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Policy Entrepreneurship by International Bureaucracies: The Evolution of Public Information in UN Peacekeeping

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Abstract[2]

The UN Secretariat's role in the expansion of peacekeeping after the Cold War is debated. Different theoretical accounts offer competing interpretations: principal-agent models and sociological institutionalism tend to emphasize the Secretariat's risk-averse behavior; organizational learning scholarship and international political sociology find evidence of the Secretariat's activism; constructivism analyzes instances of both. I argue the UN Secretariat can be both enthusiastic and cautious about new tasks depending on the circumstances and the issue area. For example, UN officials have been the driving force behind the development of public information campaigns by peacekeeping missions aimed at the local population. During the Cold War, it was not regarded as necessary for UN missions to communicate with the public in the area of operation: their interlocutors were parties to the conflict and the diplomatic community. With the deployment of the first multidimensional missions in the late 1980s and the early 1990s, UN staff realized the need to explain the organization's role to the local population and provide information about UN-supported elections. In promoting this innovation, they played the role of policy entrepreneurs. The institutionalization of this innovation, however, was not an automatic process and required continuous advocacy by UN information staff.

Keywords: Public information, Policy entrepreneurship, UN Secretariat, Peacekeeping

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In the post-Cold War period, UN peacekeeping operations have acquired a long list of substantive and supporting tasks. The UN Secretariat's role in this expansion is debated. On the one hand, international bureaucracies are expected to seek more tasks and responsibilities which translate into larger budgets and greater influence. On the other hand, there is a perception that the Security Council has imposed additional tasks on the unwilling and underfunded Secretariat. I argue the UN Secretariat can be both enthusiastic and cautious about new tasks depending on the circumstances and the issue area. Sometimes, the Secretariat has sought an enlarged role for peacekeepers; at other times, it has favored traditional approaches. In the early days of multidimensional peacekeeping, UN officials were eager to engage in new activities and expand their responsibilities. After the failures in Somalia, Rwanda, and the former Yugoslavia, they became more circumspect. Their activism also depends on the issue area. For example, they have been the driving force behind the emergence and the institutionalization of public information campaigns organized by peacekeeping missions and aimed at the local population, which is the focus of this article.

While public information is often seen as a supporting function, it has important implications for the functioning, effectiveness, and financing of UN peacekeeping operations. Information plays an important role in volatile post-conflict environments and can both advance and endanger the peace process. As the discussion of the Rwanda mission below demonstrates, local public's understanding of the limits of the mandate is essential for civilian protection. Moreover, peacekeeping missions can lose credibility by disseminating unconfirmed or incomplete information. For example, a public information officer in the UN mission in Sierra Leone mistakenly announced that the capital was about to be overrun by rebels, which shattered the locals' trust in the already struggling mission. Finally, the costs of running a radio station by the UN mission in Cambodia exceeded four million US dollars, leading the station's chief to wonder whether it was a 'multimillion dollar folly'.[3] Besides the disputable assumption that it is appropriate for external actors to 'educate' the local population in human rights and democracy, public information in UN peacekeeping is a controversial matter. For UN public information staff, there is no doubt the issue is not technical but highly political.[4]

In this article, I analyze the role of UN Secretariat officials in promoting public information in peacekeeping by conceptualising their efforts in terms of policy entrepreneurship. I begin by

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[3] Mei, *Radio UNTAC,* 21.
[4] Interview with Ingrid Lehmann, FaceTime, May 2017.

discussing conflicting theoretical perspectives on the role of international bureaucrats in the evolution of their organizations. I then argue that we can make a better sense of this complexity by drawing on the literature on the emergence, diffusion, and institutionalization of norms and policies. From this literature, I derive a list of conditions under which international bureaucrats are likely to advocate successfully for new ideas and approaches. Turning to my case study, I provide a brief overview of how several Cold War operations, as well as all peacekeeping missions launched between the end of the Cold War and the mid-1990s,[5] have addressed the issue of information. I focus on this period because it was formative for public information in peacekeeping. While all missions between 1989 and 1995 did some public information work, in none of them did it reach the same scale and sophistication as in the missions in Namibia and Cambodia. These two are studied in detail. I compare the examples of Namibia and Cambodia with the missions in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia whose record in the field of information is less impressive: even committed advocates could not overcome inauspicious circumstances they faced. While the operations in Somalia and Angola would have also benefitted from such a programme, its absence can be attributed to a single main cause: the UN budgetary committee's reluctance to authorize a UN radio station in Somalia in the former case and the Angolan government's obstruction in the latter case. In Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, multiple reasons for the deficiency existed, which makes these cases worthy of in-depth study. Finally, I briefly discuss UN officials' efforts to institutionalize public information in peacekeeping through policy, guidance, and staff.

The article has a theoretical and an empirical section. In the theoretical section, I discuss the literature on policy entrepreneurship by international bureaucracies and address two main issues: the UN's Secretariat propensity for bureaucratic expansion vs. risk-aversion and the conditions under which UN officials are likely to advocate successfully for new approaches. In the empirical section, I provide an overview of public information activities in the 1989-1995 missions, compare the successful instances of innovation (Namibia and Cambodia) with the unsuccessful ones (Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia), and briefly look at the institutionalization of public information in policy, guidance, and UN Secretariat structures. I conclude by revisiting the main findings and suggesting directions for further research.

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[5] This excludes small observer missions, such as the first UN Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM I, 1989-1991) which consisted of 80 military observers and the UN Aouzou Strip Observer Group (UNASOG) which consisted of nine observers and six civilian staff, as well as the follow-on missions to UNPROFOR.

Methodology

My methodological approach rests on a combination of fieldwork, document analysis, and archival research. The data for this project come from two sources. First, I have conducted semi-structured interviews with current and former officials at the UN Department of Public Information (DPI), including two former chiefs of the department's Peace and Security Section, initially called Peace and Security Programmes Section (Ingrid Lehmann and Susan Manuel) and a staff member who has worked in the section since its inception and continues working there (Mikhail Seliankin), as well as with a staff member of the Public Affairs Section in the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) (André-Michel Essoungou). Second, the UN archives, UN official documents, memoirs of event participants, the UN Oral History Project, the US National Security Archive, and the US Foreign Affairs Oral History Project have been indispensable sources.

