Why Bureaucracies Matter in the Global Age: A Post-Weberian Explanation with the Case Study of Preparing and Implementing the UN’s An Agenda for Peace

Summary

This article will challenge the conventional wisdom according to which international bureaucracies are unviable and undesirable in the age of globalisation. The relevance and powers of today’s international bureaucracies can best be understood by reference to the model of the ‘network logic of globalisation’ rather than Max Weber’s classic theory alone. Bureaucracies are undergoing a transformation from the rigid and hierarchical institutions of Weber’s time to more network-oriented and de-layered post-Weberian entities. On occasion, these post-Weberian structures allow middle-level officials in international organisations to wield considerable new bureaucratic powers. The case study of this article draws upon empirical evidence on the drafting and implementation of An Agenda for Peace (1992) by UN Secretariat officials and its contributions to the UN early warning and conflict prevention mechanism. The network-oriented structures and approaches have started to permeate the UN Organisation in two ways: First, the UN operates more and more through interdepartmental and interagency teams. This trend was evident already in the drafting and implementation processes of the Agenda. Second, the UN is reaching out to academic and civil society networks. The start of these two transformations of the UN bureaucracy is related to globalisation and can be seen already in action in the early 1990s when the Agenda was drafted.
Introduction

An Agenda for Peace\(^1\) (henceforth: ‘the Agenda’) was commissioned by the UN Security Council Summit in January 1992 and published by former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in June 1992. It is still one of the most cited documents of the UN Organisation in the field of international peace and security. The in-depth investigation of the drafting and implementation process of the Agenda in this article\(^2\) will reveal that international bureaucracies - in the case in point here, the UN Secretariat - increasingly derive their powers from a new source, namely network-oriented decision-making, which enables particularly middle-level officials to short circuit bureaucratic hierarchies and thus directly affect their organisation’s policy formulation and execution. Traditionally, the main power base of international organisations (IOs) has been viewed as residing in Weberian rationality-legal authority, which refers to the lack of bias, objectivity and superior precision of bureaucratic decision-making. The new, post-Weberian bureaucratic powers refer to the capacity of today’s IOs to ‘blend their intellectual energies’\(^3\) and expertise with external actors, e.g. civil society organisations, within global networks of cooperation, as well as to the internal tendency of these organisations to work in teams rather than only through hierarchical structures. The case study of the Agenda will reveal that those emerging post-Weberian powers date back to already the early 1990s.

The first section of this article will outline the theoretical framework of analysis. We claim that rigid and hierarchical bureaucracies of Weber’s age relying on strict divisions of labour between departments of IOs are increasingly transformed and replaced with more network-oriented, flexible, de-layered and flat entities based on the post-Weberian model. While the Weberian model of bureaucracy envisages monolithic, centralised and hierarchical structures, the post-Weberian form of bureaucracy relies more on global networks of cooperation. The subsequent sections of the article will proceed to the case study, which will demonstrate that the drafting and implementation of the Agenda reflects the post-Weberian model of bureaucracy both in terms of how the document was prepared and in terms of its overall impact.
Procedurally, the preparation and drafting process of the Agenda was implemented by teams of middle-level UN bureaucrats working closely with global networks of various expert groups, research organisations, think tanks and other organisations operating outside the UN. Interestingly, Boutros-Ghali used interdepartmental teams in both drafting and implementing the Agenda, although his tenure has often been characterised by a secretive and authoritarian type of leadership and Boutros-Ghali himself stressed that in dealing with bureaucrats ‘stealth and sudden violence’ was essential. The trends identified in this article, particularly the gradual emergence of network-based structures in the UN Secretariat, have been taking place irrespective of the specific leadership style of the Secretary-General. Kofi Annan was known as a democratic and inclusive team leader but the practice of using interdepartmental teams and working groups started already much earlier.

Setting the scene for analysis: the theoretical framework

(i) The Weberian theory of bureaucratisation

In the present literature on globalisation, bureaucracy is widely seen as an old relic of modernity and an antithesis of the new modes of action, such as global networks of cooperation. Methodologically, bureaucracy is conceived of as an outdated concept which lacks explanatory powers in the global age. Martin Albrow, for one, contends that bureaucratic rationalisation has sedimented in the history of modernity and ‘transmuted into what now appear to be features of a past historical period.’ Bureaucracy is commonly refuted not only on descriptive and ontological grounds (‘bureaucracies are unviable’), like in Albrow’s theory, but also for evaluative and moral reasons (‘bureaucracies are undesirable’). According to conventional wisdom, bureaucracy stands for unnecessary and burdensome regulation which hinders networked business activities.
However, the first decade of the 21st century has witnessed a somewhat surprising resurgence of bureaucratisation theory across disciplinary boundaries. In current International Relations (IR) theory and administrative sciences, an increasing number of scholars call for the ‘revitalisation’ of bureaucracy theory and ‘rediscovering Weber’. The recent discussions on theory of bureaucratisation refute both (neo)realist and neoliberal institutionalist theories, according to which IOs are merely epiphenomenal of state policies (the realist argument) or technical and apolitical instruments of their principals, i.e. nation-states and governments (the neoliberal argument). Both (neo)realist and neoliberal institutionalist theories are based on the premise that IOs cannot wield substantial powers independently of states. The new bureaucracy theory draws upon sociology and social constructivism to argue that IOs can and will wield considerable powers independently of states, and should therefore be described as political actors per se.

In current social and organisational science, the (re-)emergence of bureaucratisation in global society is explained mainly by reference to Weber’s classic text, which outlines the benefits of bureaucracy in modern society. According to Weber, the adoption of the bureaucratic form of administration is a rational choice on the part of policy-makers because of its efficiency and superiority in comparison to alternative forms of administration. Bureaucracies are superior in precision, reliability, stability, efficiency, the stringency of discipline, application to all kinds of administrative tasks, and access to specialised and technical knowledge. These qualities combine to constitute the rationality-legal authority of bureaucracy, which still provides an important source of power to IOs in global society. As Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore point out, ‘The power of IOs, and bureaucracies generally, is that they present themselves as impersonal, technocratic, and neutral - as not exercising power but instead as serving others.’

