



Department of History

The United Nations' discursive construction of time: a comparative  
analysis of the United Nations Charter, the Millennium Declaration  
and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda

Dunja Obajdin

Dissertation submitted as partial requirement for the  
conferral of the

Master in  
International  
Studies

Supervisor:  
Dr. Luis Nuno Rodrigues,  
ISCTE-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

Co-Supervisor:  
Dr. Ines Marques Ribeiro,  
ISCTE-Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

August, 2019

## **ABSTRACT**

*The work analyzes the construction of temporality within the UN's discourses in relation to two questions: what the construction of temporality can tell us about the UN's view of its own agency and to what extent changes in temporal constructs can be related to wider socio-political shifts. Theoretically, it relies on social constructivist, post-structuralist, and critical discourse analysis (CDA) approaches to explore the intersections of agency, discourse, and time, specifically focusing on the political struggle to define temporality. To this end, it starts from the discourse-historical approach and its interest in the mutually-shaping dynamics between discursive structures and agents. It then conducts a critical analysis of the UN Charter, the Millennium Declaration, and the 2030 Agenda. The documents went through two rounds of coding which isolated individual words and explored grammatical structures. The data was reduced through a modified model of decontextualizing discursive strategies. By moving between different levels of analysis, and using secondary sources to reconstruct the historical context from which the documents emerged, the work finds a trend of increasingly concrete temporal settings and increasingly abstract subjects. It argues that this can be related to the growing importance of capitalist realist discourses which have both undercut the agency of individual actors and imbued abstract principles, which the UN embodies, with power. It also finds that the construction of time both within and between the documents is rife with contradictions, and relates this ambiguity to the constant push and pull between conflicting interests which mark discourse as a field and politics as a mode of activity.*

**Keywords:** United Nations, critical discourse analysis, agency, temporal politics

# Contents

**INTRODUCTION .....1**

**LITERATURE REVIEW .....1**

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .....5**

**THE UNINTED NATIONS .....7**

**METHODOLOGY ..... 11**

**RESULTS..... 14**

**DISCUSSION.....34**

**CONCLUSIONS .....44**

**BIBLIOGRAPHY .....47**

## **INDEX OF FIGURES**

Table 6.1: Association rules for the United Nations Charter.....	15
Table 6.2: Association rules for the United Nations Millennium Declaration.....	22/23
Table 6.3: Association rules for the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development....	26/27
Table 6.4: Time frames and infinitives in SDGs 1-16.....	32
Table 7.1: Percentage of clause types between the Charter, the MDGs, and the SDGs.....	41/42

## **GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS**

CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis

HLPEP: High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons

MDGs: Millennium Development Goals

UK: United Kingdom of Britain and Northern Ireland

UN: United Nations

UNDP: United Nations Development Program

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

SDSN: Sustainable Development Solutions Network

US: United States of America

USSR: United Socialist Soviet Republics

WW1: World War 1

WW2: World War Two

## INTRODUCTION

Ever since its founding in 1945, the United Nations Organisation (UN) has garnered mixed reactions, both within and outside of academia. The questions of whether it is a forum for cooperation or a tool for legitimizing the actions of a few powerful states, whether it is too powerful or impotent, whether it remains necessary in the modern world, are all question of great political importance. The goal of this work is to look at the implicit assumption behind these questions, the assumption that the UN either does, does not, should, or should not have power, and ask what enables it to have power.

An overwhelming volume of work has already been developed in this direction, with the notion of legitimacy, or “an actor’s normative belief that a rule or institution should be obeyed” (Hurd, 2007: 7), gaining particular prominence in recent works (Anderson, 2010, Kadah, 2010, Takhur, 2010). The idea that political actors assign legitimacy to themselves, and require recognition of that legitimacy from others, fundamentally reframes the discussion about the UN from coercion, shared norms, or consent, to the linguistic construction of identity and communicative practices between actors. In other words, if legitimacy, as the source of power and agency, is tied to actor’s abilities to make (legitimate) claims about themselves, then the content and construction of these claims needs to be examined, opening up an array of new questions. This work will pick up on one such question: how the UN’s agency, defined by following Giddens (1984) as an actor’s ability to act and influence the world around it, is constructed through discourse. To do this, we will look at how temporality is constructed in the Charter of the United Nations, the United Nations Millennium Declaration, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, chosen because of their status as core agenda-setting documents. Temporality, in particular, was chosen because all action, as the manifestation of latent agency, is by necessity spatially and temporally situated. Since the UN is a spatially disaggregated body, made up of geographically distant states and international non-state actors, an inquiry into its construction of temporality is a potentially more fruitful avenue towards understanding its discursive construction of agency.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

When it comes to discourse analysis, temporality tends to be treated from the stand-point of structuralist linguistics. (see: Jaszcolt and de Saussure, 2013). The focus is on formal and informal rules which govern our use, expression and thinking about time and the ontological position is phenomenological. (Jaszcolt and de Saussure, *ibid.*, Mozersky, 2015). This leads to a contradiction between the phenomenological recognition of intersubjectivity as the pillar of all social interaction and the structuralist position of attributing patterns to universal, essentialized cognitive structures. Specifically, the role of discursive structures in shaping subjective experiences of being-in-time is recognized but attributed primarily to the nature of those structures themselves, or to the nature of subjective experience.

On the other hand, sociological theory tends to treat time from a micro-macro divide. Older works are particularly divided in this respect (Bergmann, 1992) with symbolic interactionists (Mead, 1932, Roth, 1963, Glaser and Strauss, 1965, Calkins, 1970) and behavioral psychologists led by Schneider and Lysgaard (1953) and LeShah (1952) focusing on individual perceptions of time, and authors like Kaufmann (1970, in: Bergmann, 1992), Rammstedt (1975, in: Bergmann, 1992), and Luhmann (1976) focusing on broad social systems. In the first instance, time is seen as an ordering mechanism which agents use to orient themselves, communicate with each other and self-reflect. In the second instance, it is seen as a 'social fact', an over-arching category which acts upon agents' understandings and perpetuates itself through their actions. There have been some attempts to bridge this divide, most notably, symbolic interactionism in the past, and Giddens (1984) more recently.

Symbolic interactionists focused primarily on agency and saw all social structures as constructed. Specifically, they posited that people, while acting and interacting with each other and their environment, draw symbolic resources from wider structures in order to communicate and pursue their goals. This, in turn, leads to the reproduction or transformation of those same wider structures, as people add new elements or transform old ones. However, it is unclear whether this relationship goes the opposite way. On one hand, symbolic interactionism recognizes that people, by necessity, draw on pre-existing elements and that they often do so by inertia. On the other, this tendency to reproduce pre-existing norms, beliefs, or practices is attributed to human nature. The biggest problem with their approach is, for our purposes at least, the failure to recognize power dynamics behind cultural production and consumption.

Giddens (1984), for his part, posited that structures and agency are mutually dependent, with structures defining what agents are and what they can do, and agents reproducing or transforming structures through the accumulated effects of their actions. This introduces the notion of 'emergent features', or properties which are more than the sum of their parts, to explain how social constructs appear as objective reality and act back upon the agents who produce and consume them.

