outflows. The second conference, held in 1998, identified priority areas for Japan’s economic cooperation (i.e., education, health, gender, agriculture, industry and private sector support, and assistance for improved governance, conflict prevention, and postconflict development). At the 2003 TICAD meeting, priority sectors were linked to the three newly defined pillars of Japan’s assistance to Africa, which were declared as the consolidation of peace, human-centered development, and poverty reduction. A commitment to human security and South-South cooperation was also made.

With the fourth TICAD meeting in 2008, the Japanese government attempted to address criticisms by development practitioners and some African officials that the TICAD process was largely unresponsive to Africa’s real development needs, that its implementation was uncoordinated, and that it had not led to increases in trade and investments from Japan. The TICAD IV communiqué, the Yokohama Declaration, set out to boost investment and trade with African countries, to provide market access to African goods, and to introduce follow-up mechanisms to ensure effective implementation of TICAD goals. Aid administration was also changed: first, through the merger of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the overseas economic cooperation section of Japan’s International Bank for Cooperation into the so-called New JICA; and, second, through attempts to streamline the activities of the thirteen state bureaucracies tasked with aid disbursement. Through this process JICA gained not only more aid functions—beyond its conventional tasks of technical cooperation—but also greater autonomy vis-à-vis traditionally powerful bureaucracies such as the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Finance.

Overall, the TICAD process has underpinned a multilateral repositioning in Japan’s foreign policy and served foreign policy objectives in a num-
ber of ways. First, since it is a multilateral initiative, it has sought and gained the support of a number of African constituents, donors, and development organizations. TICAD has been quite appealing in its rhetoric and over the years has helped Japan to profile itself positively in the UN General Assembly. In addition, it has offered Japan opportunity to reposition itself in international politics\textsuperscript{16} and has given momentum to what might be termed Japan’s middlepowership in relation to the continent.\textsuperscript{17}

In the latter respect, TICAD’s emphasis on fostering self-reliance through initiative by the continent has distinguished Japan’s activities from those of other donors, or at least phrased underlying expectations about good governance, democratization, and political accountability in friendlier and more saleable terms. It is therefore of significance that the Japanese government sought to make a connection between the TICAD process and its support for continental initiatives such as the revamping of the Organization of African Unity into the African Union and the establishment of the New Economic Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). TICAD II had explicit political aims, as seen with the adoption of the Tokyo Agenda for Action and the commitment by African signatories to political liberalization and good fiscal and political governance. TICAD III continued this emphasis.\textsuperscript{18} TICAD therefore helped give prominence to Japan around key developmental and political issues in Africa, and it enabled Japan to establish alliances of convenience with a class of African leaders who seemed to share the Japanese vision of political progress.

These endeavors paralleled Japanese maneuvers in the G8. Japan was the first to invite African heads of state to a G8 summit when it hosted the Okinawa meeting in 2000. The leaders—Algeria’s Abdelaziz Bouteflika, Nigeria’s Olusegun Obasanjo, and Thabo Mbeki of South Africa—were NEPAD’s main protagonists and they used that summit to introduce the NEPAD idea to an international audience. Japan was eager to be seen to engage proactively with the NEPAD initiative and its outflows; thus, a first-ever visit by a Japanese incumbent to the African continent the following year (when Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori visited Kenya, Nigeria, and South Africa) was intended to reinforce that support.\textsuperscript{19} When Japan next hosted a G8 meeting, in Yokohama in 2008, the government was careful to schedule the summit closely with the fourth TICAD meeting, aiming to give greater prominence to the latter and to give weight to the impression that its TICAD and G8 initiatives around Africa were well harmonized. TICAD IV was accompanied by major institutional changes as far as the delivery of aid to Africa was concerned and brought more pledges of aid increases, projecting a doubling in disbursements to $1.8 billion by 2012. This led some to speculate that there was a reinvigoration of the TICAD process and possible new directions in Japan’s aid ties with the continent.\textsuperscript{20}
Emergent Issues

A number of established structural factors in Japan-Africa relations, along with emerging geopolitical changes, moderate the nature and depth of Japan’s present involvement with the continent. Shifts in the international environment and recent events in Japan’s domestic sphere—the unseating in 2009 of the Liberal Democratic Party after nearly half a century as governing party, and the major natural disasters of 2011—have forced Japanese foreign policy to a crossroads. A major issue is the way in which the country deals with the economic and other reverberations of the natural disasters and the Fukushima nuclear crisis of March 2011 (known in Japan as 3/11). There are the fiscal costs of rebuilding the Tohoku region in northeast Japan that was affected by the earthquake and tsunami. In November 2011, the Japanese government committed in excess of 12 trillion yen toward this, with more to be spent in coming years.21 The costs of closing down the Fukushima plant are also high, although the long-term economic, environmental, and humanitarian costs might be largely indeterminable. The ramifications of 3/11 have necessarily forced Japanese attention inward and have also highlighted many weaknesses of the relatively inexperienced Democratic Party government. The government has nonetheless vowed to strive to maintain Japan’s international position.

To the extent that multilateral politics is concerned, as the G8 is increasingly overshadowed by the Group of 20 (G-20), Japan risks being sidelined in a forum where it is no longer the only voice for Asia and no longer a key decisionmaker in a small and controllable club of like-minded states.22 Further, its proclaimed, rather paternalistic representation of Africa in the G8 now has to compete for legitimacy with powerful claims for entitlement and equity that underlie the developing bloc’s maneuvering in a forum such as the G-20. This will require Japan to adapt its multilateral posturing in order to continue to be viewed as a development partner of choice on the continent.

Given this, effective aid diplomacy in Africa becomes particularly important for Japan. However, high-profile pledges to boost aid disbursements have had to confront the challenges posed by the global economic downturn that also further exposed the fragilities in Japan’s domestic economy. Japan’s Gleneagles target was modest relative to the commitments made by some G8 counterparts, and over the years its aid performance, measured as a proportion of gross national income, has declined to well below UN and DAC targets.23 Japan has also long been criticized in DAC ranks for the composition of its aid, which tended to favor loan rather than grant assistance.