However, the call for ‘rediscovering’ Weber in current social science research appears partly misguided as it erroneously assumes that bureaucratisation today is precisely the same as that seen in the age of modernity and that the power and appeal of bureaucracy today are explained by the same factors as those envisaged by Weber. Instead, the emergence and
operations of bureaucracy today are actually embedded in the specific structural conditions of
global politics. Thus, we should assess the renewed importance of bureaucracy from the
vantage point of globalisation theory. The next sub-section will engage in that task, inquiring
which aspects of globalisation render bureaucracy powerful and how the bureaucracies have
changed both in substance and form.

(ii) Bureaucracies embedded in global networks: towards a post-Weberian theory of
bureaucratisation

It will be argued below that the increased importance of bureaucracy in contemporary
international relations could be explained by one factor in particular, namely the network logic
of globalisation. The conventional wisdom, according to which the latter factor constitutes an
antithesis of bureaucracy in the global age, could be turned upside down by arguing that it is
precisely the network logic of globalisation which actually generates new, post-Weberian
powers for bureaucracies - in addition to Weberian powers described above. John Urry alludes
to those post-Weberian powers, when he argues that the network logic of globalisation enables
flexible and hence more efficient responses to emerging conflicts as well as rapid exchange of
information between interacting units in global decision-making.14 Such units may include
international bureaucracies.

Anne-Marie Slaughter similarly argues that the network logic of globalisation radically
transforms unitary and sovereign nation-states into disaggregated ones. As a result, global
problems are increasingly solved through expertise networks and direct interactions between
specialists working for sectoral ministries in different countries, rather than through inter-
governmental negotiations between diplomats and other political representatives of sovereign
states whose primary aim is to pursue their national and political interests, not to solve
functional problems.15 These direct lines of communication enabled by globalisation, in turn,
enhance the powers of bureaucracy: they allow more effective decision-making on functional
problems of globality like climate change and cross-border violence by enabling officials at
times to bypass time-consuming and often unproductive or counterproductive political wrangling at the inter-government level. Thus, the network logic of globalisation and enhanced powers of bureaucracy go hand in hand.

The current IR research has thus far paid relatively little attention to the fact that the disaggregation process set in motion by globalisation affects not only nation-states, as implied by Slaughter, but also international bureaucracies. The case of the Agenda analysed in this article shows that global networks allow particularly middle- and lower-level officials in IOs to wield considerable new bureaucratic powers. These officials can in principle take the initiative on global problems, for instance in the prevention of genocide and mass atrocities or in dealing with natural or environmental disasters, bypassing the strict hierarchical structure within a bureaucracy. This works basically in the same way as experts in sectoral ministries directly communicate with each other across national borders, often bypassing their superiors in government structures, as described by Slaughter.

As for the prevailing (cob)web metaphor of globalisation, Harold Jacobson notes that, ‘States entangled in webs of international organizations is the proper simile to describe the contemporary global political system.’ Jacobson’s account could be elaborated here by noting that international organisations, too, are entangled in webs of cooperation which involve various non-governmental organisations and civil society actors. Just as the embedding of nation-states in global networks potentially increases their influence, so too the embedding of international bureaucracies in global cooperation networks can amplify their powers. The UN, for example, increasingly derives its bureaucratic powers from global networks like the ones built around the principle of Responsibility to Protect (R2P). These R2P networks are composed of not only official actors such as regional organisations and governments but also of active individuals, non-governmental organisations and social groups that offer their energy and time - often on a voluntary basis - to promoting the global cause of the protection of civilians from atrocity crimes.
The propensity of the network logic of globalisation to amplify the bureaucratic powers of the UN is implied in Thomas G. Weiss, Tatiana Carayannis and Richard Jolly’s account, which argues that UN policy is shaped between three UNs, namely UN member states (the First UN), the staff of the UN Secretariat and other UN officials (the Second UN), and academia and NGOs (the Third UN). The ‘intellectual energies’ of the three UNs blend, creating synergies and amplifying the powers of the UN. As Weiss, Carayannis and Jolly elaborate in more detail, ‘A revolving door turns as academics and national political actors move inside to take staff positions in UN secretariats, or UN staff members leave to join NGOs, universities, or national office and subsequently engage from outside, but are informed by experience inside.’ The second section of this article will describe such ‘blending of energies’ and ‘revolving doors’ in the case of the Agenda. UN officials engaged in the drafting of the Agenda had been informed by working experience both inside and outside the UN, including universities, non-governmental and governmental institutions.

(iii) Practices as the binding glue between the three UNs

It will be argued below that the post-Weberian theory of networked bureaucracies outlined previously is inherently related to the practice theory, on account of the fact that practices constitute the glue which binds international civil servants and civil society actors together in global networks. Joel S. Migdal describes practices as ‘routinized performative acts - that batter the image of a coherent, controlling state and neutralize the territorial and public-private boundaries’. Migdal’s explicit intent is to demonstrate the openness of states and their relatedness to wider national and international society via practices. His argument, however, is applicable not only to state bureaucracies but also to all other kinds of bureaucracies, including those embodied in IOs. It implies that individual bureaucrats can and will short circuit the bureaucratic hierarchy of their relevant IOs by establishing cooperation practices directly with their counterparts outside of those organisations.
Migdal’s theory concerning the gradual removal of the ‘public-private boundary’ of bureaucracies is central in this article, for it demonstrates that UN Secretariat officials, like any other bureaucrats, can short circuit the UN hierarchy by establishing and performing practices directly with civil society actors. The empirical part of the article will show that Secretariat officials were in fact effectively doing so already in the early 1990s. As a result, the public-private boundary between international civil servants working at the UN (the ‘public’) and international civil society (the ‘private’) has been eroding. This, in turn, importantly implies that the UN has been developing into an open system through spontaneous, active and independent practice-setting by individual bureaucrats particularly at the mid-level of the UN bureaucracy, rather than only by design or through an intentional master plan devised by the senior leadership of the UN, e.g. the Secretary-General, to open up the Secretariat and to increase its external relations.