When it comes to time, his focus is placed on 'the compression of time and space': the weakening of spatial and temporal boundaries brought about by increased proximity facilitated by modern technology. This term is heavily tied to the Frankfurt school, especially Marcuse (1964), and post-modernists, especially Baudrillard (1994). Marcuse (1964), uses the notion of a 'one-dimensional-man' to argue that the mass production of culture is creating homogenous societies where time and space are becoming progressively less meaningful. Baudrillard (1994) offers an explanation of post-modernity as the prevalence of simulacra, decontextualized signs which refer back to a network of other signifiers instead of signified, 'material' objects and indicates that this prevalence is disrupting traditional time-space continuities and discontinuities. Giddens (1999) takes the notion and fits it into a canon of theories exploring (post)modernity<sup>1</sup> as a mostly cultural phenomenon. Arguably, his greatest

---

<sup>1</sup> Giddens () does not ascribe to the notion of 'post-modernity', preferring to view the phenomena usually ascribed

contemporary influence was Bauman's (2000) theory of liquid modernity. According to Bauman (ibid.) contemporary societies are dominated by constant change, expressed as the pursuit of new technology to increase market competitiveness, subjectivities shaped by constant re-invention through life-style consumption, and precariousness as a norm in all fields of employment. Giddens' (199) contribution to their theories can be found in his decision to frame the uncertainty of modern life and the erasure of time-space boundaries as an effect of globalization. His understanding of globalization can be exemplified by Castells (2000). Castells (ibid.) analyzes globalization as the opening up of the space of global flows where capital, goods, and services, and information pass freely and with barely any temporal delay. As these flows become more significant in ordering everyday-life, they overtake the space occupied by communities, shaping from afar the conditions under which geographically and temporally embedded places must exist. Giddens (1999) therefore argues globalization is a disrupting force which dis-embeds and re-embeds pre-existing social forms.

In explaining the differentiated effects of globalization, he distinguishes between 'modern' and 'traditional' impulses which can be read as metaphors. Modernity represents Enlightenment ideals: individual freedoms, mechanical reason, and communities based on voluntary contracts. Tradition represents a reaction in the opposite direction: strong communities based on kinship and proximity and irrational, identity-based action. While Giddens (1999) argues tradition and modernity are mixed, his insistence on juxtaposing the two has been criticized. As Argyrou (2003) and Shields (2006) show, the categories of modernity and tradition can be read as the construction of a 'temporal other' (Fabian, 2014). They implicate each other in a binary of normative assessments where modern/traditional stand in for rational/irrational, future/past, developed/developing, and global/local. The last distinction in particular, between 'global' and 'local' is similar to Castells' (2000) distinction between the space of global flows and the place of traditional communities. 'Modernity', carrying on the project of the European enlightenment, embedded itself into the space of global flows where it acts over 'tradition' which, while not entirely passive, is presented as reactive.

If, like Argyrou (2003) and Shields (2006), we see modernity and tradition as spatial metaphors denoting the 'developing' and 'developed' world, the dynamic of globalizer-globalized between the two can be read as a continuation of colonialism. This, in turn, requires we reassess the opposition between modernity and tradition as differentiated responses to globalization and observe them as mutually constitutive, both as discourses and as descriptors of the dynamics of uneven development. Rather than focusing on the global scale as it acts over the local and determines the conditions of its existence, we might instead side with Peck *et. al.* (2018) and argue that global dynamics are woven out of the social fabric of 'hybrids-in-motion'. Globalization, and 'the compression of space and time' are embedded into and can only act through geographical and historical realities, including inherited

---

to post-modernity (the shift from material to immaterial values, the growing importance of consumption vis-a-vis production in the 'developed world', increased risk and fluidity, and managerial approaches to politics) as a continuation of modern tendencies towards increased complexity of social systems.



discourses, infrastructure, and institutions and political struggles developing between and within different spatio-temporal localities. In other words, if time and space are indeed becoming compressed, it is as much a result of a continued struggle to define what ‘time’ is, as it is a reflection of changing material realities or an expression of modernity.

This is why our work will be based on another, fairly recent, development in sociological and anthropological studies of temporality. The field of ‘temporal politics’, covering a broad range of issues from memory politics (see: Hodgkin and Radstone, 2003; Auchter, 2014), futurology (Opitz and Tellmann, 2014, Andersson, 2018), to the temporal construction of the other (Fabian, 2014), offers us all of the elements we need to analyze the construction of temporality within the UN’s discourses. Luhmann (1976) can be seen as a forefather of this approach, as he was the first to develop a comprehensive theory of time as a ‘social imaginary’ (Laclau, 1990). Specifically, he claimed that the past and the future are co-constructed with the present and emerge as a single time-horizon. This means that our conceptions of the past and the future, and the connections we locate between the past, the present, and the future, are constantly being transformed in accordance with present needs. This process of transformation is seen as deeply political, with conflicting groups competing and cooperating in an attempt to assert their definitions as the dominant ones and, through this assertion, gain control over symbolic resources. Perhaps even more important, at least for the needs of this work, is the assertion that different agents’ goals and strategies in this struggle are, at least partially, determined by their structural positions. Put simply, whether or not an agent’s or group’s goal will be to reproduce or dismantle hegemonic structures may depend on whether or not they benefit from them, their success in fulfilling their goals may depend on their access to wealth and power, and their activities may depend on what is socially sanctioned as acceptable and what they therefore believe will be more or less effective.

Due to the nature of the documents analyzed in this work, all three of which focus on the future, the main contributions in the field of temporal politics we will focus on come from approaches to ‘futures studies’. Starting from Luhmann’s (1976) distinction between future presents, the unknown future which will eventually come to pass, and present futures, the current pictures of what the future might or should be like, temporal politics approaches to futures studies analyze the tensions inherent to managing uncertain futures. According to Mallar and Lakoff (2012) models of the future are a form of agenda-setting which emphasize and de-emphasize the importance of imagined future outcomes. As such, they can shape what responses will be put into practice. As De Goede (2008), Jarvis (2009), and Aradau and Van Munster (2012) show, expecting future catastrophes, in the case of their works, terror attacks, has led to an increasingly securitized post 9/11 policy environment. On the other hand, Anderson (2017) shows how invoking an ‘emergency’, a temporal configuration where the future ruptures into the present, was used as a powerful awareness-raising tool by the Black Lives Matter movement. By appropriating the language associated with the military, the movement was able to get its claims recognized as worthy of an institutional response.

According to Anderson (2015, 2017, *et.al*, 2019) invoking a looming emergency entails a process of claim-making. <sup>2</sup>A group of actors first define an event as an emergency and engage with different interest groups, institutions, and publics to get their claims recognized. One form of recognition is ‘response’, where a near-by future is brought to act over the present (Neissler and Runkel, 2017), disrupting the normal time order (Zebrowski, 2019) to create a ‘state of exception’ (Brun, 2016). If recognition is lacking, instead of response the claim-makers can be faced with what Anderson *et. al.* (2019) call a ‘slow emergency’ and Burn (2016) calls protraction. The state of exception becomes normalized, at least for the group in question, and the lack of response to their claims and needs is institutionally entrenched.

As Optiz and Tellman (2014) explain, the construction of an ‘emergency’, or lack thereof, unfolds through different temporal modalities. For example, the modality of the economy, based on prediction and anticipation (Beckert, 2016) will encourage a different response than the modality of law, based on retroactive inquiry (see: Beynon-Jones and Grabham, 2018). What is essentially at play when temporal modalities are attached to events are modes of governmentality under which those affected by them will be required to operate. For example, in her study of Cold War-era futurology, Andersson (2018) shows how projecting different visions onto the future served to legitimize different socio-political regimes. At the same time, she argues, the competing visions opened up a space of struggle. Different groups, needs, interests, and strategies were expressed in different visions concerned more with shaping than predicting future events. The attempt to control the future, therefore, intersects not only with governmentality and control, but also with the politics of hope and change (Anderson, 2015). The ambiguity of the future can serve as an outlet for unrecognized grievances as much as it serves as a space for preemptive exclusion. Where the UN positions itself between these two tendencies: prediction and control and ambiguity and change, can tell us where it draws the line between what is possible and impossible, and which discourses it bases its agency in.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This work will address two central questions:

- 1.) How is temporality constructed in the UN’s documents?
- 2.) How has this changed over time?

Two more, non-empirical questions, will be explored in relation to the results of the first two. Regarding our first question, we will go on to ask: What does the UN’s discursive construction of temporality tell us about its agency? Specifically: What conclusions can we draw about how it sees itself and its place in the world? Regarding our second question, we will go on to ask: What do the changes in the UN’s

---

<sup>2</sup> Emergencies are the best studied example within agency-focused literature on the temporal politics of the future, which is why we mention them. A similar process of claim-making, response, and struggle over temporal modalities and modes of governmentality can be expected in our case, although, without access to the agents involved, we are unable to fully explicate them, and will focus our work on the discourse side of the process.

discursive constructs of temporality tell us about wider socio-political changes? Specifically: What conclusions can we draw about the influence of the different geopolitical environments at the times of the Charter's, the MDGs', and the SDGs' writing on the temporal constructs deployed in these documents?