A slight rejigging of the modalities of Japanese aid to Africa in recent years, and in particular large-scale debt relief and rescheduling, have largely underpinned Japan’s attainment of its ODA doubling targets to date.
In real terms, however, the absolute volume of ODA to Africa has seen little increase. Further, a small but growing civil society movement in Japan, calling for better responsiveness and performance in the country’s aid dealings with Africa, has voiced scepticism about the effectiveness of even revamped aid institutions in achieving all that is expected of them. Following the global economic crises and despite the new domestic priorities in the wake of 3/11, the Japanese government has reiterated its Gleneagles and TICAD IV aid commitments to the continent and has even made further pledges of ODA increases (in 2009, for instance, the government undertook to speed up the disbursement of $6 billion out of the $10 billion pledged at the G8 in grant and loan assistance).

Japan’s involvement with the African continent has also needed recasting in light of the role that countries such as China, India, and to a lesser extent Brazil have come to play in Africa’s economy. The swift growth in trade between Africa and Brazil, Russia, India, and China (BRIC) in recent years accentuates the minimal part Japan has had as an economic partner with the continent. Japanese trade and investment have remained consistently below 2 percent of its global totals over the past two decades. The BRIC countries have been able to capitalize on assumed Southern solidarities that have helped engender political alliances, but which also turned symbolic affinities into capital returns. This has been particularly observable in China’s new economic role in Africa.

These aspects have prompted a new positioning toward the continent by Japan, in which resources seem to constitute a key focus of the country’s Africa policy. In this regard, it is worth citing an ODA white paper of 2007 in full:

the international environment for rare metals is growing in severity. Additionally, especially in Africa, China is intensifying its diplomatic efforts for securing natural resources. Against this backdrop, it is tremendously important for Japan to secure stable supply of these resources over the longer term through direct investments by Japanese enterprises for gaining access to vital resources such as rare metals. It is considered that supporting these corporate activities through the utilization of official aid will become more and more important in the future. Specifically, possibilities include the development of an environment where Japanese enterprises can conduct activities smoothly in developing countries through assisting infrastructure building such as harbors and roads, and social development of local residents of surrounding mines.

Since the drafting of this particular white paper, there has been a change in government that has led to changes in the tone, but not in the aims, of Japan’s cooperation endeavors in Africa. ODA is intended to promote growth, peace, and development on the continent and, in this way, indirectly serve Japan’s national interest. Further, one aspect of the imple-
mentation of TICAD IV programs has centered on the provision of loan facilities to provide equity for projects in energy, natural resource and infrastructure development, and manufacturing across the continent. There have also been new large-scale and strategic investments in mineral scoping and exploration in locations such as Botswana, the Gulf of Guinea, Namibia, and Madagascar.30

Africa has also come to figure more prominently in other aspects of Japan’s contemporary foreign policy. First, the continent is being looked toward for the conclusion of free-trade areas and Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). The development of EPAs underpins a new economic diplomacy in which Japan seeks to foster stronger economic ties with emerging countries in Asia, Latin America, and to a lesser extent Africa.31 Japan’s efforts with respect to Africa have centered on the southern African region, although they have been waylaid by the region’s stalled EPA negotiations with the European Union.32

A second new and surprising dimension in Japan’s relationship with the continent emerged in mid-2011 when the country announced the creation of a permanent base for its Self-Defence Force (SDF) in the eastern African country of Djibouti.33 This is part of Japan’s involvement in international antipiracy efforts off the coast of Somalia and follows the deployment since the early 1990s—at first much opposed by Japanese people—of SDF troops as contributors to international peacekeeping operations. Yet the Djibouti base represents the first permanent overseas military presence for peacetime Japan. The decision to establish the base reflects changing orientations in Japan’s security policy, as it seeks to play a particular role in the evolving post-September 11 global security architecture. But it also overlaps with the country’s Africa diplomacy in significant ways since a key rationale was that “such an international contribution will help win broad support for Japan’s bid to become a permanent member of the UN Security Council,” for which the African vote is deemed vital.34

Conclusion
Japan’s relations with Africa over the past two decades have waxed and waned, but overall the continent has served as an important channel for Japan’s claims to middlepowership. Looked at through the lens of Japan’s G8 politics, it is clear that the country’s orientations to the continent served a greater purpose as far as Japan’s multilateral aims were concerned and that the G8 was often the forum where these were enacted.

Today the shifting landscape of major players in world politics, the entry of another set of players in Africa’s international relations, along with dramatic unforeseen events in Japan’s domestic sphere—in particular the 2011 natural disasters—have reset the conditions under which Japan engages
with the continent. They nudge Japan’s interests elsewhere and reshape the determinants of Japan-Africa relations. Thus, Japan has more consciously and determinedly defined a resource-seeking strategy for itself with respect to Africa, but this is coupled with a broader outlook in which trade agreements, investment treaties, and EPAs with the developing world combine in an outward economic diplomacy. Japan’s aid ties with the continent will continue to be an important foundation of partnership and will remain Japan’s major diplomatic access point. For this, much effort should be made to ensure that the promising signs of institutional streamlining and aid revitalization following the last TICAD meeting are realized and that discussions during the next TICAD, scheduled for 2013, aim to give real force to objectives toward greater levels of investments by Japanese corporations.

Notes

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16. Also see Alden and Sato, “La diplomatie japonaise de l’aide et l’Afrique.”


24. Ibid.


34. Ibid., p. 2.
For the past ten years Germany’s Africa policy has become more driven by the emerging international consensus formed in the United Nations and among the G8 member states but, more importantly, within the European Union on what the African continent’s challenges are and how they should be approached. The multilateralization of Africa policy plays out on questions of trade, peace, and security and in the way that aid relations are generally conditioned to issues of democracy, good governance, and human rights. However, there remains a German “content” in many bilateral relations with African countries, which can be explained by the specific mix of policy instruments and development assistance actors that have their own institutional interests and path-dependent legacies in terms of priorities. Major changes of this particular mix between externally determined and internally driven elements of Africa policy are likely to be influenced by financial considerations, the future of European integration, and the way that German elites perceive changes in global governance architectures. 