Policy entrepreneurship by international bureaucracies

Theories of international organizations' behavior put forward conflicting expectations about the UN Secretariat's role in the post-Cold War expansion of peacekeeping. Principal-agent models and sociological institutionalism tend to emphasize the Secretariat's risk-averse behavior. Organizational learning scholarship and international political sociology find evidence of the Secretariat's contribution to the expansion of peacekeepers' responsibilities. Constructivism has analyzed instances of both innovative and passive behavior. The fact that these studies usually refer to different examples suggests the Secretariat' behavior is context-specific.

The UN Secretariat and peacekeeping: bureaucratic expansion or risk-aversion?

Principal-agent models expect international bureaucracies to drive the expansion of their organization's remit. Secretariats are assumed to want larger budgets and therefore more tasks and responsibilities: they are 'competence-maximizers'.[6] However, empirical studies of the

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[6] Pollack, *Engines of European Integration,* 35.

UN Secretariat's behavior in peacekeeping in this tradition note that UN officials, besides the institutional interest in increased resources, also have policy interests. These policy interests result in 'an emphasis on risk aversion': the Secretariat does not want to be blamed for failure and, for this reason, tries to 'prevent overly ambitious objectives'.[7] This makes it 'extremely risk adverse and self-protective of the organization'.[8]

Sociological institutionalism provides a theoretical explanation for bureaucratic inertia and finds evidence of it in UN peacekeeping. The bureaucratic nature of international organizations may hinder innovation because new ideas 'question the status quo and the existing organizational culture'.[9] International bureaucracies thus frequently exhibit 'a structural conservatism'.[10] For example, during the 1994 Rwandan genocide, the Secretariat was not active and entrepreneurial but 'timid' and 'indecisive'.[11] Even entrepreneurial UN officials themselves note that 'very few UN bureaucrats will take any risk'.[12]

Constructivism paints a mixed picture. Having analyzed the contribution of Javier Pérez de Cuéllar and Boutros Boutros-Ghali to the evolution of peacekeeping, Karns thinks about 'two Secretaries-General and other key officials as agents and norm entrepreneurs in what might be termed a "process of task expansion"'.[13] She also notes the 'the flexibility and entrepreneurship' of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General (SRSGs) heading the early post-Cold War missions.[14] On the contrary, Paddon Rhoads argues that during the 1999 debates on the ground-breaking protection of civilians mandate for Sierra Leone, Kofi Annan expressed reservations and insisted on caveats.[15] Similarly, Weinlich demonstrates that in the planning for the transitional administration in East Timor, the Secretariat 'did not embrace the opportunity to enlarge its competences but rather sought orientation in traditional peacekeeping ideas', which questions 'the assumption that the international bureaucracy stands behind the vast expansion of the scope of peace operations, pushing for an ever-growing peacekeeping portfolio'.[16]

[7] Dijkstra, *International Organizations*, 8, 38.
[8] Doyle and Sambanis, *Making War,* 189.
[9] Kamradt-Scott, "The WHO Secretariat," 86.
[10] Bauer et al., "Understanding international bureaucracies," 25.
[11] Barnett, *Eyewitness to a Genocide,* 3.
[12] Carney, Interview by Kennedy, 110.
[13] Karns, "The roots of UN," 83.
[14] Ibid., 74.
[15] Paddon Rhoads, *Taking Sides*, 106.
[16] Weinlich, *The UN Secretariat's Influence,* 220.

Finally, from an organizational learning perspective, Benner, Mergenthaler and Rotmann have analyzed the Secretariat's efforts to enlarge peacekeepers' responsibilities to include police restructuring, judicial reform, and social rehabilitation.[17] Studies inspired by international political sociology have also challenged the 'common understanding of bureaucrats as agents of the status quo' and demonstrated that UN civil servants had influenced ideas and practices of the organization.[18] For example, Karlsrud has explored how SRSGs engaged in norm entrepreneurship when they adjudicated between conflicting peacekeeping principles and made difficult but consequential decisions.[19]

Faced with these diverging perspectives, I argue that we should not make *ex ante* assumptions about the UN Secretariat's behavior but instead look at specific debates on peacekeeping which have taken place in unique historical circumstances. An approach that conceptualizes the role of UN officials in terms of policy entrepreneurship helps analyze their efforts to promote new ideas and approaches as well as the reasons why those efforts succeed or fail. Some UN officials themselves report feeling 'more like an "entrepreneur" than a civil servant'.[20] I draw on the literature on both norm and policy entrepreneurship. Mintrom, who has introduced the concept of a 'policy entrepreneur' in his work on US domestic policies, has noted 'discussion among international relations scholars of the advocacy techniques used by "norm entrepreneurs" who…can be thought of as policy entrepreneurs who engage in dialogue and coordinated action at the transnational level'.[21] Nowadays, of course, we know that both norm and policy entrepreneurs can be active transnationally. Park and Vetterlein offer a useful way of thinking about the relationship between normative and policy advocacy through the concept of policy norms which they define as 'shared expectations for all relevant actors within a community about what constitutes appropriate behaviour, which is encapsulated in policy'.[22] When referring to actors promoting policy norms in the UN context, I use the generic term 'advocates'. This is the term used in Keck and Sikkink's seminal work on transnational advocacy, along with a similarly general term 'political entrepreneurs'.[23]

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[17] Benner, Mergenthaler and Rotmann, *The New World.*
[18] Bode, *Individual Agency*, 2.
[19] Karlsrud, *Norm Change.*
[20] Winckler, "Exceeding limitations," 60.
[21] Mintrom, *Policy Entrepreneurs,* 33.
[22] Park and Vetterlein, "Owning development," 4.
[23] Keck and Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders.*

Innovation in UN peacekeeping: Advocacy by UN Secretariat officials

The literature on norms and policies argues that different strategies for their promotion succeed under specific conditions. Since UN officials cannot coerce member states into accepting their visions, they rely on soft mechanisms of influence, such as persuasion and argumentation. Like transnational activist networks investigated by Keck and Sikkink, UN officials are 'not powerful in the traditional sense of the word [and therefore] must use the power of their information, ideas and strategies to alter the information and value contexts within which states make policies'.[24] In promoting the idea of public information in peacekeeping, UN information staff agree they 'did not have any other methods and levers of influence rather than to persuade, debate, and induce'.[25]