This gives us two poles from which to build our work: discursive constructs of temporality, located within the texts themselves, and extra-textual context, including specific social agents and broad structures which shape and are shaped by these constructs. To unite them, we will rely on Ruth Wodak's (2001) discourse-historical approach.

Wodak (ibid.) belongs to the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) school of thought. CDA practitioners tend to define themselves as a loose group connected by a research agenda of interdisciplinary, problem-oriented research, sociocultural critique, and a focus on the fluid, multi-layered nature of discourse. (Wodak and Meyer, 2001, Locke, 2004, Bloor and Bloor, 2007). What makes them particularly interesting for this work is their unique combination of interactionism, marxism, and post-structuralism. They recognize discourse as a shifting field of power/knowledge and ask how this field is structured by the interactions between embedded social actors, uniting the post-structuralist interest in meaning as an expression of power, the interactionists' interest in meaning as a product of human agency and creativity, and a marxist interest in the (material) embeddedness of social agents.

Wodak's (2001) approach, in particular, was chosen because she explicates these connections most clearly. Wodak (ibid) starts from the assumption of "a dialectical relationship between particular discursive practices and the specific fields of action (including situations, institutional frames and social structures), in which they are embedded" (ibid.: 66) and offers two definitions of discourse. The first, discourse as "a way of signifying a particular domain of social practice from a particular perspective" (Fairclough, 1955:14, in: Wodak, ibid: 66), stresses the power of discourses to shape perception and guide activity. The second, discourse as "a complex bundle of simultaneous and sequential interrelated linguistic acts" (ibid: 66), points to the web of interactions producing discourses. These dual definitions point to the dual nature of discourse as both activity and a blue-print for activity. By introducing dialectics as a mediating dynamic, Wodak (ibid) allows us to grasp how the contradictions and tensions arising from this duality feed into each other.

There are several benefits to this approach. Firstly, the link between 'discursive practices', 'fields of action', and 'linguistic acts' allows us to analytically separate text from context while understanding the multiple connections between them. Starting with 'discursive practices', we will follow Van Leeuwen (2008) and see discourse as a 'recontextualizing social practice'. This means that discourse can be seen as possessing all of the features of social practices, including agents and temporal and spatial settings, which can be analyzed as 'context'. However, it is unique in that it is a practice which recontextualizes, i.e. changes the meaning of the practices it symbolically represents. This newly added meaning can then be analyzed as 'text' and understood as analogous to Derrida's (1978) 'excess of meaning'. In other

words, it can be understood and analyzed as an ambiguous space where meanings are inscribed and overwritten depending on the reader's position in relation to entwining, overlapping connotations and denotations carried within symbols and bundles of symbols. This has important theoretical implications, as it posits that discourse is always arbitrary and that the gap between the signified and the signifier opens up and closes spaces for alternate readings which can then lead to alternative strategies in terms of other activities.

'Linguistic acts' and 'fields of action' can then be seen as elements of context and further divided. 'Linguistic acts' can be seen as analogous to Austin's (1962) 'speech acts.' Specifically, they can be seen as instances where language was used to modify social reality in a way that creates a new relationship between pre-existing agents or structures or creates new ones altogether. According to Austin (ibid.) a successful speech act requires recognition from others. In our case, this means that the UN needs other agents to recognize its claims as legitimate, or at the very least needs them to behave as though they recognize them as legitimate. Speech acts are therefore tied to the context in which they unfold: the institutional arrangements, normative frames, and webs of social interactions which agents need to operate within in order to speak and be recognized as legitimate in their speech, or 'fields of action'.

This relates to the 'temporal politics' approach of connecting agents' goals and strategies to their social environment and to Wodak's (2001) interest in dialectics, understood as the cyclical resolution of reemerging struggles across varied contexts. To be more, precise, because speech acts and fields of action constantly modify each other, no two conflicts over meaning are the same. However, as agent's interests are at least partially determined by the positions they occupy in pre-existing structures, an underlying struggle to fix the connections between different signifiers, to solidify their meaning and the power dynamics behind it, develops back and forth across these contexts. Furthermore, as different agents have different access to symbolic and material resources, the degree to which the meanings they construct are recognized as legitimate is likely to depend on their position within pre-existing structures. Finally, the continuous acceptance of a meaning or groups of meanings as more or less legitimate can be seen as giving discourse itself emergent features.

## **THE UNITED NATIONS**

The United Nations was founded in 1945, following negotiations by 'the big three': the UK, the US, and the USSR. (Gareau, 2002). Its founding document, the Charter of the United Nations, was signed by 50 governments on June 26<sup>th</sup> and entered into force on October 24<sup>th</sup> the same year. Krasno (2001) reports that it grew out of the defunct League of Nations, and locates the earliest attempts at creating a new organization tasked with keeping the world's power balance in check via a great-power alliance in the 1942 'Declaration of the United Nations.' However, the 1944 Dumbarton Oaks and the 1945 Yalta

conferences are mentioned as key events in the UN's story, where most of the Charter's current body was worked out. (Krasno, 2001, Gareau, 2002).

According to Gareau (2002), the US, emboldened by its newly expanded productive capabilities and growing geopolitical influence, spearheaded the UN project. The UK, weakened both economically and politically, acquiesced to the US in exchange for its assistance in consolidating capitalism in Europe, and was primarily concerned with retaining influence over its former colonies. The USSR, for its part, focused on strengthening its western borders and consolidating power in Eastern Europe. Krasno (2001) reports the countries agreed that the main bodies of the new organization would be a Security Council with five members, including China which the US allegedly pushed for in order to balance out Japan's influence in Asia and France, which the UK allegedly pushed for to balance out Soviet influence in Europe, and a General Assembly. (Sayward, 2017). Four more core organs were established: the Secretariat, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, and the International Court of Justice.

What followed was approximately half a century of contention between the US and the USSR during the Cold War. These tensions emerged even before the UN was officially founded, as the question of veto almost resulted in a break-down of negotiations between the US and USSR. Krasno (2001) reports that the USSR insisted on absolute veto-power as a means of protecting its interests in what it saw as a western and capitalist dominated institution. Ultimately, it was decided that Security Council members could veto any decision, but not discussion, which reportedly created contention among smaller states who saw the decision as contributing to the already existing power imbalance between themselves and 'the big three'. (Sayward, 2017). While US-USSR relations were by no means stagnant during this period, Krasno (ibid) and Gareau (2002) agree that the countries' willingness to ignore and paralyze the UN in the pursuit of their geopolitical interests significantly lessened its ability to impact global matters. Some attempts were made to remedy this, for example, Resolution 377 A (Uniting for Peace) which was passed during a USSR boycott of the Security Council over the occupation of China's seat by Chang-Kai Sheik's and not Mao's government, and which allowed for the passing of binding decisions at the Assembly when the Council was unable to perform its duties due to an absence. (Sayward, 2017). At the same time, the relations between former colonial powers and former colonies were changing. As more and more former colonies began joining the UN, the 'western' powers saw their influence wane in the newly-empowered Assembly. Puchala, *et. al.* (2016) report that these countries pushed for greater political representation, increasing the number of non-permanent Security Council members from the initial six to ten in 1965, and called for a more equitable global distribution of wealth. While their initial demands focused on remedying structural imbalances, including favorable taxation and pricing policies on a global level, they were ultimately embodied in the UNDP under the banner of 'aid and development.' (Puchala, *et. al.*, 2016)