**KEYWORDS:** Germany, Africa, foreign policy, Group of 8, European Union, United Nations.

In Germany’s foreign policy, Africa has always been a symbolic “other” for the projection of visions of (changing) national identity and global order. Rarely has Africa been treated as a subject. Rather, it has served for different German governments to define Germany’s place in the world. This is also reflected in the way Germany relates to multilateral contexts and processes. The relationship between the Group of 8 (G8) and Germany’s Africa policy has been an ambivalent one; in the new millennium, however, the importance of the G8 as a policy arena for Africa policy temporarily gained greater significance. In the mid-1970s, West Germany was one of the founding members and driving forces of the Group of 7 (G7), which, at that time, basically tried to harmonize the economic and finance policies of a small group of industrialized countries in response to global crises. In these early days, Africa policy did not matter to the G7 at all. This has changed. In the early 2000s, during a period of fundamental change of the global order, Africa certainly became the single most important issue
that allowed the G8 to keep up the image of its own global relevance: Africa constituted one of the few policy fields where the G8 could actually still formulate and implement the club’s policies, whereas in most other global governance arenas it no longer could expect compliance without the corroboration of the newly emerging powers. But with the rapid rise of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) and the so-called Next Eleven, the enlargement of G7 club governance to the Group of 20 (G-20) in the wake of the 2008 global financial crisis, and the parallel relative decline of the G8’s capacity to actually steer global governance processes in a multipolar global order, the symbolic importance of the G8’s Africa policy has started to lose some of its relevance. Germany was among the G8 members that pushed the Africa agenda further than others but, in terms of global governance today, UN-driven processes around the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the 2005 Africa Strategy of the European Union (EU) have become far more important for the actual conduct and identity of Germany’s Africa policy.

In response to the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD), which was tabled to the G8 by the presidents of South Africa, Nigeria, and Senegal at the 2001 Genoa summit, the 2002 summit held in Kananaskis, Alberta, Canada, decided to respond to the proposed development partnership with an Africa Action Plan in order to assist the continent’s new development agenda. The G8 summit held in Heiligendamm, Germany, in June 2007 then mainly dealt with the implementation of the 2005 Gleneagles summit’s promise to double official development assistance (ODA) for African countries to $50 billion by 2010 in order to meet the spending target of 0.7 percent of gross domestic product for development assistance by 2015.

After some initial rivalry with the United Kingdom about identifying a core field of cooperation within the G8 Africa policy framework, the German government—during its 2007 presidency of the G8—launched a peace and security in Africa program. In contrast to the majority of Germany’s Africa programs, its G8-related contribution to Africa is budgeted under the Foreign Office and not the Ministry of Development Cooperation (BMZ). Since 2008, the program has been furnished with a modest annual volume of between €25 million and €30 million. The policy emphasis is on addressing the structural causes of conflict. The program concentrates on capacity building for the African Union (AU) and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs), focusing on the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), among other priorities concentrating on police consultancy activities or training for AU personnel. Substantial funds are also going into the construction of the new building for the AU’s Department of
Peace and Security in Addis Ababa. Usually this aid is implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), which commenced operations on 1 January 2011 (after the merging of three agencies: the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit [GTZ], the German Development Service [DED], and InWEnt–Capacity Building International, Germany).

To a certain extent, Germany’s involvement in the G8 Africa policy process over the past decade represents a break with its past Africa policy. Traditionally, this policy has been conditioned mainly by external role expectations of the United States, France, or the EU. It has been characterized by a process of policy harmonization with regard to major international bodies (such as the UN and the institutionalized European Political Cooperation of the 1970s) and, ultimately, the G8 as well as a separate process of policy routinization, which is attributable to related dynamics of institutionalization and professionalization. At times, there have been substantial tensions between Germany’s Africa policy identity (or its role conception) and the concrete interests actually followed (i.e., role behavior); for instance, in southern Africa. Overall, Germany’s Africa policy has been interpreted within the “civilian power politics” paradigm that puts emphasis on the limited use of force (cooperation and security arrangements), the strengthening of the rule of law (multilateral cooperation, integration, partial transfer of sovereignty), the promotion of democracy and human rights, the support of nonviolent forms of conflict management and resolution, the promotion of social equity and sustainable development, as well as the promotion of interdependence and division of labor.

Before the mid-2000s, four distinct phases of German Africa policy can be identified: (1) a period of cumbersome reintegration into international relations where Africa served as a door opener for politics and the private sector (from 1949 to 1959, when South Africa, for instance, diplomatically recognized West Germany even before the Western allies did so); (2) a time when African countries were basically instrumentalized in an effort to prevent the international diplomatic recognition of East Germany (1959–1972); (3) a period when Africa policy was reduced to an uninspired combination of foreign policy around the apartheid issue on the one hand and fairly traditional development policy toward the rest of the continent on the other (1973–1990); and (4) after the end of the Cold War, a phase in which the now united Germany became engaged in variations of bilateral economic and political reconstruction efforts within Africa (1990–1999). In the context of the African renaissance debate (1999–2004), it can be argued that Germany has entered into a new phase in its Africa policy. This time, it is characterized by an ambivalent tension between a low domestic profile for African issues (or waning interests) and a general acceptance of the international mainstreaming of Africa policy.
Whereas in the past Germany’s Africa policy has been determined by a national mix of political, administrative, and economic interests (though always with a view toward external role expectations) and recently also the general securitization of politics vis-à-vis the African continent, today international mainstreaming has become the single most important driver of this policy. Ever since the adoption of the MDGs (and following the example of the United Kingdom) and even more so with the adoption of the EU’s Africa Strategy of 12 October 2005, Germany has embarked on an Africa policy that reflects a shared hegemonic problem analysis (generally labeled as “development challenges”), a joint vision of steering and taming “globalization” processes (in order to profit from an imagined “bright side of globalization”), with a strong emphasis on African responsibility (“ownership”), continued key relevance of “good governance” and economic liberalization, the sequentialized implementation of development assistance (which serves as a precondition for a qualitatively different form of North-South cooperation), and a stated need for bridging the development finance gap through increased aid (with reference to the political debate based on an alleged “poverty trap” and the related “big push” theory). Thus, there is a policy shift from a more internally driven, mainly bilateralized Africa policy toward a more externally driven, multilateralized Africa policy. This trend also reflects a general increase in the importance of global governance arenas. In this shift, the G8’s Africa policy initially played an important role; although, in comparison, for Germany the EU has remained the more relevant arena for framing its Africa policy and, ultimately, defining its Africa policy identity and interests.