The recent ‘practice turn’\textsuperscript{22} in social science and IR theory has deepened the understanding of the way in which practices structure the relations of IOs with their constituent parts and with their external partners in global networks. Ole Jacob Sending and Iver B. Neumann, for example, argue that, ‘Our things of boundaries are practices, which in and of themselves define where the inside of an IO stops and the outside begins.’\textsuperscript{23} While Sending and Neumann focus on the internal dimension of IOs and identify those practices that structure state-IO relations, such as the Country Policy and Institutional Assessment applied by the World Bank, this article will also shed light on the external dimension of IOs by exploring those practices that structure the relations of IOs with civil society actors, namely those between UN Secretariat officials and the ‘Third UN’, including non-governmental organisations and think tanks.

As Barry Barnes points out, ‘To engage in a practice is to exercise a power…’\textsuperscript{24} For this article, Barnes’s insight means that UN officials engage in internal practices (e.g., interdepartmental cooperation) and external practices (e.g., cooperation schemes with civil society actors) in order to exercise and build their bureaucratic powers. External practices amplify bureaucratic powers in two interrelated ways. Firstly, the expertise of UN officials is partly embedded in
those practices which structure their relationships with external actors. The conventional, or ‘Hammarskjöldian’, wisdom on the nature of the United Nations maintains that international civil servants (e.g., UN Secretariat officials) always need to maintain a degree of isolation from the political environment surrounding them in order to ensure their impartiality and integrity and to remain untainted by the national interests of UN member states. On the other hand, the building and maintenance of technical expertise of UN officials - which constitutes the essence of their raison d’être and the bulk of their bureaucratic powers - require them to reach out to specialised civil society organisations, universities and think tanks and to set up and perform practices of concrete cooperation with them in order to gather information and gain knowledge on global problems and skills in solving them.

According to Emanuel Adler and Vincent Pouliot, ‘Practices … are patterned actions that are embedded in particular organized contexts and, as such, are articulated into specific types of action and are socially developed through learning and training.’\(^{25}\) This article will show that the pattern of the UN Secretariat’s internal practices (interdepartmental cooperation) and external practices (relations with civil society actors) has become increasingly intense, more institutionalised and systematic during the past two decades, which has been partly enabled by organisational learning at the UN.

At first, the pattern of those practices was unsystematic and rudimentary, based on the personal initiative of UN officials to establish connections internally and with external actors, as will be demonstrated in the second and third sections of this article by reference to the case of the Agenda. The initial stage of the drafting of the Agenda, for example, was informed by ad hoc seminars with distinguished experts working in the Ford Foundation, the UN Association of the US and other organisations (external practices), as well as by several consequent and competing drafting teams set up by the Secretary-General within the UN Secretariat (internal practices). Many of these experts consulted for the Agenda had built their savoir-faire by working in various posts inside and outside the UN, which illustrates the ‘revolving door’ model of the practice theory. James Sutterlin, for example, had first worked in the US State
Department and then taught at the Yale and Long Island Universities in addition to making another distinguished career at the UN. The fourth section of this article will argue that in the 21st century the internal and external cooperation practices of the UN Secretariat have become more institutionalised, and their pattern has become more systematic. Today these institutionalised practices include the Arria formula and the conflict prevention and early warning mechanism of the so-called interdepartmental framework team, which nowadays consists of more than 20 members from the whole UN system.

However, the paradigm shift from the Weberian model of closed and hierarchical administration towards the post-Weberian ideal of open administration premised on global networks has not been a deterministic or straightforward process. The working of UN Secretariat officials has always been subject to Weberian and post-Weberian bureaucratic practices simultaneously, and the relative importance of these two sets of practices has been in constant flux. Thus, neither the Weberian nor post-Weberian model of administration fully characterises the UN system. Instead, it is more apposite to say that the Weberian and post-Weberian models have always fought over primacy in the UN Organisation. Yves Beigbeder’s account published in 1997, for example, reflects that the practices applied by the UN Secretariat in the early 1990s were predominantly Weberian: ‘The UN itself is not a model of decentralization … In December 1993, the General Assembly regretted that the Secretary-General’s report on the restructuring and efficiency of the Secretariat did not include proposals on decentralization measures.’ At the same time, post-Weberian bureaucratic practices began to gain prominence in the UN Secretariat on two fronts.

Firstly, individual bureaucrats particularly at the mid-level of the Secretariat were spontaneously building connections to civil society actors on their own initiative, short circuiting the UN bureaucracy, as already mentioned previously. Secondly, the then Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali, who has typically been portrayed as the advocate of Weberian bureaucratic practices on account of the fact that he used to concentrate bureaucratic powers to the close circle of trusted senior officials around him, actually advocated post-Weberian
practices on some occasions, for example by setting up competing drafting teams on the Agenda. As Beigbeder describes, ‘In management terms, top management retains full control in a centralized organization, while decentralization may allow rival centres of power to emerge and cause rivalry and conflicts.’\textsuperscript{27} The next section will describe in more detail the way in which competing bureaucratic units - along with many other post-Weberian bureaucratic practices - were used as an intentional strategy in drafting the Agenda.

**The drafting of An Agenda for Peace**

(i) Overview

During the UK’s chairmanship of the UN Security Council for the month of January 1992, the then British Prime Minister John Major presided over the first Summit meeting of the Council at the level of Heads of State and Government on 31 January 1992. In that meeting, the Council decided to ask the newly elected Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, to produce a blueprint for his leadership and the reform of the UN at the end of the Cold War, particularly in the political and security areas of the Organisation.