The end of the Cold War saw significant changes. Firstly, smaller and non-aligned states were no longer

able to use their position between the east and west as leverage and transitioned, peacefully or violently, to liberal democratic regimes. (Hulme, 2009). The peaceful transitions served as the basis for an expansion of UN responsibilities. No longer constrained by the US-USSR rivalry, it was able to come to a unanimous understanding of how these processes should unfold, and create a repertoire of mechanisms, including democracy-building, institution-building, and peace-building to steer them in the desired direction. (Wedgwood, 1995, Hulme, 2009, Puchala, *et. al.*, 2016). The violent transitions, including Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and Somalia, on the other hand, exposed deep-seated problems with the organization's principle of neutrality. Partially because of the clashing interests of the US and USSR, and partially because of the role that the Assembly came to play as a consequence, the UN's primary response to crises was 'peace-keeping' which entailed assembling a neutral military force tasked with protecting civilians. (Wedgwood, 1995). The civil wars which marked the 1990ties unfolded within failing states and developed too rapidly for peace-keeping, as it was previously practiced, to adequately address. Sayward (2017) reports that subsequent conflicts were resolved primarily through NATO, while the UN mostly focused on its 'softer' functions.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), contained in the Millennium Declaration from 2000, grew out of this environment. According to Hulme (2009), the turning point for their conception was the 1990ties, specifically, the publication of the first Human Development Report by the UNDP in 1990, the first World Development Report by the World Bank in 1990, the World Summit for Children in 1990, and the Rio Summit in 1992. As we will see, and as their name suggests, their focus is overwhelming on development. This has led some, most notably Amin (2006), to criticize them as a lock-down of diverse paths towards development into a single hegemonic model, shaped by western powers who were able to, in the new global environment, take on the role of 'developer' towards the post-colonial and post-communist world of the 'developing'.

The MDGs served as the inspiration behind the SDGs, contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development from 2015 (Shawki, 2016), although global conditions have changed somewhat between 2000 and 2015. Shakwi (*ibid.*) argues that the 2008 financial crisis and the pending ecological disaster reaffirmed the need for global, supra-national solutions. At the same time, sociological theory has noted a growth in the power of non-state actors, alongside the already established power of states, with explanations ranging from the effects of inter-dependence and globalization (Taylor, 1994) to the emergence of a new economic paradigm following the dissolution of the USSR (Jessop, 1990). For a topical example, we can look at the HLPEP (High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons) and the SDSN (Sustainable Development Solutions Network) which Shakwi (2016) claims were instrumental in shaping the SDGs, alongside an array of regional and sub-regional non-state actors. Finally, another change which can be noted is the growth in non-western powers, especially the BRICS countries, that has led some (Turner, 2009, Cooper and Flemes, 2013) to claim that we now live in a multi-polar world. While these changes are too recent to examine authoritatively, it seems justifiable to speculate that the growth of regional powers and the growth of non-state agents' power are connected. The hole left behind

by the waning power of big states could have simultaneously been filled by smaller, regional hegemons and non-state agents, while the growth of the latter two could have facilitated the diminishing influence of state power in the international sphere.

The UN currently has 193 member and two observer states. Its main organs have been altered throughout history, but below is an over-view of their main responsibilities, organization, and composition.

The Security Council currently consists of five permanent members, the US, the UK, France, China and Russia, instead of the USSR, and ten non-permanent members with one vote per member. (un.org, 2019a). Non-permanent members are elected by the Assembly on a regional basis for two-year terms. It is led by a presidency which rotates monthly in alphabetic order. It meets irregularly, at the request of the president. (un.org, 2019b). According to the UN's official website, it is tasked with "the maintenance of international peace and security" (un.org, 2019a). To that end, it passes binding and non-binding resolutions. Its permanent members hold veto power over any UN decision.

The General Assembly is the UN's main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ made up of all member states (un.org, 2019c). It meets yearly in New York from December to January. Emergency meetings can also be called by seven members of the Security Council or by a majority of UN members (un.org, 2019c). It is led by a presidency elected on a regional rolling basis and 21 vice-presidents. It passes binding resolutions on budgetary matters and non-binding resolutions on all other matter, excluding matters of peace and security which are under Security Council consideration and which it is barred from discussing. Each member has one vote. Decisions on budgetary, peace and security, and membership matters require a two-thirds, while other matters require a simple majority (un.org, 2019c)

The Secretariat is the UN's main administrative body. It consists of permanent staff, and is led by the Secretary-General appointed by the Assembly at the recommendation of the Security Council. It is organized into departments and offices. (un.org, 2019d). The Secretary-General may bring matters to the attention of other organs, participate at meetings, and submits yearly reports to the Assembly. Staff is chosen based on competence and with respect to regional and gender inclusivity and appointed by the Secretary-General to other UN organs. (un.org, 2019d).

The International Court of Justice is the UN's main judiciary body. It consists of 15 judges appointed by the General Assembly for six-year terms. (un.org, 2019e). Each judge is from a different nation. The court can only pass judicial decisions if all parties recognize its jurisdiction. To that end, a country can request a judge with its citizenship be appointed for its case specifically. It is also tasked with clarifying international law by providing its opinions. (un.org, 2019e).

The Economic and Social Council consists of 54 members elected by the General Assembly for three-year terms. According to the UN's official website, "it is the central platform for fostering debate and innovative thinking, forging consensus on ways forward, and coordinating efforts to achieve

internationally agreed goals.” (un.org, 2019f). To that end, it monitors and coordinates the work of specialized agencies and commissions.

The Trusteeship Council ceased operations in 1994 following the independence of Palau. It held annual meetings up to that point and was led by a president and vice-president elected by the members for a maximum of five years. It consisted of the five permanent members of the Security Council and was tasked with monitoring ‘non-self-governing territories’ i.e. colonies. (un.org, 2019g).

Together with its main organs, the UN also consists of “affiliated programs, funds, and specialized agencies, all with their own membership, leadership, and budget” (un.org, 2019h). They are autonomous and entered into relations with the UN through negotiated agreements, either between the UN and a pre-existing body or through the establishment and negotiation with new bodies.

## METHODOLOGY

The work utilized a mixed methodology which developed over several steps. After familiarizing ourselves with the documents, we began coding individual words and phrases. They were coded if they indicated a temporal setting, or if they acted, or could have acted, as a verb. The second possibility was determined by looking at the etymology of the word, and at its position in the sentence. We asked if turning the word into a verb would alter the meaning of the sentence and if the answer was yes, it was not coded<sup>3</sup>. The words were coded using an excel table on the following dimensions:

- **CATEGORY**, referring to the grammatical category of the word or phrase in question. Nouns were coded as one, verbs as two, and adjectives as three. Phrases and numbers indicating a temporal setting were coded as four. Adverbs, prepositions and other words which could have acted as verbs were coded as five, as they were exceedingly rare.
- **TENSE**. For verbs, present simple was coded as one, present perfect as two, present continuous as three, past simple as four, past continuous as five, and future simple as six. Infinitive, coded as 10, and imperative, coded as 18, were added later, while other tenses which did not appear in any of the documents were deleted from the list. Past participles were coded as seven, present participles were coded as eight, and progressive participles were coded as nine, whether they functioned as nouns or adjectives. Other words which indicated a temporal setting, and were not verbs or participles, were coded as 11 if they referred to the present, 12 if they referred to the past, and 13 if they referred to the future. If they expressed continuity or permanence they were coded as 16 (continuous), and if they specified a clear point in time (for example, a date, within a given period, after an event which has already taken place or will take place at a known date) they were coded as 17 (specified). If a word could have acted as a verb but did not express a temporal setting (for example, a verbal noun which acted as the

---

<sup>3</sup> The phrase 'sustainable development' was not coded, since it formed a core component of the MDGs', and especially the SDGs', program and coding it could have massively prejudiced our results.



object but could have been the predicate) it was coded as zero (missing). If a temporal setting was indicated, but not covered by our list of codes, it was coded as 14 (other) and if a temporal setting was expressed, but unclear (for example, if a verb was modified by an auxiliary which could express either a future or a present tense) it was coded as 15 (unclear).