There is an impressive body of research on the conditions favorable for persuasion. For example, the persuader should be 'an authoritative member of the ingroup'.[26] Both concepts, authority and belonging to the same in-group, need unpacking. Regarding authority, advocates can be perceived as reliable providers of policy-relevant information either due to the institutional context (for example, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change is authoritative *ex officio*) or because of previously established credibility on the issue.[27] Regarding belonging to the same in-group, information is often 'interpreted differently depending on whether it comes from "people like us" (the information is more authoritative and persuasive) or comes from a devalued "other"'.[28] For this reason, persuasion happens most frequently in 'a small, intimate, high-affect in-group'.[29] Ideally, 'relationships of power and social hierarchies recede in the background' in such a group.[30] Persuasion works best in an insulated, private, and informal setting.[31]

Persuasion is also more likely when the agent is relatively autonomous from the principal, for example, when the issue is technical or ignored by the delegating body.[32] This relates to the insulation and informality of the persuasion setting: if a relatively small, self-contained group of officials or ambassadors can engage in a genuine discussion without involving their capitals

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[24] Ibid., 6.
[25] Interview with Mikhail Seliankin, telephone, January 2013.
[26] Checkel, "Why Comply?," 563.
[27] Ulbert, Risse and Müller, "Arguing and bargaining," 29.
[28] Kuklinski and Hurley, "It's a matter of interpretation," 127.
[29] Johnston, *Social States*, 159.
[30] Risse, "Let's argue!," 7.
[31] Checkel, "Why comply?," 562.
[32] Johnston, *Social States*, 160.

or other principals, persuasion is more likely. Such a setting is conducive to persuasion because it 'decouples political decision making (with its potential distributive implications) from the creative part of finding new solutions to the problem at hand (problem-solving)' (Deitelhoff, 2009: 54). Persuasion is aided by a positive cultural match: a situation when persuadee's pre-existing beliefs are compatible with the new idea.[33] Persuasion is also more likely when the recipient is 'exposed to counter-attitudinal information repeatedly over time'.[34] Finally, persuasion is more likely 'in a novel and uncertain environment', which can be generated by a crisis, a serious policy failure, or global shift.[35]

At the same time, a shock or crisis alone is not sufficient. The functionalist account of UN peacekeeping's evolution assumes that the end of the Cold War necessitated new approaches. However, the addition of new tasks to peacekeeping mandates was not uncontested; each of these tasks was promoted by a specific constellation of advocates. After a shock or a crisis, advocates must make sense of the events, suggest a response, and convince everyone of the appropriateness of this response.[36] For example, when Karlsrud argues that '[t]he development of UN peacekeeping has been inductive, according to evolving needs, and reliant upon strong leadership on the ground',[37] he suggests a role for new challenges, but the story is incomplete without accounting for the agency of UN officials in the field but also at New York headquarters.

Institutionalization of innovations: looking beyond the emergence stage

The early research on the diffusion of norms and policies has focused on the processes leading to their adoption. Finnemore and Sikkink's norm lifecycle model suggests that norms follow the stages of emergence, cascade, and internalization.[38] Initially, norm entrepreneurs, or ideationally motivated individuals, start advocating for a change in the standards of appropriate behavior. They find a suitable organizational platform to promote their cause. When a critical mass of followers adopts the norm, a tipping point is reached and the norm starts cascading. At the internalization stage, the norm acquires taken-for-granted quality. This model does not pay

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[33] Checkel, "Norms, Institutions," 86.
[34] Johnston, *Social States*, 159.
[35] Checkel, "Why comply?," 562.
[36] Keck and Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders*, 22.
[37] Karlsrud, *Norm Change*, 142.
[38] Finnemore and Sikkink, "International norm dynamics."

attention to the role of entrepreneurial individuals beyond the emergence stage. In contrast, I argue it is important to look at the advocates' contribution to the institutionalization of new agendas. In the case of public information in peacekeeping, UN officials have played a key role during all stages of the agenda's development.

I argue that UN officials have been successful in promoting the public information agenda due to the presence of specific conditions suggested by the literature on persuasion, such as advocates' authority, autonomy from principals, a private and informal setting, repeated exposure to counter-attitudinal information, and a crisis or global shift. The absence of some conditions (a positive cultural match) has been explicitly characterized in the interviews as an obstacle. In several missions, entrepreneurs could not succeed because of insurmountable constraints (which are familiar difficulties in UN peacekeeping), such as incorrect assumptions about the local dynamics; member states unwillingness to authorize resources; a lack of cooperation by the host state; ineffective inter-departmental coordination within the Secretariat; and errors of judgement by the mission leadership. This is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. *Favorable conditions and constraining factors for UN officials' advocacy*

Favorable conditions	*Constraining factors*
Authority of the advocate	Incorrect assumptions about the local dynamics
Belonging to the same in-group	Member states' unwillingness to authorize resources
Informal, insulated, and small-group setting	Host state's obstruction
Autonomy from principals / technical issue	Ineffective intra-Secretariat coordination
Positive cultural match	Errors of judgement by the mission leadership
Repeated exposure to counter-attitudinal information	
Crisis or global shift	

Note: the list of favorable conditions is based on Kuklinski and Hurley, 1996; Checkel, 1999; Checkel, 2001; Risse, 2000; Johnston, 2008; the list of constraining factors is based on the author's own findings.

After the negative experiences, UN officials have continued campaigning for the institutionalization of public information, eventually embedding it in the organization's policies and structures. The following section looks at how the events unfolded and analyzes whether the favorable conditions for persuasion, as well as the constraining factors, affected UN officials' efforts.

Public information in UN peacekeeping

While there was some experimentation with public information in two Cold War missions, it was only with the deployment of the first multidimensional mission, in Namibia, that the agenda started taking its contemporary shape. Below I provide a brief historical overview of public information during the Cold War as well as in all early post-Cold War missions. I then zoom in on two successful cases of innovation (Namibia and Cambodia) and compare them with two unsuccessful ones (Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia). I conclude this section by a necessarily brief overview of the institutionalization of public information in the post-1995 period.