The drafting of that blueprint - An Agenda for Peace - reveals some important aspects of the bureaucratic routines of the UN Secretariat. In his book *Unvanquished* Boutros-Ghali gives the impression that he himself wrote the Agenda,\textsuperscript{28} but overlooks the fact that he used bureaucracies inside the UN to prepare the report. Since Dag Hammarskjöld, who has been said to have written some major policy speeches and documents entirely unaided, the UN Secretaries-General have rarely, if ever, had time for this kind of function. For the drafting of speeches, the Secretary-General has an office dedicated to this function at his disposal. As a rule, substantive departments and offices provide the fundamental elements of major policy speeches and reports. The speech-writing office then fine-tunes the draft and the Secretary-General personally approves the final product. But for the drafting of the Agenda, Boutros-Ghali used an innovative approach and set up dedicated drafting teams to do the work.
(ii) Starting the drafting process of An Agenda for Peace

In early March 1992 Boutros-Ghali established a high-level team to help him prepare the report, which had been requested by the Security Council Declaration adopted at the end of the January 1992 Summit. The high-level Task Force, as it was called, was chaired by Vladimir Petrovsky, a new Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, and the former Deputy Foreign Minister of the Soviet Union under Mikhail Gorbachev’s regime. Boutros-Ghali’s most senior programme managers and advisers constituted the other members of the Task Force. Virendra Dayal, former Chef de Cabinet of Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, was appointed as rapporteur of the Task Force.

In contrast to some later preparatory processes of major UN policy reports, no large secretariat was created for this purpose. Background research was undertaken by the secretary of the Task Force or other UN regular staff on an ad hoc basis. In addition, Brian Urquhart from the Ford Foundation and Edward Luck from the UN Association of the US organised well-targeted seminars to assist the preparatory process. A number of submissions were also received from UN Member States and these, as well as the results of inside and outside meetings, were used in the preparatory process.

All in all, the substantive preparatory process was fast (three to four months) and conducted without outside funding, whereas other similar external UN panels have consumed much longer periods with dozens of conferences, seminars and workshops, and have usually involved a much larger secretariat and funding. Moreover, the recent high-level commissions have at least theoretically been ‘independent’ from the UN. The drafting group on the Agenda, however, was a truly internal panel (the Second UN) with extensive and deep external connections with civil society actors (the Third UN). As we can see from the case study, Boutros-Ghali used the model of competing bureaucracies (creating three consequent drafting
teams for the Agenda) for innovative thinking and drafting, which in the end resulted in an influential policy document.

As usual in any report writing, the first phase was the preparation of an outline of the report which the Task Force discussed with the Secretary-General on 19 March 1992. Boutros-Ghali, a former professor, had collected statistics for the meeting on the changing role of conflicts, which he insisted should be taken into account in producing the report. At the same time, it was decided that the secretariat of the Task Force would compile a list of all previous recommendations that had been proposed on the reform of the UN in the political and security fields, whether by scholars, NGOs, international or regional organisations or governments. These were all presented to the group in two marathon weekend sessions in the Secretary-General’s Office in March 1992. The purpose of these sessions was to brainstorm the substantive content of the report and its possible recommendations in an unbiased and collegial fashion. A record of the meeting was prepared and later used in the drafting. Boutros-Ghali commented on the recommendations in the list in writing, thereby giving the eventual drafters of the report a taste of his preferences.

In late April 1992 Petrovsky assigned one of his staff members, a former speechwriter for Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, Bertrand Ramcharan to become the principal drafter of the final report. At the same time, Ramcharan and the secretary of the Task Force asked their former mentor and supervisor, James Sutterlin, who had moved to Yale University after his retirement from the UN, to provide input and informal comments on the first draft. Sutterlin was no stranger to policy-making and report-writing, as he had formerly been Director in Pérez de Cuéllar’s Executive Office and had worked in the US State Department as well, briefly directing its Policy Planning Staff in the early 1970s. The first draft by Ramcharan and his associates was ready on 24 April 1992 and was discussed in two meetings of the high-level Task Force. Members were quite happy with the product but they all made detailed comments in writing that were incorporated into the final report. It was sent to Boutros-Ghali at the end of April by Petrovsky for the Secretary-General’s approval.
(iii) Finalisation of the drafting process

Jean Krasno reports that Boutros-Ghali deemed the draft report ‘completely unsatisfactory’ and asked the rapporteur to rewrite it. At this time, with the approval of the Secretary-General, Dayal asked Sutterlin to participate in the drafting, which was supposed to take place in total secrecy in the Office of Boutros-Ghali. Sutterlin was not formally recruited for the job, nor did he receive any compensation and his formal affiliation continued to be Yale University. Together, they prepared a new draft but it was based significantly on the ideas and recommendations of the high-level Task Force and, indeed, Dayal had been a full member of the group participating in all of its deliberations. However, they also dropped a number of recommendations.

On the other hand, Sutterlin added text on peace-enforcement, that is, the sections on ‘Use of military force’ and ‘Peace-enforcement units’ of the Agenda. As Sutterlin described, ‘Dayal bought it and sold with difficulty to BBG [Boutros Boutros-Ghali].’ It is also noteworthy that the high-level Task Force had earlier decided against including anything on peace-enforcement and the Security Council Declaration did not mention it either. Furthermore, these recommendations were not cleared by the head of UN peace-keeping at the time, Marrack Goulding, who was against them and also objected to the way in which the drafting of the report was taken away from the Task Force. In addition to the section on peace-enforcement, Sutterlin also drafted sections dealing with early warning, fact-finding and conflict prevention, and defined some key concepts for the report.