- VOICE. Verbs were coded one for active and two for passive voice while all other words were coded as zero for missing.
- AUXILLIARY. The auxiliaries have and will were not coded, as they form an integral part of their respective tenses. The auxiliary may was coded as one, might as two, shall as three, can as four, could as five, should as six, would as seven, and must as eight.
- FUNCTION, referring to a word's grammatical role. Predicates were coded as one, subjects as two, and objects and predicate complements as three. If a word, such as an adjective or adverb, modified a predicate, object, predicate complement, or subject, it was coded with the same number. If it was part of a reduced clause, and technically did not have any of these functions, it was coded as four (other).
- CLAUSE, referring to the type of clause in which the word was found. Both whole and reduced clauses were coded. Independent clauses were coded as one. The most common dependent clauses were object clauses, coded as two, adjective clauses, coded as three, and adverb clauses, coded as four. All other clauses were coded as five.

We then proceeded to search for association rules using the a-priori node of IBM SPSS Modeler, while treating 'category', 'tense', 'voice', 'auxiliary', 'function', and 'clause' as nominal variables. They were all treated as both input and target, as there is no reason to assume a causal relationship between any two categories of any two variables in either direction. We used the pre-configured features of a-priori node, specifically, 80% minimum rule confidence, and 10% minimum rule support. The results of this step were used to guide our qualitative analysis, conducted by following a modified version of the methods laid out in Van Leeuwen (2008). Van Leeuwen (ibid.) suggests that we focus on recontextualizing strategies, or intra-textual ways of modifying the meanings of the practices being represented. Specifically, he suggests that we focus on the addition, deletion, substitution or rearrangement of the different elements of a practice, such as actors, settings, or activities, which occurs when it is moved from one context to another. He further lays out different grammatical strategies which were especially useful to this work. These include: predication (representing activities: as processes, events, actions, or states; as conditional or unconditional; as temporalized or atemporal), subjectivation (representing actors: as active or passive; as subjects or objects; using qualifiers to describe their attributes), and objectivation (representing objects: representing actors, processes, events, or activities as objects; using qualifiers to describe them).

The words and segments coded in the previous steps were used to trace these practices in relation to social actors, activities, and temporal settings. Initially, we only coded words or phrases, using an excel table which was exported into SPSS, but during this step, we went back through our documents and coded both individual words and phrases and larger segments of text by using AQUAD7. Regarding activities, the data was divided into segments expressing a finished action or state (denoted by the use of past tenses, past participles, and particles denoting the past), a permanent state (denoted by the use of verbal noun forms, infinitives, and particles denoting permanence), an on-going process (denoted

by the use of continuous tenses, and nouns and participles denoting continuity), a current action or state (denoted by the use of present particles and tenses, if they were not modified to express permanence, continuousness, or a different tense), and a future action or state (denoted by the use of future tenses and particles). Additionally, auxiliary verbs were used to divide these categories into necessary ones (denoted by shall and must), possible ones (denoted by may, might, can, and could), and recommended ones (denoted by should). The structure of clauses was used to determine whether they were 'conditional' (whether the clauses surrounding a specific state, action, or process express circumstances necessary for its emergence). 'Actors' were first divided into subjects and objects and these were then divided into agents (individuals or groups of individuals), objects (material artifacts), events, processes, states, and actions. The segments without an explicitly or implicitly stated agent were coded as agentless.

As a large part of the meanings we wished to explore in this way depended on the context of a given word, segment, or entire sentence, the model chosen for in-text analysis was Van Dijk and Kintsch's (1983) sociocognitive approach. According to Van Dijk and Kintsch (*ibid.*), a text can be divided into 'propositions', or the smallest parts of a text which hold meaning on their own. Discourse is constructed by using different strategies to relate these propositions to each other. The authors propose a multi-level analysis, moving between specific words, sentences, larger segments of text, and the text as a whole in order to explore how meaning is constructed. In this way, the inconsistencies in the UN's use of temporality can be contextualized, first within the text itself and subsequently in relation to extra-textual context. However, their model relies heavily on the 'cognitive interface' or the ways in which meaning is constructed when an individual engages with a text and draws on his or hers structures of meaning, experiences, and other resources to interpret it. They divide between strategies utilized in producing a text, which may encourage certain readings, and strategies utilized by individuals reading a text. Since this work is primarily concerned with temporal constructions present within the UN's documents themselves, their second category will be omitted. Instead, the focus will be on grammatical strategies and word choice, located in the previous steps, which will be represented through a thick description of the documents in the following section.

## **RESULTS**

The results below are represented in a narrative form, chosen to retain as much intra-textual context as possible. The results are ordered in line with the documents' structures, and descriptions are entwined with interpretation. Without pretensions towards an all-encompassing analysis, we have chosen to analyze common formulations in segments which use them most frequently, or when the surrounding text makes an effect we wish to illustrate particularly clear. Subsequent and previous uses of these formulations are noted, but not explored as deeply, to keep the work concise.

## THE CHARTER OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Our quantitative search yielded 69 rules, but some were excluded because they don't tell us much about the text (like the association between function one, or predicate, and category two, verb), while others were excluded because they were, essentially, doubles created by treating all variables as both input and target fields. The rest are summarized in table 6.1.

*Table 6.7.1 Association rules for the United Nations Charter*

association (consequent: followed by antecedents)	confidence %	support %
function 1 (predicate): auxiliary 3 (shall)	100	11,548
function 1 (predicate): tense 6 (future simple)	100	12, 235
function 1 (predicate): auxiliary 3 (shall), tense 6 (future simple)	100	11, 486
function 1 (predicate): auxiliary 3 (shall), clause 1 (independent)	100	10, 799
function 1 (predicate): tense 6 (future simple), clause 1 (independent)	100	11, 298
function 1 (predicate): voice 1 (active), clause 1 (independent)	100	13, 109
function 1 (predicate): tense 6 (future simple), auxiliary 3 (shall), clause 1 (independent)	100	10, 799
category 2 (verb): tense 6 (future simple)	99, 49	12, 235
category 2 (verb); auxiliary 3 (shall)	99, 459	11, 548
category 2 (verb): tense 6 (future simple), auxiliary 3 (shall)	99, 457	11, 486
category 2 (verb): tense 6 (future simple), clause 1 (independent)	99, 448	11, 298
category 2 (verb): tense 6 (future simple), auxiliary 3 (shall), clause 1 (independent)	99, 422	10, 799
function 1 (predicate): voice 1 (active)	99, 089	27, 403
category 2 (verb): voice 1 (active), clause 1 (independent)	97, 619	13, 109
category 2 (verb): voice 1 (active)	97, 267	24, 403
auxiliary 3 (shall): tense 6 (future simple), function 1 (predicate), clause 1 (independent)	95, 58	11, 298
category 1 (noun): clause 4 (adverbial)	94, 737	11, 86
function 4 (other): category 3 (adjective), clause 3 (adjective)	94, 652	11, 673
clause 1 (independent): auxiliary 3 (shall), tense 6 (future simple), function 1 (predicate)	94, 022	12, 235
clause 1 (independent): auxiliary 3 (shall), function 1 (predicate)	93, 514	11, 548
clause 1 (independent): tense 6 (future simple), function 1 (predicate)	92, 347	12, 235
category 1 (noun): function 4 (other)	90, 609	24, 594
category 1 (noun): clause 1 (independent)	90, 449	11, 111
category 1 (noun): function 3 (object)	89, 627	15, 044
category 1 (noun): function 4 (other), clause 3 (adjective)	87, 499	14, 418
category 1 (noun): clause 3 (adjective)	86, 735	18, 352
clause 3 (adjective): function 4 (other), category 3 (adjective)	85, 507	12, 921
function 4 (other): clause 3 (adjective), category 1 (noun)	84, 946	14, 426

The clearest association available, which continuously appears in different combinations, is the association between shall, future simple, predicates, and independent clauses. This can be seen both

when we look at the antecedents of predicates, and when we look at antecedents for verbs.<sup>2</sup> Theoretically, this might suggest that the Charter constructs a necessary future and uses strong, prescriptive language. However, the rule support percentage is comparatively small, hovering around 10%, which suggests that these verbs represent a relatively small percentage of the data set. It also may be interesting to note that an association was found between active voice and verbs, suggesting proactive language. On the other hand, the support percentage for the associations found for nouns, which were associated mostly with independent and adjective clauses, is comparatively larger. This might suggest that nouns, which are inherently timeless, represent a larger percentage of the data, and that they were particularly common in these two types of clauses. We could then argue that the place of verbs was often taken by non-verbs, which could suggest that the language used in the Charter avoids temporality.