This general shift, however, does not mean that Germany has given up all idiosyncratic motives in its Africa policy. Thus, the German government’s Strategy for Africa, which was adopted by the cabinet on 15 June 2011 and represents the first integrated Africa policy document in more than fifty years, makes reference to strategic partnerships between Germany and selected African countries in areas where Germany still has concrete self-interests. These are the so-called transformation partnership that Germany has offered Egypt and Tunisia to support them “on the path to social and political modernization” as well as energy and raw materials partnerships, such as that with Nigeria, “whose aim is not only to secure German raw materials and energy supplies, but also to ensure that the people of Africa benefit from the wealth of their countries’ natural resources.”

By way of conclusion, in the new millennium Germany’s Africa policy certainly has become more driven by the emerging international consensus formed in the UN and among the G8 member states but, more importantly, within the EU on what the African continent’s challenges are and how they should be approached. The multilateralization of Africa policy plays out on questions of trade (here the Economic Partnership Agreements concluded
between the EU and African regional economic communities, or what remains of them, are important), peace and security (with a general approach focusing on capacity building toward the AU and the RECs), and the way that aid relations are generally conditioned to issues of democracy, good governance, and human rights. However, there remains a German “content” in many bilateral relations with African countries that can be explained by the specific mix of policy instruments (aid, trade, foreign direct investment, etc.) and mainly development assistance actors that have their own institutional interests and path-dependent legacies in terms of priorities. Major changes of this particular mix between externally determined and internally driven elements of Africa policy are likely to be influenced by financial considerations, the future of European integration, and the way that German elites perceive changes in global governance architectures.

Notes

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1. Ulf Engel and Matthias Middell, eds., World Orders Revisited (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2010).


8. Despite antiapartheid rhetoric, for instance in the UN system, German governments (first a coalition between the Social Democratic Party, SPD, and the liberal Free Democratic Party [FDP] from 1969 to 1982, then a coalition between the Christian Democratic Union [CDU]/Christian Social Union [CSU] and the liberals after 1982) supported the apartheid regime in various ways (diplomatically, through
the export of military hardware, by undermining economic and other sanctions, etc.). At the same time, only lukewarm support was given to the liberation movements and the Frontline States. See Ulf Engel, *Die Afrikapolitik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1949–1999: Rollen und Identitäten* (Hamburg: Lit-Verlag, 2000).


REVIEW ESSAY

New Perspectives on the Independence of International Organizations: How Do They Influence Peacebuilding and Good Governance?

Roni Kay O’Dell


Postconflict peacebuilding, statebuilding, and the diffusion of “good” governance policies dominate attention in international relations (IR) foreign policy debates, development practice, and academic literature. The Syrian uprising that started in 2011 against the Bashar al-Assad regime incorporates these debates, especially in terms of the confused and inconclusive international reaction against al-Assad’s crackdown on civilian dissent. How should the international community, especially as represented by international organizations (IOs), be involved in such events? When and why do states relinquish responsibilities to IOs? What if IOs provide functions that states did not request or mandate, as represented in the concepts of “agency slack” and “mission creep”? Further, when and how do IOs become independent actors, providing goods and services traditionally the purview of states?

The three books that I review below offer novel analyses in search of the answers to these pressing questions by looking to structural characteristics, relational understandings, and process-based theories of how IOs are involved in global issues. Yet the works also reveal a need for deeper analysis of the ways that such IO characteristics influence outcomes. Indeed, if these works show, as they profess to do, how the state has become marginalized in peacebuilding, statebuilding, and governance efforts, their conclusions fall short of providing the provident policy suggestions that would give the international community a way forward in crisis situations as represented by Syria’s 2011–2012 contentious revolution.
Social Constructivism and Principal Agent Theory: Rethinking IO Roles and Impact

Joel Oestreich’s edited volume, *International Organizations as Self-Directed Actors: A Framework for Analysis*, asks whether or not IOs can be “meaningful, independent actors in international relations?” (p. 1). Oestreich’s chapter authors break down false barriers that polarize IR theorists who hold contradictory, yet surmountable, epistemological and ontological assumptions. Their approach challenges the state as the main unit of analysis in traditional IR theory. They argue that actors other than states are important because they help solve coordination and cooperation problems between states, and they independently address global governance problems. The volume speaks to the nascent literature of non–state-centric, agent-based accounts of global governance, as represented in the edited volume by Deborah Avant, Martha Finnemore, and Susan Sell, which critiques the types of actors engaged in governance activities and considers the substance of those activities. Adding to this literature, Oestreich’s chapter authors focus further on the important characteristics of IOs as a specific set of governance actors.

Oestreich argues that principal-agent (PA) theory and social constructivist accounts are not mutually exclusive, but can coexist in the same research agenda. With regard to PA theory, the authors in Oestreich’s volume do not completely discount the importance of the state as actor. In fact, they contend that PA theory allows an analyst to research and construct rational reasons for what PA theorists call “agency slack.” PA theory assumes rationality and cost-benefit analysis on the part of all actors, taking interests as given. Thus, “Principal-agent theory and work on bureaucratic behavior suggests that the primary goal of bureaucracies is their own expansion: expansion of budgets, of powers, and of existence over time” (p. 7). However, PA theory cannot explain how IOs use autonomy once obtained. Filling this gap, social constructivism provides a rich account of IO behavior. Construc-
tivists assume that actors are “engaged in a constant process of learning and interacting” (p. 8), highlighting multiple process and structure variables that influence IO behavior beyond delegation and rationalization.