After three weeks of rewriting, the new draft was ready to be submitted to the Secretary-General. Boutros-Ghali was satisfied with the product in the main. Nevertheless, he wanted the wording to be improved and asked his new incoming Director of Speechwriting Charles Hill to do it. The Secretary-General and Hill formed the third and final drafting team to finalise the
report. No major changes to the content were made in this phase although some proposals were dropped, the presentation order was altered and the language became more direct.\textsuperscript{45}

According to the final version of the Agenda, one of the key missions of the UN is to promote early warning, conflict prevention and preventive diplomacy. Both early warning and prevention were stressed in the Task Force’s draft and given special weight in Sutterlin’s new draft; the final version included a special subtitle ‘early warning’.\textsuperscript{46} The previous working history and contacts of some key actors involved in the drafting of the Agenda partly explain the centrality of early warning and conflict prevention in the final product of the Agenda. Boutros-Ghali had abolished in early 1992 the first-ever specialised early warning, conflict prevention and resolution office of the UN, the Office for Research and the Collection of Information (ORCI). But the creator and godfather of ORCI, James Sutterlin, suddenly had a chance to restore early warning and prevention to the agenda of the UN. Furthermore, James Jonah, a member of the high-level Task Force had been a former head of ORCI, as had Alvaro de Soto, another Task Force member. Jonah, when leading the office, had promoted close cooperation with academia and think tanks to improve the early warning and prevention functions of the UN. Ramcharan and the secretary of the Task Force had also been staff members of ORCI.\textsuperscript{47}

We now return to our theoretical framework concerning the post-Weberian network logic of globalisation, according to which IOs are turning more and more to academia and civil society actors in various aspects of their work. The role of Sutterlin, Jonah, Ramcharan and other ORCI members in the preparation and implementation process of the Agenda reflects the way in which the UN functioned in accordance with the post-Weberian model and practices of network-oriented bureaucracies in the early 1990s. In fact, already in the mid-1980s Sutterlin and a number of ORCI staff members had established a so-called ‘Core Group’ based at Yale University to promote new ideas for early warning, conflict prevention and conflict resolution by the UN.\textsuperscript{48} The Group was an innovative cooperation scheme between the UN staff from the Secretary-General’s Office and from the political sector of the UN Organisation (the Second UN), on the one hand, and from academia and NGOs (the Third UN), on the other. Scholars of
the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), where Jonah had received his PhD, had already helped ORCI to create an experimental information system for early warning and prevention purposes\textsuperscript{49} and this cooperation with academia continued throughout the existence of ORCI and for a number of years afterwards. When drafting the Agenda, Sutterlin had also asked confidential comments on his draft from scholars in the Core Group.\textsuperscript{50}

The legacy of the Core Group and ORCI had a major impact on the content of the Agenda since several middle-level bureaucrats\textsuperscript{51} that were affiliated with these entities were key officials in the preparation and drafting process of the Agenda. For example, Krasno, a member of the Core Group, describes the preparation process of the Agenda: ‘Secretary [of the high-level Task Force chaired by Petrovsky] circulated to the Group [Petrovsky's Task Force] ideas for the report [the Agenda], some of which had originated in discussions held over several years by a number of academics and practitioners centered at Yale...’\textsuperscript{52} Many scholars and civil society representatives, together with the secretariat of the high-level Task Force, also participated in seminars organised by the Ford Foundation and UNU of the US in the preparatory process of the Agenda. These examples reflect the way in which officials of IOs cooperate with civil society actors and scholars across institutional boundaries,\textsuperscript{53} in accordance with the post-Weberian model of networked bureaucracies.

**The adoption and implementation of the recommendations of *An Agenda for Peace***

*(i) Security Council and General Assembly discussions on An Agenda for Peace*

The Security Council took the Secretary-General’s report seriously and established a monthly work programme and an occasional working group to review various sections of the report from June 1992 to May 1993. In total, the Council issued eight Presidential Statements on the report. In the areas of early warning, conflict prevention and preventive diplomacy, the Agenda states that preventive steps have to be based on the timely and accurate knowledge of the facts, including the economic and social roots of conflicts, and that the political willingness to
take appropriate action is essential. The report then elaborates on some specific actions related to fact-finding in potential conflict areas.\textsuperscript{54} The Presidential Statement of the Council of 30 November 1992 (S/24872) welcomes and supports particularly these proposals outlined in the Agenda.

In the summer of 1992 the General Assembly set up its own Ad Hoc Working Group chaired by an Egyptian UN Ambassador, Nabir El-Alarabi. In order to maintain continuity, the Department of Political Affairs appointed the former secretary of the Agenda’s drafting group as a technical and substantive secretary of the Assembly’s Working Group.\textsuperscript{55} The Agenda received very positive comments in the Working Group, perhaps partly because Egypt, where Boutros-Ghali had previously been serving as Deputy Foreign Minister, was in charge and the report was promoted among Member States by a popular and reform-minded Egyptian Ambassador, later a Foreign Minister. Recommendations on early warning, conflict prevention and preventive diplomacy received very positive reactions of support from Members States, but the peace-enforcement concept was not welcomed at that time. In fact, nothing was included in the Assembly or Council resolutions on robust peace-keeping.

The Assembly resolution entitled ‘An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy and Related Matters’ was adopted on 18 December 1992 (A/47/120A). The resolution encourages, among other things, the Secretary-General to set up an appropriate early warning mechanism for situations which are likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security and invites the Secretary-General to strengthen the capacity of the Secretariat to collect and analyse information to better serve the early warning needs of the Organisation. All in all, it provides a strong mandate for the Secretariat to develop and act for a meaningful and timely early warning and conflict prevention system.
(ii) Implementation process of the report’s recommendations on early warning and prevention

It was clear that UN Member States were eager to move forward with the implementation process of the Agenda but progress was stalled in the Secretariat in terms of implementation in the spring of 1993. In response to pressure from the Member States, Marrack Goulding, who had become the Under-Secretary-General (USG) of the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), called a meeting on the matter with Kofi Annan (USG of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, DPKO), Jan Eliasson (USG of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, DHA), James Jonah (USG of DPA)\textsuperscript{56}, and Alvaro de Soto (Assistant Secretary-General in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, EOSG). The outcome of the meeting was a decision to set up an internal working group of middle-level officials, the Interdepartmental Working Group as it was called, to prepare the Secretary-General’s official response to Member States, as well as plans for an internal early warning and conflict prevention system in the Secretariat, as called for by General Assembly resolution A/47/120A.\textsuperscript{57}