The Charter is divided into 15 chapters: Purposes and Principles, Membership, Organs, The General Assembly, the Security Council, Pacific Settlement of Disputes, Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression, Regional Arrangements, International Economic and Social Cooperation, The Economic and Social Council, Declaration Regarding Non-self-governing Territories, International Trusteeship System, The Trusteeship Council, The International Court of Justice, The Secretariat, Miscellaneous Provisions, Transnational Security Arrangements, Amendments, and Ratification and Signature.

Introducing the chapters is a short text outlining the Charter's, and by proxy the UN's, goals. It opens with the statement 'we the people of the United Nations determined' rendered in capital letters. This is followed by a series of object clauses relating to the word 'determined' opened by to-infinitives followed by other objects. After four such clauses the words 'and for these ends' are rendered in capital letters, followed by four more object clauses in the same pattern. This frames the first set of clauses as goals, and the second as the means by which they will be accomplished. Finally, the words 'have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims' are rendered in capital letters, relating once again to the subject, the people of the United Nations, and to the words 'for these ends'. This creates tension between the actions and goals proposed in the object clauses and the action actually taken, resolving. By relating the means expressed in the object clauses to the word 'determined', they can also be read as goals, resolving the tension. Another possibility, encouraged by the rendering of the goals in infinitives which gives them a timeless quality, and their grammatical relation to the finished actions to which they are objects which establishes an essentialized connection between the two, is to read them as descriptors of

---

<sup>2</sup> Due to the nature of the procedure, with antecedents predicting consequents, the most indicative prediction to be found in this data set is the rule that, with 94, 022 % certainty, if a word was coded as a predicate in future simple with the auxiliary shall, it was coded in an independent clause. It is also interesting that the support percentage, 12, 235, for this rule is identical to the support percentage for the rule that if something was coded as future simple it was also coded as a verb, which might indicate overlap between the two.

the agent. By stating that 'we determined' the text encourages us to read everything which follows as an external object upon which the 'we' will act. By switching to infinitives and turning the object into part of the predicate, it subverts this expectation and recontextualizes the object as an integral part of the agent's activities, and, by extension, the agent. Answering why the action of resolving was taken, instead of the actions outlined in the object clauses, can then be answered tautologically, by referring to these inherent qualities of the agent. This section closes with a sentence announcing the founding of the UN. It follows logically from the previous section and provides additional details about the act of founding, moving from a past tense describing the agents to a present tense describing their actions.

The first chapter is divided into two articles. The first opens with the statement 'the purposes of the United Nations are' followed by a series of object clauses with to-infinitives. They branch off into additional clauses which further describe the main purposes, switching from describing the permanent state of the agent (the state of having these purposes) to describing the permanent characteristics of the purposes. Similarly to the infinitives of the opening section, the purposes are grammatically related to the agent, while the use of infinitives gives them a sense of permanence or timelessness. The second article lays out the principles which the organization must follow in pursuing its purposes. The independent clauses are mostly written by identifying the agent, followed by a necessary future expressed through the word 'shall'. Two sentences diverge from this slightly, the first principle which is expressed in present simple, and the last one which does not refer to a specific agent but rather states what the limits of the Charter 'shall' and 'shall not' be.

Chapters two, Membership, and three, Organs, show very little consistency in temporal constructions. Chapter four, The General Assembly, is divided into four topics: Composition, consisting of one article, Functions and powers, consisting of seven articles, Voting, consisting of two articles, and Procedures, consisting of three articles. The independent clauses alternate between expressing what the agents 'shall' and 'may' do, moving between necessary and possible futures. Dependent clauses and independent clauses related to the initial independent clauses elaborate on the conditions under which these futures may unfold, including the characteristics of the actors, the situations under which they will operate, and the actions they have taken or may take in the future. Chapter five, The Security Council, is also divided into four topics: Composition, consisting of one article, Functions and powers, consisting of three articles, Voting, consisting of one article, and Procedure, consisting of five articles. The formulation 'shall' dominates this chapter, denoting the greater importance of the Council by expressing its actions as necessary. There are several exceptions. Three articles are formulated by using 'may', one referring to the possibility of using different locations for the Council's meeting, one referring to the possibility of establishing additional organs, and one referring to the possibility of states participating in the Council's discussions without vote. Two more articles are written with the initial independent clauses' predicates in present simple. The first states that 'Members confer on the Security Council primary responsibility' while the second states they 'agree to accept and carry out

(its) decisions'. The switch to a present tense seems to suggest an instance of greater importance, as both articles address the actions members take to endow the Council with authority and ability to act. Similar formulations can be found in chapter two, in an article which describes which states may join the UN, and in chapter three, in an article which establishes the UN's main organs for the first time. Another exception in chapter five is a sentence with a predicate in present simple which points the reader towards other chapters which will further elaborate on the Council's powers in specific areas. A similar article appears in chapter three. As these point towards the Charter itself, the switch to present simple can be read as establishing the Charter's importance.

Chapter six, Pacific Settlement of Disputes, is divided into six articles. Its independent clauses alternate between expressing necessary futures by using 'shall', possible futures by using 'may', and recommended futures by using 'should'. While the articles are written with the main predicate, denoted by may, shall, or should, referring to an action taken by the agent (the Council, the Assembly, member or non-member states, or the UN), they outline a set of procedures. A series of temporal markers: first of all, when it deems necessary, at any stage of a dispute, procedures which have already been adopted, denote the appropriate sequence of actions. Conditional propositions<sup>3</sup>, mostly written as dependent clauses, describe which events can trigger a given action or sequence of actions, how actors should behave, which articles and chapters of the Charter should be considered, i.e., which measures should be taken, by whom, and in what order. The structure of the chapter conveys continuous processes, but word choice, particularly the use of verbal nouns (negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, settlement, resort, continuance, maintenance, dispute, adjustment, obligations, proceedings, procedures, provisions, recommendations, consideration), and to-infinitives as objects (to endanger, to settle, to determine, to take, to recommend) conveys permanence. This is further complicated as conditional propositions alternate between present simple, future simple, and past participles. A contradiction between permanence and specific sequences, context-sensitive conditions for these sequences, and the continuous processes they create arises. This contradiction can be read as endowing the UN with permanent features and a set of procedures which can be evoked across a variety of contexts in order to deal with its basic tasks, in this case, peace-keeping. The use of conditional propositions in chapters five and six can be seen as serving a similar purpose, but this chapter is the first instance of time-markers being used in the Charter to a significant extent, other than the use of 'present Charter' which continuously appears to reaffirm the Charter's importance.

Chapter seven, Action with Respect to Threats to the Peace, Breaches of the Peace, and Acts of Aggression, is divided into 12 articles. Its structure, word choice, and overall effect is similar to chapter six, but it relies more heavily on 'shall'. Furthermore, unlike chapter six, it contains an article with a predicate in present simple and a to-infinitive object denoting an instance of particular importance.

---

<sup>3</sup> By this we mean dependent and independent clauses which could hold meaning in isolation but, within the text, outline the conditions under which the propositions outlined in other clauses can, will, or do unfold.

This article states that 'all members (...) undertake to make available to the Security Council (...) armed forces, assistance, and facilities'. This makes another function of using to-infinitives as objects clearer: creating a layer of distance between the action being taken and the goal denoted by the infinitive. Specifically, instead of stating 'all members make available', the article introduces 'undertake' as the predicate while 'to make available' is turned into the object. The action which needs to be taken to accomplish a given goal is then constructed as the goal, making agents' obligations under the chapter less rigid.