Public information during the Cold War and in the early 1990s

During the Cold War, it was not regarded as necessary for peacekeeping missions to communicate directly with the local population in the mission area:

> ...[F]or the first 41 years, public information, let alone public information policy, had essentially no place inside a peacekeeping operation. Peacekeeping was a military undertaking that underpinned political and diplomatic activity. There were therefore careful controls on what information became public knowledge with very little thought about how to use public information as part of an overall strategy to carry out a mandate. This attitude was widely shared by United Nations officials at all levels, both at headquarters and in the field.[39]

There was limited experimentation with public information for the local population in two unique Cold War missions: the 1960 mission in the Congo, which is considered a prototype of contemporary multidimensional operations, and the 1962 mission in West New Guinea, which shared many features with the transitional administrations of the late 1990s.[40] The Congo

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[39] UN DPI, *Policy and Guidance*, 5.
[40] MacQueen, *Peacekeeping and the International System.*

mission produced radio broadcasts and leaflets explaining to the locals the nature of a foreign force in their country.[41] In West New Guinea, the UN used texts, posters, and discussion groups to help prepare the population for the transfer of administration from the Netherlands to Indonesia.[42] In most other Cold War missions, the information function was limited to sending a summary of the day's local press reports to New York and, after consulting headquarters, providing answers to questions from the media.[43] It was unstrategic, reactive, and not aimed specifically at the local population.

It is believed that 1989 'marks the year of birth of public information in United Nations peacekeeping' – the year the UN deployed a mission to Namibia to assist with its transition to independence.[44] Besides the mission in Cambodia which established its own radio station, no other operation in the late 1980s and the early 1990s had such a well-developed public information programme. The UN Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA, 1989-1992) followed the Cold War approach to information which was primarily oriented towards international audiences: while it had a Public Information Office, it produced press releases, collected press clippings from local newspapers, handled applications for press credentials, and dealt with inquiries from international organizations, embassies, journalists, and only sometimes the local public.[45]

After the mission in Namibia, which is explored in detail below, public information was given 'somewhat more attention as the UN prepared for and deployed operations in Western Sahara and El Salvador'.[46] The plan for the UN Mission for Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO, 1991, ongoing) envisaged a section on information and public relations, alongside the traditional political and legal affairs sections.[47] When the referendum could not be organized because of political disagreements, the mission was scaled down and so were its information activities. The UN Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL, 1991-1995) was mandated to organize a human rights education campaign. It was a mixed success: some observers argue the mission was 'slow to starts its educational activities' and 'only a few resources were devoted to this task';[48] others note that it 'employed a well designed radio,

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[41] Findlay, *The Use of Force,* 78.
[42] UN, "West New Guinea."
[43] Thornberry, *A Nation is Born*, 64.
[44] UN DPI, *Policy and Guidance*, 5.
[45] UN, "Summary of AG-076."
[46] UN DPI, *Policy and Guidance*, 5-6.
[47] UN, *Report of the Secretary-General on Western Sahara,* 4.
[48] Van der Lijn, *Walking the Tightrope,* 281.

television, print and billboard information campaign'.[49] In the second UN Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II, 1991-1995), the 'failure to create a neutral independent information source which people could have trusted' was criticized as one of the greatest deficiencies.[50] While its successor mission, UNAVEM III (1995-1997), tried to establish an independent radio station, it was resisted by the Angolan government.[51]

The UN mission in Croatia and Bosnia (UNPROFOR, 1992-1995) was 'in part a failure on the information front',[52] for multiple reasons which are analyzed in detail below. In the first UN mission in Somalia (UNOSOM I, 1992-1993), plans for a broadcasting capability were blocked by the General Assembly's Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ).[53] When the struggling UN mission was superseded by a US force, the Americans set up a Somali-language newspaper and a radio station a week into the deployment.[54] After the control reverted back to the UN, the Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information complained the UN was 'expected to take over with one third of the staff an information operation which was being carried out in Somalia by over 100 United States information specialists'.[55] It should come as no surprise that 'information activities lost coherence and effectiveness' in the follow-on UN mission.[56] Tim Carney, the key influence behind the idea of a UN-run radio station in Cambodia, remembers being sent to Somalia 'to take over running the pitifully inadequate information education effort that the UN had going there'.[57] However, since 'they didn't even have their own radio station' in a country which 'essentially lived by oral tradition',[58] Carney could not make a difference there.

The UN Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ, 1992-1994) hired a commercial public relations firm to run a multimedia campaign to promote its image,[59] which was an exception from the general trend. At the same time, the civic education campaign was entrusted to the UN Development Programme rather than ONUMOZ,[60] suggesting there was still no consensus on the appropriateness of peacekeeping missions' involvement in information and education

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[49] Wrobel and de Oliverra, *Managing Arms,* 187.
[50] Vines, *Angola Unravels,* 231.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Avruch et al., *Information Campaigns,* 154.
[53] O'Neill and Rees, *United Nations Peacekeeping,* 130.
[54] Avruch et al., *Information Campaigns,* 23.
[55] UN, "Statement by ASG for Public Information," 31.
[56] Avruch et al., *Information Campaigns,* 158.
[57] Carney, Interview by Kennedy, 108.
[58] Idem.
[59] DPI, *Provisional Guidelines.*
[60] Howard, *UN Peacekeeping*, chapter 6.

activities. In the UN Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL, 1993-1997), plans for a daily radio programme in support of the elections were made only half a year before the mission's withdrawal.[61] Similarly, the UN mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR, 1993-1996) developed a proper public information programme, including the establishment of a radio station, only after the genocide; it is analyzed in detail below.

The observer mission in Georgia (UNOMIG, 1993-2009) initially had a small public information office but its role increased with the build-up of the tensions prior to the 2008 Russo-Georgian war.[62] This demonstrates the important political role of information but lies beyond the temporal scope of my analysis. In the UN Mission of Observers in Tajikistan (UNMOT, 1994-2000), a Public Information Office was established only in 1997.[63] The UN Mission in Haiti (UNMIH, 1994-1996) inherited the so-called Military Information Support Team from the preceding US-led mission.[64] Their approach, however, resembled the US army's psychological operations rather than public information activities. There are important differences between the two: the role of public information officials is to inform local and global audiences truthfully and comprehensively about mission's role, activities, and plans. In contrast, the aim of psychological operations is to influence opinions and attitudes of adversaries or other audiences in order to achieve mission's (usually military) objectives.[65]

Considering either limited or unsuccessful public information programmes in many 1989-1995 missions, the missions in Namibia and Cambodia represent the clearest examples of successful innovation in the field of public information. Policy entrepreneurs operating under favorable conditions made a significant contribution in these two cases. In contrast, in the missions in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, even committed advocates were unable to overcome serious constraints.