The Interdepartmental Working Group first prepared a draft of the Secretary-General’s report entitled ‘Implementation of the Recommendations Contained in An Agenda for Peace’, issued on 15 June 1993 (A/47/965, 1993). The report discusses all aspects of the implementation of the Agenda. Regarding the early warning mechanism, Boutros-Ghali promises the following: ‘In keeping with that resolution [A/47/120A], I shall develop and present a plan for such a mechanism before the opening of the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly’.\textsuperscript{58} The same group also prepared a blueprint for this mechanism as well as for an integrated information system for the political sector of the UN. Boutros-Ghali’s statement continues: ‘Initial steps have already begun’.\textsuperscript{59} For this assignment, the group met ten times to prepare specific recommendations that were submitted in early September for action.\textsuperscript{60}

In anticipation of recommendations that were not implemented until during Kofi Annan’s time\textsuperscript{61}, the Interdepartmental Working Group concluded that DPA, DHA, and DPKO were critical components of any early warning mechanism, and that desk officers and area experts in these
departments should share the responsibilities for early warning. To that end, the Group suggested that these three departments should select senior officers to serve as focal points for early warning, and participate in an interdepartmental working group on early warning that would meet regularly (or when requested by a member) to share information and define options for preventive action. Further, the new working group on early warning was to communicate the recommendations of the Under-Secretaries-General to the Secretary-General. In carrying out these responsibilities, each departmental focal point was to utilise the insights of Secretariat desk officers and other experts within the UN system.  

Due to internal resistance and hesitation at the senior and middle levels of the UN Secretariat, these recommendations were not implemented, and the Secretary-General was unable to provide the General Assembly with his proposal for an early warning system as he had promised in his report to the Assembly. All of this happened a year before the genocide in Rwanda. The effective implementation of the Agenda’s recommendations on early warning and conflict prevention, as well as peace-enforcements units, could have contributed to the prevention and mitigation of the genocide in Rwanda. Peace-enforcement units did not get much support in the General Assembly or the Security Council, either. There was internal resistance to this concept at that time although peace-enforcement was later approved both as a concept and practice. The opposite was true regarding the early warning and prevention recommendations of the Agenda. The fact that these recommendations were warmly received among the member states but not implemented by the UN bureaucracy raises further critical questions on the role of bureaucrats in the UN decision-making process that will be explored below.

(iii) Bureaucratic powers

Why was the plan of the early warning and prevention system prepared by middle-level UN bureaucrats not implemented despite the fact that General Assembly resolution 47/120 asks the Secretary-General to develop and implement such a system? The question becomes ever
more pertinent in light of the fact that the Security Council in its Presidential Statement of S/24872 of 30 November 1992 provided indirect support for that system. Even the Summit Declaration of January 1992 suggests that, ‘The Secretary-General’s analysis and recommendations could cover the role of the United Nations in identifying potential crises and areas of instability.’ The non-implementation of the early warning recommendation also seems particularly bizarre in light of the fact that Boutros-Ghali would most likely have been eager to implement his own recommendation on the matter and, more than that, he had promised to do so to the General Assembly.

As already mentioned there was reluctance at the senior and middle levels in the key departments of the Secretariat to act on the proposal. The department most significantly linked to this issue was DPA since early warning and conflict prevention was an integral part of its mandate and mission. The head of DPA had called the high-level meeting of heads of key departments (described in the previous section) where it was decided that an Interdepartmental Working Group was to be organised to prepare plans for a new system and the finished implementation plan was duly sent for his review and action. In accordance with regular bureaucratic practices, the proposal by the Interdepartmental Group was discussed in the meetings of DPA’s senior leadership and Directors in the fall of 1993, but various reservations were expressed. One reason for inaction was that any new early warning system was felt to ‘increase bureaucracy’, a common inside argument against structural reforms in IOs. Facing the reluctance at middle levels (the Director level), the more senior leadership of DPA was unwilling to move forward with the proposal. Other UN departments and the Secretary-General’s Office did not return to the group’s recommendations either. The time was not ripe for the emergence of a post-Weberian network-based early warning system.
The transformation of UN early warning and conflict prevention towards a network model

Since the planning, and abandonment, of the system of early warning and conflict prevention outlined in the Agenda and its implementation plans, the UN has witnessed a gradual transformation towards the post-Weberian model of bureaucracy, away from the Weberian notion of closed and hierarchical administrative structures. Examples of this trend are many, including changes in the manner in which information is transferred internally and how it is acquired from outside sources. Even though the network-based early-warning and conflict prevention system outlined in the Agenda’s implementation plan was dismissed at the time of its inception, it re-emerged as an ‘Interdepartmental Framework Team’ in the late 1990s. Contacts to academia, think tanks and civil society have also intensified. Tapio Kanninen and Georgios Kostakos’s recent account points out that the development of UN conflict management towards a network model has continued from Boutros-Ghali’s tenure to Kofi Annan’s and Ban Ki-moon’s times:

Broader perspectives do come in, through contacts with outside think tanks and academics, who are invited to brown bag discussions, seminars, and other activities by UN system entities, including those organized by the secretary-general’s Strategic Planning Unit and the UN University’s New York Office. Special reports and high-level panels often initiated by the secretary-general and including senior world leaders and experts, are also used to deal with major global issues.\(^69\)

During Boutros-Ghali’s tenure, the information flow from the UN Secretariat to the Security Council was limited to a small group of senior officials around the Secretary-General. The day-to-day operations between the Secretariat and the Security Council were managed by the Senior Political Adviser and Special Representative of the Secretary-General to the Security Council.\(^70\) This arrangement reflected the old Weberian model of bureaucracy premised on the rigid division of labour and bureaucratic hierarchy. This model was later abandoned, and today the senior officials of the UN departments brief the Security Council directly in their respective
areas of expertise. This change reflects a shift towards a more open and functional – post-
Weberian – model of bureaucracy. For instance, briefing the Council on peace-keeping missions
is no longer entrusted to the Secretary-General’s closest political advisers, but is usually
assigned to a team whose exact composition depends on the particular issue arising on the
Council’s agenda.