Chapter eight, Regional Arrangements, consists of three articles. Its independent clauses alternate between present simple, pointing to other sections of the Charter, and 'shall', combined with dependent clauses outlining appropriate procedures, their sequence, the actors which will undertake them, and the conditions under which they can be taken. Chapter nine, International Economic and Social Cooperation, consists of five articles. Four use 'shall' combined with additional propositions to outline appropriate procedures. One uses present simple with a to-infinitive object to denote a specifically important instance: 'members pledge themselves to take (...) action in cooperation with the Organization' and one sentence uses a passive voice and a present simple to point to another section of the Charter. Chapter 10, the Economic and Social Council, consists of four topics: Composition, consisting of one article, Functions and powers, consisting of five articles, Voting, consisting of one article, and Procedure, consisting of five articles. The first and third topics are written largely with the use of 'shall', while the second is dominated by 'may', and the fourth switches between the two. Unlike the previous chapters dedicated to the organization's main organs, the General Assembly and the Security Council, this chapter does not contain a sentence in present simple. Instead, the Economic and Social Council's authority is grounded in clauses which outline its relationship to the Council, member states, and Assembly. This may be indicative of the Economic and Social Council smaller scope of influence, which extends primarily over coordinating specialized agencies, initiating studies and reports, and making recommendations in the 'softer' fields of health, education, culture, and development.

Chapter 11, Declaration Regarding Non-self-governing Territories, consists of only two articles, but it opens up a large sector of the Charter which deals with these territories. Both articles are written in present simple. The first consists of six paragraphs, with the first expressing the independent clause, 'members recognize and accept', of the article followed by an object clause, 'the obligation to promote well-being'. The rest are a part of an adverbial clause elaborating on how this goal, well-being, should be achieved, while each individual paragraph functions as a to-infinitive led object clause related to the main clauses' predicates (recognize and accept). Verbal nouns function as objects of individual paragraphs, creating additional layers of distance between the actions of recognizing and accepting, and the goal of well-being. As was noted before, the word-choice essentializes the 'goals' by making them atemporal, which, combined with the introduction of an adverbial clause, turns them into descriptors of



the main clause's actors, members of the UN. The second article is shorter with the independent clause's predicate being 'agree' and an object clause with the predicate 'must be based.' Again, the grammatical structure creates a sense of permanence, as well as a layer of distance, with the necessary action denoted by 'must' belonging to an atemporal plane which can be read as descriptive. Chapter 12, International Trusteeship System, consists of 11 articles. It mostly uses 'shall', with 'may' appearing occasionally in dependent clauses. Its second article contains five to-infinitive led object clauses related to the independent clause's predicate 'shall be'. The rest of the chapter is written similarly to chapters six, seven, and eight, with conditional clauses, a-temporal forms, and temporal markers outlining a set of procedures, and independent clauses expressing a necessary future related to an agent. Chapter 13, the Trusteeship Council, closes the section related to non-self-governing territories. It is divided into four parts: Composition, consisting of one article, Functions and powers, consisting of two articles, Voting, consisting of one article, and Procedure, consisting of two articles. It switches between 'shall' and 'may' with dependent clauses outlining the organ's relationship with other organs. This grounds its authority which, similarly to the Economic and Social Council, falls within 'softer' fields, in other organs.

Chapter 14, The International Court of Justice, consists of five articles, but its Statute is annexed to the Charter as a separate document and 'forms an integral part of the (...) Charter'. Two articles use 'shall', two use present simple, one with a to-infinitive object clause and one as a simple sentence, and the rest use 'may'. Dependent clauses are mostly written in present tenses, or in passives which make the temporal setting unclear. Chapter 15, The Secretariat, consists of five articles. One uses present simple with a to-infinitive led object clause, one uses may, and three use shall in their initial independent clauses<sup>4</sup>. The Secretariat and the Court are the only organs whose chapters are not divided into the topics of composition, functions and powers, voting and procedure. In the case of the Court, this can be explained by the fact that it has a separate founding document, the Statute of the International Court of Justice. In the case of the Secretariat, and in light of its placement near the end of the Charter which focuses predominantly on internal procedures, while the beginning focuses predominantly on external goals, it could be explained by the organ's administrative function.

Chapter 16, Miscellaneous Provisions, consists of four articles, with shall being slightly more common than may in its independent clauses. Chapter 17, Transnational Security Agreements consists of only two articles, both of which use shall in their independent clauses. The first refers to an agent, while the second's subject is the Charter. It is interesting because it contains the first instance where a date, the signing of the Four-Nation Declaration in Moscow in 30.10.1943, is specified. Considering the constant references to the Charter, and the position that the organization, its organs, and members occupy as the main agents of the document, the fact that the only specified points in time refers to a conference held by the members seems to suggest that the Charter simultaneously establishes and reinforces the

---

<sup>4</sup> Most articles are written so that, even if there are multiple independent clauses, they flow from each other, with the first clause setting the stage and the following clauses elaborating on important details.

organization's importance. Chapter 18, Amendments, consists of two articles with shall in five and may in one independent clause. In contrast to the rest of the Charter, only one out of six independent clauses has an agent as its subject. Chapter 19, Ratification, also consists of two articles and uses shall in its independent clauses. Only one of its seven independent clauses has an agent as the subject and it does not use shall, but 'will'. Instead, the subjects of these clauses are fairly abstract (the Charter, ratifications, conference, alteration, amendments), while agents are referred to in dependent clauses. Similar sentences appear in every chapter apart from chapter three, but only chapters two, (two out of six clauses), seven (14 out of 28), and eight (four out of eight) have a significant number of them. Chapter 12, with abstract subjects in 11 out of 18 independent clauses, is the only exception appearing before the closing chapters. Two of them use a passive voice and the subject 'it', one of which is agentless, and another agentless clause uses 'there' as the subject. While the rest of the Charter uses dependent clauses to recontextualize actions and processes as states describing agent, these clauses have the opposite effect. Agents are still identified in dependent clauses, or act as objects, but this reversal makes them passive recipients of the Organization's procedures and diminishes their agency. Overall, the use of these clauses throughout the Charter is inconsistent, but the chapters using them more frequently tend to refer to administrative procedures: the closing chapters deal with implementing the Charter, much of chapter 12 deals with trusteeship agreements, chapter eight with regional agreements, and chapter two with membership. Chapter seven is the exception, as it deals with 'action in respect to threats to the peace', in other words, the use of military force. In this case, these clauses could be seen as taking away the agency of individual agents to place it under over-arching procedures, collectivize and embody it within the organization, and strengthen its ability to use force.

The Charter closes with two simple sentences. 'In faith whereof' is written in capital letters and ties the body of the Charter back to its opening section. Grammatically, 'in faith whereof' suggests that the sentence which follows, 'the representatives of the Governments of the United Nations have signed the present Charter', is an adverbial clause. Relating it to the opening section of the Charter, we get the sentence: 'we the people of the United Nations have resolved to combine our efforts to accomplish these aims, in faith whereof the representatives of the United Nations have signed the present Charter.' However, as the sentence appears at the very end of the Charter without much context, it could also be read in reverse with the signing of the Charter serving as the independent clause, and the rest of the Charter effectively functioning as an adverbial clause to 'have signed'. Both interpretations have a similar effect of recontextualizing the Charter's text into a descriptor of the agent, we the people, or representatives. The first ties it to the object clauses of the opening section, and the second effectively turns it into an attributive clause. The second, and last sentence of the Charter, opens with the word 'done' in capital letters, followed by the location and time, 'at the city of San Francisco the twenty-sixth day of June, one thousand nine hundred and forty-five.' This is also the second instance where a date is

specified, referring to a convention held by the members, which seems to indicate that the Charter is largely based on the activities of member-states.

## THE UNITED NATIONS MILLENIUM DECLARATION

We found a total of 97 association rules. After deleting all of the doubles and ‘obvious’ rules, we were left with table 6.2.