Early successes: Namibia and Cambodia

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[61] UN, *Secretary-General's report on Liberia.*
[62] UNOMIG PIO, "UNOMIG press release."
[63] UN, " Summary of AG-067."
[64] Lehmann, *Peacekeeping and Public Information*,
[65] Ibid., 4.

In 1987, an extensive reform of DPI was initiated by the head of the department which lasted at least two years. During the reform, the Peace and Security Programmes Section was created to disseminate information about peacekeeping as one of the UN's activities to global audiences. During the reform period, several DPI specialists worked on issues of peace and security in addition to their regular responsibilities.[66] These specialists helped develop the first public information campaigns for the local population in peacekeeping missions, such as in Namibia.

The UN Transition Assistance Group in Namibia

The UN mission in Namibia (UNTAG, 1989-1990) is often described as the first multidimensional UN peacekeeping operation. Tasked with supervising elections that would lead to Namibia's independence, the mission faced the challenge of ensuring the local population was aware of the UN's role, the voting procedures, and the options available to them. After many years of colonialism and apartheid, Namibian media were 'deeply partisan' and 'prone to disinformation', leading UNTAG to 'neutralize these processes and to provide Namibians with relevant and objective information'.[67] UNTAG thus differed from most Cold War missions because it 'sought to change Namibian *society*, and to interact directly with the Namibian *people*, not simply with the political elites'.[68] It was an unusual mission in other respects, too: while the plans for UNTAG were made in 1978, it could only be deployed in 1989 as the Cold War was coming to an end. Martti Ahtisaari, who had been chosen as the SRSG at the beginning of the planning, had more than a decade to contemplate it. He believed it was essential 'the Namibian people could feel free, and sufficiently informed, to express genuine choice as to their future' and pushed for 'a massive active intervention by UNTAG to change the political climate in the country'.[69] Cedric Thornberry, UNTAG's chief-of-staff and Ahtisaari's close advisor, also attached a high importance to information.

Ingrid Lehmann, the head of the Peace and Security Programmes Section in DPI, knew Ahtisaari and Thornberry from a 1978 survey mission in Namibia.[70] Despite this personal

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[66] Interview with Ingrid Lehmann, FaceTime, May 2017.
[67] UN, *The Blue Helmets,* 220.
[68] Howard, *UN Peacekeeping*, 65 (emphasis in original).
[69] Howard, *UN Peacekeeping,* 66.
[70] Interview with Ingrid Lehmann, FaceTime, May 2017.

relationship, UNTAG's spokesperson Fred Eckhard recalls that Thornberry 'had a total disdain for DPI' because he thought the department was insufficiently field-oriented.[71] DPI did not have a good reputation at the time: it was seen as ineffective and was 'not really taken seriously'; regarding the information programme in Namibia, there was a perception that the department 'could not handle it'.[72]

At the same time, Thornberry and Ahtisaari talked to Lehmann; although they did not fully trust her, they thought she had a good contribution to make and would informally accept notes from her on the information campaign.[73] These interactions provided repeated opportunities for Lehmann to argue for greater attention to information in UNTAG. Lehmann also knew people in the Office of Special Political Affairs, which would later become DPKO: its head, Marrack Goulding, 'was pretty good on the public information front' and gave Lehmann and colleagues support.[74] Lehmann has 'come to the conclusion that the UN is run by networks of people who like each other. It is more important than departmental hierarchies.'[75] Similarly, Winckler links UN officials' ability to exert influence with 'inclusion in local informal networks, which crosscut formal hierarchies within the UN peacekeeping bureaucracy'.[76] This suggests that advocates' authority stems primarily not from the institutional context or prestige of the office but their personal credibility and networks.

After Lehmann visited Namibia in February 1989 as a part of a pre-deployment survey mission, the proposal for the information programme was elaborated just in time to be included in UNTAG's preliminary budget.[77] Partly because of the immediacy of the task, UNTAG's planners did not look to the examples of information programmes in Cold War missions, which suggests that organizational learning was not the driving force. As Lehmann recalls:

There was a reluctance (and this really does not reflect well on us) to go back to what we considered the deep history of the 1950s and 1960s. We were so happy to leave this Cold War stuff behind and we were not going to dwell on it. We were also under an immense pressure to produce and get things done…Unfortunately, we were ahistorical in that way: we just wanted to move out of the Cold War days.[78]

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[71] Eckhard, Interview by Sutterlin, 28.
[72] Interview with Ingrid Lehmann, FaceTime, May 2017.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Winckler, "Exceeding limitations," 45.
[77] Lehmann, *Peacekeeping and Public Information,* 33.
[78] Ibid.

UNTAG went far beyond any of the earlier experiments with information campaigns for the local population in peacekeeping. It was the first mission to have a 'visual identity': developed by Jan Arnesen, a graphic designer seconded from UN headquarters, UNTAG's slogans and symbols were printed on stationery, posters, decals, badges, bumper stickers, and T-shirts. Arnesen found 'a particularly gifted Namibian artist' to do linocuts of Namibian faces and make an electoral poster, which became 'everyone's image of UNTAG' and 'the best-known thing'.[79] UNTAG also produced five-minute daily radio programmes that were aired by the state-owned South-West African Broadcasting Corporation and a weekly ten-minute television programme.[80]

UNTAG's public information programme helped overcome doubts and fears many Namibians had about the election and contributed to the high turnout. In Eckhard's view, central to the programme's success were 'contributions by single individuals that suddenly were free just to get a job done'.[81] Many conditions favorable to persuasion were present in UNTAG's case. Public information did not attract much attention from member states: according to Lehmann, 'member states were at the time not involved in the details of the public information programme; our pressures were internal and logistical.'[82] The issue was technical and largely ignored by the principals. The conversations on the information programme were UN-internal and happened in an insulated setting within a small group of officials who recognized each other's authority and contribution. As Lehman recalls,

what helped me is that I had spent four years in the Secretary-General's office so I knew a lot of people. I could move around with more confidence than others. By then I was a P5 so I was already a senior officer and could approach people at higher levels more easily.[83]