Oestreich’s chapter authors add to the literature on IOs by focusing on how the personal characteristics of IO staff, especially leaders, influence IO behavior, thus providing insight into an undertheorized variable in social constructivist accounts. Minimizing functionalist theories of IOs, Oestreich’s chapter authors provide the starting point for a better understanding of how individual actors may be just as important, if not more important, than IO bureaucratic structure or external influence in shaping the ways that IOs respond to crises in international relations. Because of the way the authors combine theories to explain complex social phenomena, this research has the potential to add tractability to social constructivist accounts in IR the-

New Perspectives on the Independence of IOs
ory and academia by showing that it is possible to create rigorous and replicable analyses of social settings, thereby countering the oft-cited reason for IR theorists eschewing social constructivist methodology. The missing element in this volume is that the individual authors do not provide a framework for replicating further research, though Oestreich does offer a two-step process in the final chapter (see my comments on Margaret Karns, Kristen Haack and Kent J. Kille, and Susan Park and Catherine Weaver’s respective chapters below).\textsuperscript{5}

**Limited Statehood: A New Concept to Address an Old Problem**

Thomas Risse’s edited volume, *Governance Without a State*, analyzes the possibilities for governance where the modern state does not exist, or where it functions ineffectively. Risse clarifies that the chapter authors reject the concepts of “fragile,” “failed,” and “failing” states because these concepts refer to a model that “reveals Eurocentrism and a bias toward Western concepts” (p. 5). The authors instead use the concept of “limited statehood,” arguing that rather than ask whether or not a modern state functions and exists in a certain area, researchers should ask “who governs for whom, and how are governance services provided under conditions of weak statehood?” (p. 4). Multiple actors are involved in governance processes, and therefore the unit of analysis shifts from a contrived idea of statehood to focus on non-state actors such as civil society organizations, warlords, nongovernmental organizations, and IOs. Furthermore, Risse defines governance as “the various institutionalized modes of social coordination to produce and implement collectively binding rules, or to provide collective goods” (p. 9), contrasting with traditional definitions that point to hierarchical modes of control.

Under the nonhierarchical governance perspective, Risse’s authors analyze three issues. They show that modern statehood contrives the public-private distinction where one did not previously exist. Empirically, the modern state does not solely provide public goods and services; therefore, research agendas must consider how and why other actors can and do provide those services. In fact, “the weaker and the more fragile the state, the less it makes sense to judge governance services according to the benchmarks derived from modern developed states” (p. 17). Finally, the authors argue that private actors need the rule of law and an authority structure in order to effectively provide public services, a concept they term the “shadow of hierarchy” because the Western, modern state does not need to be the actor to provide that stability (p. 10).

Risse’s volume shifts the argument addressed in statebuilding literature and practice because it challenges the accepted unit of analysis of the state and suggests that there are multiple, overlapping, and variable ways that societies control themselves outside of formal institutions.\textsuperscript{6} The authors do
not engage in the seemingly insurmountable arguments over such terms as failed and failing states, or the difference between statebuilding and nation-building; rather they seek to provide an alternative framework for analysis that transcends such state-centric concepts. As opposed to the state-centric, institutionbuilding suggestions of Francis Fukuyama and others in the statebuilding literature, Risse’s authors consider governance as occurring in social interactions rather than in rule-based mechanisms, in horizontal relationships through groups and individuals in a society rather than in vertical mechanisms of control, in deeply held beliefs about authority rather than in legislative systems. Such thinking augments the failures of statebuilding policies focused on institutional capacity. Yet, lack of a focal point for policy creation and implementation may dangerously challenge the applicability of Risse’s chapter authors’ arguments. Risse’s volume portends a paradigm shift in international relations theory and practice; the challenge, then, is to provide a working conceptual and theoretical framework for analysis, a struggle for some of Risse’s authors (see my comments on Ulrich Schneckener and Bernd Ladwig and Beate Rudolf’s respective chapters below).

The United Nations: An Exemplar IO

Apropos to the academic literature discussed above, the Sixty-fifth General Assembly of the United Nations pondered how the UN would engage “as the world’s supreme governance institution,” as eloquently stated by former Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali in the foreword to the Annual Review of United Nations Affairs (2010/2011), edited by Joachim Muller and Karl P. Sauvant. This series of six volumes provides commentary and resolution text on the Sixty-fifth General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the International Court of Justice, the UN Secretariat, and progress reports on specific UN missions. Part of the plenary session of the General Assembly focused on the UN’s role in global governance as discussed by the president of the Sixty-fifth General Assembly, Joseph Deiss, and as related in UN General Assembly Resolution 65/94. The Sixty-fifth General Assembly suggested that the UN should take responsibility in addressing the Millennium Development Goals, lead the world in sustainable development, and mediate in conflicts and postconflict situations.

The Annual Review offers academics, UN experts, and the general public an excellent example of that with which Oestreich’s and Risse’s works contend; that is, how IOs come to make certain decisions and not others, and how those decisions and implementation affect international relations. While the Annual Review is no page-turner (six volumes of records on decisions made and agreements signed), it is an excellent source of knowledge.
for anyone seeking to learn more about the internal workings of a large intergovernmental organization. In the *Annual Review*, current leaders and former leaders of the organization are named for their influential statements and goals that led to specific outcomes. Such examples remind us of the premise of Oestreich’s chapter authors—that personal characteristics of individuals within organizations make a lasting impact on the kinds of activities IOs pursue. Furthermore, areas of conflict and “failing states” take prominence in discussions within these meetings as one of the responsibilities of the UN, showing a propensity for the international community to think in terms of building institutions rather than in terms of social relations, as pointed out by Risse’s volume, as a problem of the statebuilding literature and intervention. While the length and price of the *Annual Review* make it hard to reach by the general public, it provides ample evidence of the kinds of international relations issues that academic literature seeks to describe, analyze, and even resolve.