Another distinct example of the shift of UN crisis management towards the post-Weberian
model of applying global, delayered and functional networks of decision-making, is the use of
direct briefings of the Council by non-governmental organisations and other relevant actors
outside the Secretariat and Security Council members. Already in the 1990s, the Arria Formula
was introduced at the UN with the aim of facilitating the information flow of global security
challenges to the Security Council. The Arria Formula refers to informal consultation processes
in which actors outside the Security Council, including NGOs, can brief the Council in a
confidential setting. Today, this mechanism is increasingly applied by the Council.

As for conflict prevention, a variety of non-governmental institutions, including the
International Crisis Group and the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, can bring
forward information on matters pertaining to international peace and security such as the
threat of impending atrocity crimes directly to the Security Council. The Arria Formula has been
used to promote other issues as well, such as gender and human security at large. Noeleen
Heyzer describes the practice of the Arria Formula as follows:

We used what is called Arria formula ... to allow real consultation ... We brought women
- the non-governmental groups, and the women themselves who were affected by
conflict, to talk to the members of the Security Council to prepare for the Security
Council resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.71

The transformation of the UN early warning and conflict prevention mechanism from the
Weberian hierarchical system into a more network-oriented (post-Weberian) one took place in
the aftermath of the UN’s failures in Rwanda and the Western Balkans when the so-called 
Interagency Framework Team for Coordinating Early Warning, Prevention and Preparedness 
was created in 1998.\textsuperscript{72} The membership of the Framework Team includes those departments 
and agencies of the UN system that are relevant for the generation of early warning 
information on impending conflicts, although the early warning side has not been too 
prominent in its work so far. Nevertheless, the Framework Team ideally constitutes a forum for 
such exchange of information, and its membership is evolving and expanding. Today, the Inter- 
Agency Framework Team for Coordination on Preventive Action consists of as many as 22 UN 
agencies and departments.\textsuperscript{73} It helps to build a ‘dynamic network of independent structures, 
mechanisms, resources, values, and skills which, through dialogue and consultation, contribute 
to conflict prevention and peace-building in a society’.\textsuperscript{74} On account of its fluid network 
structure, the Framework Team (FT) clearly resembles, in many respects, the original vision of a 
network-based information-sharing system envisaged by the architects of the implementation 
plan of the Agenda’s recommendations on early warning in the early 1990s.

Preventive action projects coordinated by FT have been, and still are, operational in dozens of 
countries. According to its network logic, FT not only cooperates with governmental agencies 
but also reaches out to civil society in the field. A recent example of prevention work sponsored 
by FT and its members is in Kenya where the local peace committees played a critical role in 
containing violence after the disputed elections of 2007.\textsuperscript{75} Networks and teams in international 
organisations are often most effective when they are informal in character avoiding protocol 
and politisation. FT is an example of this, as described by the UNDP Administrator Helen Clark:

There is also an informal group of 22 UN departments, agencies, funds and 
programmes, known as Framework Team, which provides support and advice to UN 
Resident Coordinators on interagency conflict prevention initiatives. Its work is 
premised on the principle, reaffirmed in the Secretary-General’s 2001 Report on the 
Prevention of Armed Conflict, that conflict prevention remains the responsibility of 
member states, with the UN playing a supportive role as requested to help build
domestic mediation institutions. Interagency efforts like the Framework Team should be encouraged, supported and ideally consulted, albeit informally, by the Council.\(^{76}\)

Generally speaking, the shift towards the network logic in the UN bureaucracy is reflected by the increasing use of interdepartmental and interagency teams to prepare and execute UN policies and to solve international crises and emergencies. Kofi Annan formalised interdepartmental practices by establishing the Executive Committees for key thematic areas of the Organisation. He also set up a Senior Management Group and a Policy Committee of his departmental heads to meet with him regularly for policy preparation and execution.\(^{77}\) Annan also used interdepartmental teams in preparing policy documents, for example his 2001 Report of the Prevention of Armed Conflict.\(^{78}\) Another indication of the trend towards the network logic has been the establishment of the UN Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) which coordinates humanitarian efforts among 17 UN and non-UN partners under the leadership of Emergency Relief Coordinator.\(^{79}\)

**Conclusions**

To close the argumentative circle of this article, it is useful here to return to the model of three UNs, which was outlined already in the first section. In their recent article, Anoulak Kittikhoun and Thomas G. Weiss draw upon a variety of empirical and theoretical sources to demonstrate that the Third UN is vital for the functioning of the UN system, as non-governmental organisations and scholars bring forward new information and ideas in the UN’s decision-making, promote new policies and mobilise public opinion.\(^{80}\)

Our analysis confirms Kittikhoun and Weiss’s argument by revealing an integral and close cooperation between the Second and Third UNs in the drafting and implementation of *An Agenda for Peace*. The direct and indirect engagement of the members of the Yale-based Core Group and other cooperation partners outside the UN system in the drafting process of the Agenda demonstrates the blurring boundary between IOs working in their ‘official capacity’, on
the one side, and the academic community, on the other. Moreover, many UN officials who contributed to the drafting of the Agenda had previous working experience both in the UN system and in academia, in accordance with the model of ‘revolving doors’ developed in the recent IR literature. This transformation of the closed system of decision-making into an open system provides support for the emerging network logic of globalisation in the UN system.