Individual histories and relational capital can enable officials to exert influence on ideas and practices of their organizations.[84] This was the case with UN information staff who could make a difference because of their experience and connections. Furthermore, there were multiple opportunities for interaction between different UN officials during UNTAG's long planning period. Finally, the end of the Cold War was an important factor: according to Seliankin, the

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[79] Eckhard, Interview by Sutterlin, 13.
[80] Lehmann, *Peacekeeping and Public Information*.
[81] Eckhard, Interview by Sutterlin, 13.
[82] Interview with Ingrid Lehmann, FaceTime, May 2017.
[83] Ibid. P5 is the highest UN career grade before the Director level.
[84] Bode, *Individual Agency*.

perception of the importance of public information 'emerged with the deployment of large, multidimensional missions, such as in Namibia and Cambodia'.[85]

One favorable condition was absent: a positive cultural match. As Seliankin recalls, 'for the first five to six years, until the mid-1990s, it was quite difficult to convince, at all levels, that public information component should be one of the core components of any field mission and that DPI representatives should be included in working groups and planning processes early on. The culture of the UN senior management was not ready yet for openness, for pro-active public information and communication.'[86] Since peacekeeping was still seen as a diplomatic and military activity, the idea of information dissemination was contrary to the UN's norms. Lehmann also recalls it was 'difficult to get people to accept that DPI specialists had to attend DPKO political meetings': it was 'a big struggle to get DPKO to open up to the people from other departments'.[87] DPKO was especially reluctant to open up to DPI which was suspected of being 'too close to the media' and liable of leaking information.[88] Overall, 'those were not "happy sailing" times: we imagine that peacekeeping expanded exponentially and DPI suddenly had strategic communications. In fact, those were the years of struggle and some people lost their jobs.'[89] Therefore, the functionalist story of peacekeeping's expansion is partial without accounting for the contribution of entrepreneurial individuals, who sometimes risked their careers in putting forward new ideas.

The UN Assistance Mission in Cambodia

The UN mission in Cambodia (UNTAC, 1992-1993) was the first UN peacekeeping operation to establish its own radio station. Considering that it had to organize the first democratic election in decades, the Secretariat's report containing the plan for the mission argued 'massive civic education campaigns in human rights, mine awareness and electoral matters' were necessary.[90] The report did not mention a radio station, only the production of materials that could be aired by other stations like in Namibia. There were apprehensions within the

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[85] Interview with Mikhail Seliankin, telephone, January 2013.
[86] Interview with Mikhail Seliankin, telephone, January 2013.
[87] Interview with Ingrid Lehmann, FaceTime, May 2017.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.
[90] UN, *Secretary-General's report on Cambodia*, 38-39.

Secretariat that an independent media outlet would endanger UNTAC's impartiality.[91] Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali was especially reluctant; in general, he 'was not at all supportive of public information'.[92] According to Tim Carney, who was appointed the advisor on information to SRSG Yasushi Akashi and the head of the Information/Education division, 'Boutros Ghali did not shine. He initially on his first visit to Cambodia argued that we really didn't need a radio broadcast facility.'[93] It 'took three months to change his mind'.[94] In the literature on norms, those who oppose ideas promoted by advocates are referred to as 'norm antipreneurs' or 'norm spoilers'.[95] This was the role played initially by Boutros-Ghali and others within the Secretariat who opposed Radio UNTAC.

However, Carney 'persuaded Akashi that a Radio UNTAC was the only way to disseminate the UN's message free from interference from the factions'.[96] Having served as the Under-Secretary-General for Public Information, the SRSG was receptive to Carney's arguments: Akashi 'was very open and indeed somebody who would have wanted to have a strong information campaign'.[97] Akashi, in turn, persuaded Boutros-Ghali. Charles Twining, who served as the US ambassador to Cambodia during UNTAC's tenure, offers the following recollection:

> Boutros-Ghali said, 'The UN doesn't have radio stations.' Akashi said, 'I think this is the only way we can get out to the public what is happening.' Boutros-Ghali opposed it until maybe late 1992. Finally, Akashi wore him down. He said, 'Well, alright.' UN radio was one of the biggest successes it had in Cambodia…Now, every UN peacekeeping operation, to my knowledge, has a UN radio station. Akashi had to wear down Boutros-Ghali. I give him a lot of credit.[98]

In Cambodia, too, advocates like Carney and Akashi operated under favorable conditions. Carney was a diplomat 'with long experience in Cambodia';[99] those who had worked with him 'speaking very highly of him'.[100] He was an 'old Cambodia hand' and had authority because of his knowledge of the country's history and affairs.[101] Boutros-Ghali's visit to Cambodia was an opportunity for an informal, private interactions between the supporters of Radio UNTAC and the Secretary-General. Although these interactions did not bring an immediate result,

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91 Stedman, "Spoiler problem," 31.
92 Interview with Ingrid Lehmann, FaceTime, May 2017.
93 Carney, Interview by Kennedy, 104.
94 Carney, "UNTAC's information/education programme," 173.
95 Labonte, "R2P's status as a norm,"137; Thakur, "R2P and the interplay," 162.
96 Shawcross, *Deliver Us from Evil*, 58-59.
97 Interview with Ingrid Lehmann, FaceTime, May 2017.
98 Twining, Interview by Kennedy, 149.
99 Shawcross, *Deliver Us from Evil*, 58.
100 Interview with Ingrid Lehmann, FaceTime, May 2017.
101 Doyle, "Authority and elections," 152.

Boutros-Ghali was repeatedly exposed to counter-attitudinal information as Akashi persevered. The post-Cold War environment was also conducive but there was still a lack of a cultural match.