**“Failed States” or “Limited Statehood” and Postconflict Peacebuilding**

In the aftermath of the end of the Cold War, the international community was beset with new conflicts that presented as threats to international peace and security, but which had not been considered in Chapter VII of the UN Charter. IOs redefined their roles to meet the needs of the changing political world structure and to address the rising trend in internal conflicts abounding throughout the world; Somalia, Rwanda, and the conflict in the Balkans being the most widely known and studied. In her chapter in Oestreich’s volume, “The Roots of UN Post-conflict Peacebuilding: A Case Study of Autonomous Agency,” Margaret Karns addresses this latter issue by describing how the UN, and specifically former Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali, created the concept of postconflict peacebuilding. Karns explains that the traditional PA theory explanations for the emergence of the idea of postconflict peacebuilding do not fit with the empirical evidence. Boutros-Ghali prepared *An Agenda for Peace* at the request of the General Assembly, yet the request was for an explanation of the UN’s role in conflict, not in postconflict. Indeed, Boutros-Ghali was the first to coin the term *postconflict peacebuilding* (pp. 71–72).

In creating a role for the UN in postconflict peacebuilding, Karns argues that the role of leaders and their individual idiosyncrasies was influential, more so than the role of member states. She notes the UN’s historical influence in various conflicts, including South Africa and Namibia, South American civil wars, and Cambodia (which the author calls three root systems). After these conflicts ended, UN presence ended as well. The UN
had no mandate or precedence for being involved in postconflict situations. In opposition to historical tendencies, Boutros-Ghali outlined a mandate for the UN to ensure postconflict peace. In this case, Boutros-Ghali represents a “norm entrepreneur” whose leadership molded the response of the UN to emerging postconflict cases. Thus, Karns offers insight into the nature of the connection between PA theory and social constructivism, indicating that delegation from member states does indeed guide IO behavior but does not explain the emergence of new ideals, especially normative ones.

Karns offers a convincing narrative leading us from historical precedents of the UN to the changing nature of UN intervention. Yet consideration of the relative influential weight of these different variables would have made the argument more convincing. Under PA theory, it is no surprise that Boutros-Ghali strayed from the substantive elements of the General Assembly’s request in his Agenda for Peacebuilding, largely because of the context of the international environment in which he led the UN. He delivered the Agenda to the General Assembly in 1992, a year after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The international relations environment was burdened by the need to assist states that broke from the Soviet Union. Furthermore, Somalia disintegrated into conflict in 1991 and the international community, including US troops, intervened in Mogadishu in a failed attempt to resolve the instability that had resulted from the overthrow of Somalia’s then leader, Mohammed Siad Barre. Concern for influencing peace and supporting democracies was important to foreign policy and, therefore, could have been just as influential as Boutros-Ghali’s individual normative stance and suggestions.

Karns does convincingly show that the UN began internalizing the concern for postconflict peacebuilding in its functions. As an example of this internalization, the Annual Review documents that the new government of South Sudan was included as the UN’s 193rd member on 14 July 2011 by the General Assembly (pp. i–xiv). Furthermore, the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) currently has a mandate to provide assistance in roughly the following three areas: “peace consolidation,” “conflict prevention, mitigation, and resolution,” and “Support the Government of the Republic of South Sudan in developing its capacity to provide security, to establish rule of law, and to strengthen the security and justice sectors.” The long civil war, the peace agreement, and the secession in Sudan represent just one instance of conflict and postconflict areas around the world that draw the attention of the international community, especially that of the UN.

Risse’s volume contains a chapter written by Ulrich Schneckener in which he addresses the problematic nature of IO intervention in postconflict peacebuilding situations. In “State Building or New Modes of Governance? The Effects of International Involvement in Areas of Limited Statehood,” he argues that intervention does not achieve statehood; rather it creates new and different forms of governance, increasing the “process of transnation-
alization and blurring of borders” (p. 233). Schneckener problematizes the way that IOs interfere in state sovereignty. According to this author, emerging types of governance other than the state include various mechanisms, processes, and actors. He contrasts IO aims and strategies with their effects, arguing that four extant strategies of statebuilding do not “reflect the challenges of multilevel and multiagency politics” (p. 245) and, therefore, result in a failure to “build a state.” He further argues that there are four strategies utilized by states to bring certain issues to the fore. Strategies of “liberalization first,” “civil society first,” “security first,” and “institutionalization first” all have extant examples and outcomes. However, he argues that, in each of these strategies, external actors are devoid of legitimacy with local actors and cannot effectively promote local ownership.

While Schneckener provides theoretical examples, likening the four strategies to the realist and liberal theories of IR, his argument would have been strengthened by further consideration of cases that represent the four statebuilding strategies and their outcomes. He does suggest macro-level examples, such as the use of structural adjustment programs by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. However, these do not give us the empirical evidence necessary for agreeing conclusively with his argument. As an example, the security first strategy is evident in the NATO no-fly zone enforced over Libya in the summer of 2011, which turned into an agenda to overthrow Muammar Qaddafi and support the rebels. It is too soon to tell what kind of influence this security first intervention had in Libya. On another front, Afghanistan and Iraq would be excellent case studies for this research agenda. In addition, applying Schneckener’s analysis on new and emerging states, such as South Sudan or Kosovo, provides an example of the failure of institutionalization-first statebuilding efforts. The Nubian people in South Sudan need institutional representation, adequate provision of goods and services, and protection from harm.