As the second main indication of the emerging network logic, we have also noticed in our case study more recent trends in the working methods of the UN system: the Organisation is increasingly functioning in interdepartmental teams. Sometimes these teams might be personality-driven networks (or old boys’ clubs, to use a more plain description) akin to the second drafting team of the Agenda. But increasingly this kind of teamwork is formalised, as demonstrated by the system-wide composition of the Executive Committees of the present UN system. Even Boutros-Ghali established a formal interdepartmental group of senior managers, a high-level Task Force, to draft the Agenda. At the end, however, he decided not to fully utilise its product and trusted more another, more informal team of drafters, as revealed in this article. In the implementation phase, still another middle-level interdepartmental group was established to prepare a forward-looking blueprint for a new system of early warning and prevention. The trend is clear: the UN is moving towards team- and network-based structures and operations.

With regard to the overall impact of the Agenda, the new categories of conflict management introduced in it have subsequently been adopted in global networks of security policy well beyond the UN system. Today, a variety of actors ranging from non-governmental organisations to government officials continuously refer to the categories of conflict management introduced in the Agenda in their bureaucratic routines and activities, including concepts of ‘peace-enforcement’, ‘peacebuilding’ and ‘preventive deployment’. This process again demonstrates the dynamics of the network logic of globalisation.
The positive story of the Agenda was coupled with a negative one. Some of the conceptual and concrete innovations proposed by middle-level UN officials and their supporting cooperation networks in the broader intellectual community on early warning and prevention were stalled. And, most interestingly, they were stalled not by UN Member States but by other officials in the UN Secretariat at the senior and middle levels for bureaucratic reasons. The old Weberian bureaucracy ‘hit back’ at the emerging post-Weberian bureaucracy premised on the network logic. But recent developments in the field of UN conflict management indicate that the post-Weberian form of network-based bureaucracy, based on the necessities of globalisation, is gradually gaining ground in the UN Organisation.

2 [deleted for review process]
5 Myint-U and Scott, UN Secretariat, pp. 105-6.
8 These debates include for example the Young Researchers’ Workshop ‘Rediscovering Global Bureaucracies - From Weber to Where?’ organised at the Seventh Pan-European Conference on IR by the SGIR (Standing Group on International Relations) in Stockholm on 7-8 September 2010.


18 These include the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect established in New York in January 2008, the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect created in January 2009, the World Federalist Movement - Institute for Global Public Policy and various regional R2P centres.


28 ‘I was eager to draw up the report the Security Council had requested. I knew that policy was made by the written word … Before I became the secretary-general, I would write almost every day, whenever I could, for eight hours … As the weeks went by, I worried over each draft of my report. After twelve or thirteen versions, I stopped counting.’ Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished: A U.S. – U.N. Saga* (New York: Random House, 1999), p. 26.


30 Other members were Marrack Goulding, Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Peacekeeping Operations, James Jonah, the other USG for Political Affairs (in addition to Petrovsky), Jan Eliasson, USG for Humanitarian Affairs, Dick Thornberry, former US Attorney General and USG for the Department of Administration and Management, and Alvaro de Soto, Special Assistant to the Secretary-General.

31 Interview of James S. Sutterlin, New York City, 18 July 2011.

32 Personal notes, documents and working papers of the secretary of the high-level Task Force.

33 Notes of the secretary of the Task Force.


36 Notes of the secretary of the Task Force.

37 Ramcharan was later appointed as deputy and acting High Commissioner for Human Rights.

38 Sutterlin, Interview, 18 July 2011.

39 Notes of the secretary of the Task Force.


42 Sutterlin, ‘Personal e-mail communication’, 25 September 2010.
Sutterlin, 'Personal e-mail communication', 25 September 2010; Krasno, 'The Quiet Revolutionary', p. 35.

Hill was the former Chief of Staff to US Secretary of State George Schultz.

Sutterlin, Interview, 18 July 2011.


Sutterlin, Interview, 18 July 2011.

Some dozen scholars, civil society representatives and UN officials from the US, Canada and Europe were members of the Core Group. Bruce Russett from Yale University and James Sutterlin from the UN were the key organisers of the Group. Together with other members, they initiated, coordinated and co-organised some 30 conferences, seminars and brainstorming sessions on early warning, conflict resolution and related subjects for the representatives of the UN, academia, governments and NGOs over a period of some 10 years. Upon Sutterlin’s retirement in 1990, Russett asked him to join Yale University for the Core Group’s activities and, in fact, when drafting the Agenda, his official title was Senior Fellow at Yale. The membership of the Core Group changed over time but some of the most active members were: Bruce Russett and Paul Bracken from Yale University; Hayward Alker and Lincoln P. Bloomfield from MIT in the initiation phases; David Cox and Jane Boulden from Kingston College; Raimo Väyrynen from Helsinki University and later from Notre Dame University; Thomas Boudreau from the Carnegie Council of International and Religious Affairs and later from the Irish Peace Institute and the International School of Training; Jim Tierney and Jean Krasno from the Fund for Peace and Krasno later from Yale University. Sutterlin, Interview 18 July 2011.

However, this system was not implemented at the time due to bureaucratic resistance.

At the time, DPA was headed by two USGs.

Personal notes, documents and working papers of the convener of the Interdepartmental Working Group, Tapio Kanninen. The structure of the internal group also reflected the post-Weberian model of bureaucracy in that its chair was at a lower grade than any of its members. Hence, in this case functional expertise - gained for instance through regular participation in the activities of the Core Group - was more important than one’s hierarchical position.

Notes of the convener of the Group.

Touko Piiparinen, The Transformation of UN Conflict Management: Producing Images of Genocide from Rwanda to Darfur and Beyond (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 79-83.

Notes of the convener of the Group.


Myint-U and Scott, *UN Secretariat*, p. 87.


Statement by Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator, at the annual workshop for newly-elected members of the UN Security Council, New York, 17 November 2011, pp. 13-14.