However, unlike in UNTAG where member states paid little attention to public information, they were supportive of Radio UNTAC, which helped overcome Boutros-Ghali's reluctance.[102] Doyle and Sambanis suggest the US played a pivotal role.[103] While the conversations were no longer confined to the Secretariat, the member states' support must have carried a lot of weight. In October 1992, seven months into the operation, the Security Council explicitly instructed that 'the UNTAC radio broadcast facility be established without delay'.[104] In international bureaucracies, advocates can face the greatest resistance from their own colleagues and then reach out to member states for support. For instance, Kamradt-Scott documents how WHO Secretariat officials campaigned for using non-state sources to verify disease outbreaks, in addition to relying on member states' reports: after 'the only resistance to the new system actually arose from within the WHO Secretariat itself', the advocates approached member states directly and received support.[105] This is similar to what Radio UNTAC's supporters had to do in order to get their idea approved.

Radio UNTAC began broadcasting in November 1992. It helped allay the doubts many Cambodians had about the secrecy of their vote after decades of political repression and intimidation. Radio UNTAC also provided air time to all political parties on an equal basis. In this way, it ensured the UN's image of impartiality was upheld, although the station unavoidably came under criticism from some factions. Besides political programming, the station broadcast music, experimented with interactive communication by reading audience letters on air, and had a weekly health programme.[106] It became the most popular station in the country, 'confounding those at New York headquarters who had opposed its establishment'.[107] UNTAC also produced comic books, brochures, leaflets, and posters, as well as a popular soap opera, which used local actors to dramatize issues related to the peace process and the election. Thus, the mission made a creative use of 'traditional Khmer cultural media – singers, puppets,

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[102] UN DPI, *Policy and Guidance*, 6.
[103] Doyle and Sambanis, *Making War,* 221.
[104] UN, *Resolution 783*, 3.
[105] Kamradt-Scott, "The WHO Secretariat," 81.
[106] Mei, *Radio UNTAC,* 33-35.
[107] Findlay, *Cambodia,* 76.

comics and local artists – in addition to modern media such as radio, television and video'.[108] Like UNTAG, it integrated elements of the local culture into its communication products.

Subsequent failures: Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia

Despite the precedents of Namibia and Cambodia, in some of the most challenging environments during the mid-1990s, the UN was unable to communicate effectively and counter hostile propaganda. Below I discuss two illustrative examples: the missions in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

The UN Protection Force in the former Yugoslavia

It took two years for the Security Council to endorse the Secretariat's proposal for a radio station in UNPROFOR.[109] This points to an initial unwillingness to authorize resources. In 1994, the equipment of Radio UNTAC was shipped to and reassembled in Croatia and a Division of Information was finally established. UNPROFOR started producing radio programmes that 'few listeners ever heard'.[110] The mission's public information activities 'were, though large in scale, not remarkable'.[111] UNPROFOR staff themselves wondered why the mission did not develop an effective information campaign, despite 'a full information team and a generous budget', both of which grew five-fold since the mission's inception, 'with little increase in productivity'.[112]

Among the reasons were '[i]nstitutional conservatism and personal errors of judgement'.[113] According to Thompson, who served as the head of media analysis in UNPROFOR, the mission's passivity in the field of information 'was deliberate, not a careless omission'.[114] UNPROFOR, like the rest of the organization at the time, was careful not to get 'caught up in an effort at one-sided manipulation or propaganda for which individual states have, especially

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[108] Ibid., 63-64.
[109] UN, *Resolution 947*, 2.
[110] Manuel, "Reviving war's first casualty," 38.
[111] Thompson, *Slovenia*, 14.
[112] Lehmann, *Peacekeeping and Public Information*, 133.
[113] Thompson and De Luce, "Escalating to success?," 203.
[114] Thompson, *Slovenia*, 19.

during wartime, been severely criticized'.[115] A change in the mission's approach to information took place only in January 1995 with the arrival of the new head of Bosnian UNPROFOR command, General Rupert Smith.[116] Additionally, the population in the Balkans, unlike in Namibia and Cambodia, was 'too sophisticated to be impressed' by the mission's information efforts.[117] Finally, for the first two years, UNPROFOR did not have its own broadcasting capacity and had to rely on the cooperation of local radio and TV stations, which frequently refused to carry, or censored, UN broadcasts.[118] The passivity of the mission leadership, the initial member states' unwillingness to authorize resources, a poor understanding of the local dynamics, and the obstruction by the conflict parties were the constraints that mission's public information staff could not overcome.

The UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda

The Comprehensive Report on Lessons Learned from UNAMIR recognized the lack of an effective communication campaign as a major shortcoming:

> The lack of an effective public information programme was a serious weakness for UNAMIR from the outset. It was unable to inform the Rwandese public and the world at large about the achievements of the mission and the constraints of its mandate. Faced by increasingly hostile propaganda…UNAMIR seemed powerless to correct this negative image…UNAMIR should have done much more to inform the public about its limited role and mandate early on, particularly for the protection of civilians at risk, so as not to give the people a false sense of security.[119]

During the planning for UNAMIR, the Secretariat thought it could rely on the cooperation of local radio stations.[120] Since the mission was designed as a traditional observation mission, an independent broadcasting capability was not seen as a priority. Furthermore, there was a lack of coordination between DPKO and DPI: the latter 'was not closely involved in conceiving, designing or carrying out UNAMIR's information programme'.[121]

In contrast to the former Yugoslavia, mission leadership recognized the importance to information. Roméo Dallaire, the force commander, 'hoped for radio equipment to permit the

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[115] Lehmann, *Peacekeeping and Public Information,* 23.
[116] Thompson and De Luce, "Escalating to success?," 203.
[117] Thompson, *Slovenia*, 17.
[118] Manuel, "Reviving war's first casualty."
[119] UN DPKO, *Comprehensive Report,* 42.
[120] UN, "Secretary-General's report on Rwanda," 12.
[121] UN DPKO, *Comprehensive Report,* 44.

UN force to inform public in a responsible fashion'.[122] In a cable sent to New York two months before the genocide, the SRSG also stressed the need for 'a UNAMIR radio station and…a local public information campaign by leaflet and possibly newspaper to explain UNAMIR operations'.[123] Since the issue was not addressed by the Secretariat or the Council, the mission had no effective mechanisms to counteract the infamous 'hate radio', *Radio Mille Collines*.