Taking Schneckener’s analysis to its obvious conclusions in the case of Sudan requires reinventing IO intervention policies, an issue to which the last chapter author returns, but which is not sufficiently addressed in Schneckener’s chapter. Since the state is not the only entity that can provide governance, as Risse’s volume adequately demonstrates, IOs should consider supporting nonstate actors and different kinds of governance mechanisms. In a civil society–first effort, IOs would focus on the social controls and mechanisms of governance that already exist such as by supporting Nubian tribal leaders of South Sudan who have been fighting the government of Sudan for decades. However, if local traditions and societal structures are ignored, civil society–first strategies are doomed to fail. It can turn into promoting the Western-style public-private distinction where one does not exist and imposing Western values about social control. Further work needs to be done in this research to make solid conclusions about the effects that statebuilding efforts have on achieving governance as well as a state.
Good Governance Concepts
The changing nature and notions of state legitimacy, associated with “good” governance concepts, offer another research agenda that has gained considerable attention since the end of the Cold War. The definition and measurement of acceptable governance indicate the changing nature of sovereignty, that states are only legitimate actors if they treat their citizens with a certain amount of respect related to human rights and democratic principles. In fact, states are more often open to criticism for their human rights practices than in any previous era. The Arab Spring provides a meaningful example of this in the fact that even the closest allies of Tunisia’s Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, Egypt’s Hosni Mubarak, Libya’s Qaddafi, and Syria’s al-Assad did and still must condemn their practices and make attempts to convince them to reform their ways or be subject to outside intervention or sanctions. The chapters that I review below consider the changing nature of norms in IR as well as the essential elements of good governance and what this means for state legitimacy and sovereignty.

In “The UN Secretary-General and Self-Directed-Leadership: Development of the Democracy Agenda,” Kristen Haack and Kent J. Kille investigate the institutionalization of the democracy agenda in the UN and its agencies over two periods of time and leadership. Former Secretaries-General Boutros-Ghali and Annan were entrepreneurs of democracy promotion. Boutros-Ghali led the organization by “actively promoting democracy and influencing its conceptualization” (p. 38) in the way that he included democratic principles in his speeches, in his writings for the organization, and in his leadership goals. On the other hand, Annan promoted democratic principles in a strategic way, continuing the institutionalization that had begun under Boutros-Ghali. Haack and Kille contend that, while the two leaders had some capacity for “self-directed leadership” (pp. 48–50), they were also constrained by the organization’s bureaucracy and culture. This contribution to the research agenda of leadership ability and acceptability is not groundbreaking, but their conclusion offers insights into further studies that may allow for a better understanding of the conditions necessary for “self-directed leadership” within organizations.

Susan Park and Catherine Weaver, in “The Anatomy of Autonomy: The Case of the World Bank,” suggest that the World Bank’s sustainability and anticorruption agendas are directly connected to specific styles of leadership and organizational context. They analyze how Wolfensohn and Wolfowitz respectively “championed” (p. 91) sustainability and anticorruption agendas at the World Bank. These authors refer to organizational culture and structure as one of the reasons that the two leaders had a difficult time in changing policies and implementing projects. Park and Weaver note that it is difficult to operationalize and generalize organizational culture in the way that PA theory is generalizable, a perennial problem for constructivist
agendas. However, their discussion of the “approval culture” (p. 96) of the World Bank provides ample evidence of how organizational culture might influence the behavior of an organization. Speedy facilitation of capital loans above normative concerns about the environment or transparency does indeed hinder the ability of leaders to pressure and change an organization’s focus.19

Despite a lack of theoretical conceptualization and application of organizational culture as a social constructivist concept, Park and Weaver provide invaluable empirical evidence for the interrelationship of “self-directed” leadership and organizational culture. For instance, even with resistance to the two agendas coming from the “approval” organizational culture of the World Bank, other variables, such as the type of leadership, facilitated the internalization of norms and institutionalization of mechanisms that promoted sustainability and transparency. These mechanisms often related to pressure and reputational considerations. More research on the specific characteristics of leadership style and organizational culture is needed to show how social constructivist concepts can provide ample evidence of independent variables on IO behavioral outcomes.

In Risse’s volume, “International Legal and Moral Standards of Good Governance in Fragile States,” Bernd Ladwig and Beate Rudolf consider sovereignty as a “normatively laden concept” (p. 199). Sovereignty now includes the condition that states follow international laws and norms, especially in governance provision. These authors define governance normatively as inclusive of human rights, the rule of law, responsiveness, and participation. They further note that these elements of good governance are not only a part of positive international law, as written in the International Bill of Rights20 and the Geneva Conventions, but also a part of *ius cogens*, the norms to which states are behaviorally bound.

The problem with hinging state legitimacy on good governance as defined by Ladwig and Rudolf arises with the so-called failed state issue, as the authors make clear. Failed states continue to garner respect because of a state’s sovereign right to exist despite lack of control over borders or a functioning government, as evinced in Somalia since 1991. Yet such states are unable to provide the *ius cogens* norms of good governance. Thus, through legal positive analysis as well as theoretical considerations, these authors argue that the responsibility falls on the international community to provide those functioning institutions. The international community would provide the “shadow of hierarchy” needed in the absence of the state in order to fulfill the good governance requirements of international law that are due each citizen of each country.

Ladwig and Rudolf’s concern for the well-being of human beings provides a basis for their important theoretical considerations. Yet some areas lack analytical clarity. First, they suggest that, according to positive law, “if
a state demonstrably is not able to fulfill even the core rights, it is obliged to use resources available through international cooperation and assistance” (p. 204). This statement already ignores the issue that the authors of the volume seek to address; that is, that where there is no modern state, it is difficult for that modern state to “use resources” offered by the international community. To make up for this problem, Ladwig and Rudolf later provide an ethical argument as to why the international community has the responsibility to provide the said institutions where no modern state exists.

Another issue arises in how Ladwig and Rudolf use the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights General Comments as the only positive law basis for suggesting that states have an obligation to accept international help in order to provide governance institutions. They do not even mention the voluntary and self-regulatory nature of the human rights treaty system, which counteracts their “obligatory” claim. Ladwig and Rudolf contend that the “positive” obligations of economic, social, and cultural rights created both a progressive realization of implementing rights and recognition of help from the international community.21 The main reason, however, for progressive realization was not that it imposed “positive” obligations on the part of states; rather it was that states were uncomfortable with the justiciability of economic, social, and cultural rights, both in how to implement them and in how to legislate them.22 This concern applied to rich, Western states just as it did to states that did not have the ability to implement the rights entailed, again countering Ladwig and Rudolf’s claim that states have an obligation to seek and obtain help from international sources.

While Ladwig and Rudolf theorize persuasively about the “responsibility” of the international community to provide the institutions that are lacking in limited areas of statehood, based on the burgeoning principle of the Responsibility to Protect, they will need to delve deeper into extant international positive law as well as suggested ius cogens norms to convince states and most IOs that human rights “corresponding duties are ultimately those of humanity, and the international community, as a whole” (p. 213) rather than voluntary responsibilities of states. On the other hand, even as this review goes to print, the international community struggles to come to a consensus on the correct response to Syria’s al-Assad government and its military’s brutal crackdown on the uprising. With the Security Council unable or unwilling to resolve more than sending peace monitors to Syria, concern for finding solutions to such problems abounds. We may see a trend to rely on theoretical arguments of ethical, rather than of legal positive, responsibility. Thus, Ladwig and Rudolf set a precedent for theorizing a new conception of sovereignty and international responsibility toward all human beings.
Toward a Comprehensive Understanding of IOs in Global Governance

While the works that I review here offer further insight into how and why IOs are important in international relations, they still leave questions about IO action unresolved. Such questions include: Will IOs take seriously the responsibilities traditionally relegated to states? How will IOs change their mandates and functions in the future to respond to new threats? For example, is it enough for the UN to have a historical precedent for postconflict peacebuilding since Boutros-Ghali created it? The UN continues to display its inability to deal effectively in conflict and postconflict situations such as in the stagnated response to Syria. While the UN acts as a repository for human rights treaties and promotes democratic governance principles, it finds itself weak in the face of powerful regimes that have the backing of internal military or international allies. Ineffectiveness is a constant concern for the UN, as demonstrated in the *Annual Review* of General Assembly plenary and high-level meetings. Yet the authors in the books I have reviewed collectively suggest that IOs exert an impressive ability to think and act outside of the pressure and influence of member states, especially as relates to normative concerns.

As convincingly demonstrated by Oestreich’s chapter authors, states acting as principals do indeed delegate action to IOs, but this does not preclude action on the part of IOs. Further, they imply that action is not bound by traditional bureaucratic considerations or rational cost-benefit analysis. The actions of IOs can be normatively guided by their internal bureaucratic structure and process as well as by the leaders and their normative leanings. Indeed, Oestreich’s volume expands our understanding of an undertheorized aspect of IOs by delving into the nature of the personal characteristics of the individuals involved, through examination of their leadership style and organizational culture. The volume brings us closer to an understanding of the endogenous relationships, processes, and structures of IOs and how these factor into the way that IOs act. Oestreich’s authors offer convincing answers to how, when, and why IOs become independent actors, but Oestreich ends by pointing out that being able to “distinguish ‘delegated discretion’ from ‘true independence’” (p. 268) proves an enigmatic research project that requires further exploration.

Risse’s volume further adds to the issue by problematizing the way that academics and practitioners explain the nature of the international community as it concerns failed states and governance. The volume stands out in the literature because it provides an alternative framework for governance and IO action. Thinking in a limited way about statebuilding, especially for the IOs that are involved in such projects, negatively hurts the prospects of
reinstating security and stability. On the other hand, thinking in terms of interconnected and state-transcendent mechanisms of social control, that is, “multi-level governance” (p. 29), will allow greater ability and freedom for actors to achieve the implicit and explicit goals of statebuilding efforts. If international organizations, such as the UN, take Risse’s chapter authors seriously and heed their calls to reconsider the motives, actions, and focus of governance interventions, problematic phenomena for international relations, as represented in Syria, Somalia, and Sudan, may not be as intractable as heretofore. However, policy interventions based on “multi-level governance” concepts require empirical and theoretical concreteness in order to be fully accepted and/or implementable by the international community.

Notes
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3. The authors build on previous work. One example is the volume edited by Bob Reinalda and Bertjan Verbeek in which the authors combine PA theory with constructivism on decisionmaking behavior in IOs and other international actors. Bob Reinalda and Bertjan Verbeek, eds., Decision Making Within International Relations (New York: Routledge, 2004).


5. Oestreich writes, “We have posited a two-step approach to acting: first, having preferences independently of states; second, translating those preferences into actions that have a real impact on world politics” (p. 10).


12. Somalia is often looked to as a failure in intervention. The UN peacekeeping mission and US mission that intervened, after Mohammed Siad Barre was taken out of power in clan warfare in 1991, failed to achieve their goals and pulled out of Somalia by 1994.

13. Internalizing norms is the third step in the norm life cycle as described by Finnemore and Sikkink, “International Norm Dynamics and Political Change”; the first two steps are norm emergence and norm cascade.


15. Lars Brozus makes some important points in regard to the reorientation of the international community and IOs to intervention policies in his chapter entitled “Applying the Governance Concept to Areas of Limited Statehood” (pp. 262–280).


17. One may date the change in the principle of sovereignty to the end of World War II. The documents of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Charter both describe and imply how important it is for states to provide certain
rights to citizens. As Henry Shue argues, it is the “duty to develop and preserve effective institutions for the fulfillment of rights” (p. 18). Henry Shue, Basic Rights (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980, 1996). And yet the change in the principle of sovereignty emerges more evidently in the practice of sovereignty since the end of the Cold War.

18. At the time of this writing, intervention in Syria is hotly disputed, with Russia and China blocking any resolution to intervene but still condemning the Syrian regime for its use of force against the rebellion and against civilians. See, for example, Neil MacFarquhar and Anthony Shadid, “Russia and China Block UN Action on Crisis in Syria,” New York Times, 5 February 2012, p. A1, www.nytimes.com/2012/02/05/world/middleeast/syria-homs-death-toll-said-to-rise.html?pagewanted=all.


20. Included in the so-called International Bill of Human Rights are the three major treaties that describe the basic list of human rights for all. These include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1977), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1977).


22. For more information on this justiciability issue, see Whelan and Donnelly, “The West, Economic and Social Rights, and the Global Human Rights Regime.”


Krause, Keith, “Hybrid Violence: Locating the Use of Force in Postconflict Set-