When the genocide began, the mission 'was in such political and military straits that the last thing they were thinking about was public information'.[124] The spokesperson was evacuated with most international staff and his various successors failed to develop an effective communication programme.[125] After the genocide ended, UNAMIR sought to establish a radio station, which was opposed by the new Rwandan government. It took months to negotiate the permission and the station was set up only in February 1995. While it became 'an impartial and objective voice and source of information in Rwanda', it was 'too little, too late'.[126]

In this case, a poor understanding of the local dynamics that prevented the recognition of the urgency of a radio station, the lack of intra-Secretariat coordination, the initial member states' unwillingness to authorize resources, and, at the later stage, the obstruction by the host government prevented UNAMIR from developing an effective communication strategy. Unlike in UNPROFOR, the mission leadership recognized the importance of information but received little support. In general, the missions in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda 'were just disasters and it is impossible to communicate a disaster as something positive'.[127]

Advocacy beyond the emergence stage

After 1995, the supporters of public information in peacekeeping continued pushing for its institutionalization in the form of increases in the number of officials working on the issues and the production of policy and guidance. There was a proposal in 1994 for a specialized unit on information in DPKO, which was 'quite naturally opposed by the DPI',[128] as well as some

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[122] Des Forges, "Call to genocide," 46.
[123] UNAMIR, "Update on security situation," 3.
[124] Interview with Ingrid Lehmann, FaceTime, May 2017.
[125] Lehmann, *Peacekeeping and Public Information*, 98.
[126] UN DPKO, *Comprehensive Report,* 42.
[127] Interview with Ingrid Lehmann, FaceTime, May 2017.
[128] Lehmann, *Peacekeeping and Public Information*, 25.

member states, such as Russia.[129] While 'no department likes having staff taken away from it', DPI was in a particularly vulnerable position in the early 1990s because there were voices in the Secretariat and among the membership calling for its dissolution, the US being especially hostile because DPI 'was doing things like an anti-apartheid campaign and a Palestinian rights campaign'.[130] In this atmosphere, 'any attempt by other substantive departments to take things from DPI were watched with great trepidation'.[131] What looks like mere 'bureaucratic wrangling' was a manifestation of 'political struggles behind it'.[132]

The staff stayed in DPI but the debate re-emerged in the early 2000s when the Brahimi Report suggested a dedicated unit for the support of information components in peacekeeping missions in either DPKO or DPI.[133] The General Assembly approved two additional information posts financed by the Peacekeeping Support Account and a 'big battle' ensued over which department would get them.[134] ACABQ decided those posts should remain in DPI. The Public Affairs Section was only established in DPKO during the 2007 restructuring.

In the meantime, policy and guidance were developed. Among the earliest examples of policy and guidance for any peacekeeping task were the 1997 *Provisional Guidelines for Public Information Components in UN Peacekeeping and Other Field Missions*. According to Seliankin, the idea of developing these guidelines was due to the Peace and Security Section because there was no counterpart in DPKO at the time.[135] However, the lack of human resources delayed further work on policy and guidance. Although the *Standard Operating Procedures and Deployment Capabilities for Public Information Offices in the Field* were elaborated in 2002, they remained in draft because the officials did not have time to finalize them.[136] The *Standard Operating Procedures* were superseded in 2006 by the *Policy and Guidance for Public Information in UN Peacekeeping Operations* and then the *Strategic Communications and Public Information Policy* in 2016.

Overall, the agenda has reached a significant degree of institutionalization:

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[129] UN, "Fourth Committee 26th meeting," 3.
[130] Interview with Ingrid Lehmann, FaceTime, May 2017.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid.
[133] UN, *Report of the Panel on UN Peace Operations*, 25.
[134] Interview with Susan Manuel, New York, January 2013.
[135] Interview with Mikhail Seliankin, telephone, January 2013.
[136] Lindley, *Promoting Peace,* 210-211.

At the level of the institution, the Secretariat already understands that public information should not be an afterthought but one of the priorities. The Peace and Security Section participates in all inter-agency working groups and task forces on all conflicts, including those where peacekeepers are involved. When a new mission is planned, DPI always sends a representative to ensure that public information is included in the planning and, most importantly, that it is addressed appropriately in the budget of the new mission.[137]

This has been confirmed by a member of the Public Affairs Section in DPKO, who believes today 'no one would think of a peacekeeping mission without thinking about a public information component. That is not being disputed.'[138]

Conclusion

As the UN prepared to deploy its first multidimensional operation with an electoral support mandate, UN staff doubted the mission's ability to organize a democratic election in a country that had no independent media and was rife with disinformation. They devised a public information programme in support of the 1989 Namibian elections. Entrepreneurial individuals pioneered an unconventional response to what they perceived as a pressing need and managed to persuade key counterparts that effective communication was a necessity in peacekeeping operations. In those early days, member states showed a scant interest in, but also little disagreement with, the innovation. The advocates operated under favorable conditions, such as autonomy from principals, authority within their own networks, opportunities for repeated interactions with targets, a private and informal setting, and the waning Cold War. The lack of a cultural match between public information and the UN's norm of confidentiality was an obstacle with which the advocates struggled.

Three years later, the mission in Cambodia broke new ground by establishing a radio station, this time with the member states' support but in the face of initial opposition by the Secretary-General. In contrast, the missions in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda were less successful in communicating their message. Each faced a unique combination of constraints that even committed advocates could not overcome, such as a poor understanding of the local dynamics, member states' unwillingness to authorize resources, the host states' obstruction, ineffective intra-Secretariat coordination, and errors of judgement by the mission leadership. Despite this,

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[137] Interview with Mikhail Seliankin, telephone, January 2013.
[138] Interview with André-Michel Essoungou, New York, January 2013.

UN information staff continued promoting the institutionalization of public information by campaigning for more staff and by developing policy and guidance.

A focus on policy entrepreneurship by UN officials provides a more comprehensive picture than the alternative accounts of the evolution of international organizations. It allows analysing situations when UN officials behave in a risk-averse manner or seek an expansion of their remit. It also suggests reasons why their advocacy succeeds or fails. Beyond the example of public information, advocacy by UN officials has played an important role in the development of UN peacekeeping. At the same time, member states and the increasingly active epistemic community are important actors, too. Exploring roles played by various advocates in the evolution of UN peacekeeping is a promising direction for research.

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