*Table 6.7.2: Association rules for the United Nations Millennium Declaration*

Association (consequent: followed by antecedents)	Confidence %	Support %
function 1 (predicate): tense 1 (present simple)	100	12, 464
function 1 (predicate): tense 10 (infinitive)	100	22, 319
function 1 (predicate): voice 1 (active)	100	35, 652
function 1 (predicate): voice 1 (active), tense 1 (present simple), auxiliary 0 (missing)	100	10, 58
function 1 (predicate): auxiliary 0 (missing), tense 1 (present simple)	100	12, 464
function 1 (predicate): clause 1 (independent), category 2 (verb)	100	11, 159
function 1 (predicate): tense 10 (infinitive), clause 2 (object), auxiliary 0 (missing)	100	14, 783
function 1 (predicate): tense 10 (infinitive), voice 1 (active)	100	21,304
function 1 (predicate): tense 10 (infinitive), auxiliary 0 (missing)	100	22, 319
function 1 (predicate): voice 1 (active), auxiliary 0 (missing)	100	34, 783
function 1 (predicate): clause 2 (object), category 2 (verb)	100	16, 377
function 1 (predicate): clause 3 (adjective), category 2 (verb)	100	10, 435
function 1 (predicate): tense 10 (predicate), clause 2 (object), voice 1 (active), auxiliary 0 (missing)	100	14, 203
function 1 (predicate): tense 10 (infinitive), voice 1 (active), auxiliary 0 (missing)	100	21, 304
function 1 (predicate): clause 2 (object), voice 1 (active), auxiliary 0 (missing)	100	15, 507
voice 1 (active): tense 10 (infinitive), clause 2 (object), function 1 (predicate), auxiliary 0 (missing)	96, 078	14, 783
voice 1 (active): tense 10 (infinitive), function 1 (predicate), auxiliary 0 (missing)	95, 455	22, 319
voice 1 (active): clause 2 (object), function 1 (predicate), auxiliary 0 (missing)	94, 69	16, 377
voice 1 (active): category 2 (verb), function 1 (predicate), auxiliary 0 (missing)	92, 279	37, 536
voice 1 (active): category 2 (verb), clause 3 (object), function 1 (predicate)	91, 667	10, 435
tense 10 (infinitive): clause 2 (object), voice 1 (active), function 1 (predicate), auxiliary 0 (missing)	91, 589	15, 507
voice 1 (active): function 1 (predicate), auxiliary 0 (missing)	91, 255	38, 166
tense 10 (infinitive): clause 2 (object), function 1 (predicate), auxiliary 0 (missing)	90, 265	16, 377
voice 1 (active): clause 3 (adjective), function 1 (predicate)	89, 333	10, 87
voice 1 (active): clause 3 (adjective), function 1 (predicate), auxiliary 0 (missing)	89, 189	10, 725
function 3 (object): clause 2 (object)	86, 301	10, 58

voice 1 (active): tense 1 (present simple), function 1 (predicate), auxiliary 0 (missing)	84, 884	12, 464
---	---------	---------

The first thing to note is the use of active voice and the lack of auxiliary verbs. Active voice, coupled with the fact that the support percentages are quite high for all of the associations regarding verbs, might suggest proactive language. On the other hand, the support percentage for infinitives is higher than that for present simple (22, 319 % for the former and 12, 464 % for the latter), and we can see that in 10, 58% of the data it is 86, 301% likely that if a data point was coded in an object clause, it served as the object. We can also see that infinitives commonly appear as antecedents or consequents of predicates and object clauses, suggesting that the documents relied on infinitive led object clauses with nouns which could have served as predicates in the object position. Finally, we can see that the support percentage for predicates in object clauses was 16, 377 % compared to 11, 159% for independent clauses and 10, 435% for adjective clauses. This might suggest that object clauses were used to make the active voice and verb-led document more temporally ambiguous, to create layers of distance between actions and goals, and to create associations between the goals expressed in infinitive-led object clauses and the activities described by independent clauses' predicates.

The Millennium Declaration is the Shortest of the three documents, with only nine pages compared to the Charter's 20, and the Agenda's 38. It is divided into eight sections: Values and Principles, Peace, security and disarmament, Development and poverty eradication, Protecting our common environment, Human rights, democracy, and good governance, Protecting the vulnerable, Meeting the special needs of Africa, and Strengthening the United Nations. It opens with the sentence: *'The General Assembly Adopts the following Declaration'*, placing the following text into an object position related to the present tense of 'adopts'. This grounds the document both is the present action being taken by the Assembly, and in its agency, since the activity of adopting the Agenda is presented as a key event in solving the problems the MDGs address in the rest of the document.

The first chapter, Values and Principles, consists of seven articles. The first article sets the stage, identifying the subject, 'heads of State and Government', subsequently referred to as 'we' and appearing in almost every article of the document. It is also marked by a reference to a meeting held 'in New York from 6 to 8 September 2000', temporally and geographically situating the document. All articles open on independent clauses with predicates in present tenses and, apart from articles three and seven, all are followed by object clauses. Article six lays down the fundamental values of the document: freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature, and shared responsibility. Each is written in bold letters and followed by a brief elaboration. Apart from the first value, freedom, the initial independent clauses elaborating these values use 'must' to denote necessity. Four are written in passives with the subject position mostly occupied by abstract principles (responsibility, challenges, and prudence) and agents either missing or acting as objects. Additional independent and dependent clauses elaborating the values are inconsistent in temporal settings, but six out of eight do not have agents as subjects. This divorce

between values and agents can be read as either minimizing agents' responsibility or maximizing the values' importance by presenting them as independent of any one agent.

Chapter two, Peace, security and disarmament, consists of three articles. The first has two independent clauses with predicates in future simple which are followed by to-infinitive led object clauses. It contains the formulation 'we will spare no effort to free our people from the scourge of war', evocative of the opening line of the Charter 'we, the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war'. Combined with explicit references to the Charter throughout the document, a continuity between the two is established, and the Declaration is framed as an extension of the Charter. The second article opens with the words 'we resolve therefore' followed by 11 to-infinitive led object clauses which are visually divided into bullet points. They relate both to the first article of chapter two and, in a more round-about way, to article seven of chapter one. Article seven closes the first chapter with the words 'in order to translate these shared values into actions, we have identified key objectives to which we assign special significance'. This reframes the following text as the means of achieving the values outlined in article six of chapter one. Additional layers of distance arise from it, first between the values of article six and the rest of the text, and then between the goals and 'means' of subsequent chapters, outlined in to-infinitive led object clauses. The third article of chapter two, article 10, once again has the independent clause's predicate in present simple with two to-infinitive led object clauses. Seven more references to other UN documents can be found in chapter two, building on the internal continuity between this document and the UN's pre-existing practices, procedures, and structures. It should also be noted that references to other UN documents and activities appear throughout the document both in the body of its text and in footnotes.

The references mentioned in footnotes are particularly interesting. Since they commonly refer to concrete points in time, whether the time and place is specified or not, they ground the document temporally and geographically, and situate it within the UN's body of work, as much as the in-text references. However, their placement at the text's margins, as well as the smaller font, might suggest that they are imagined to be less integral to the text's core ideas. While this is difficult to substantiate, we can note a trend of the footnotes being written with more technical details, and this could indicate that they are additional, more specific, 'means' deduced from the 'means' which were placed in the text.

Chapter three, Development and poverty eradication, consists of nine articles. Three independent clauses have predicates in future simple, with the auxiliary 'will', and the rest are in present simple. Dependent clauses are dominated by the use of a-temporal forms, including infinitives and verbal nouns, while those that do have a clear temporal setting mostly use present tenses. To-infinitives are particularly common, usually as predicates of object clauses, with articles 15, 19 and 20 using multiple to-infinitive led object clauses visually divided into bullet points. Article 15 is interesting in this respect because, while the infinitives relate grammatically to the independent clause's predicate 'call' they refer to its object 'industrialized countries', rather than the subject 'we'. The action 'call' is done by the subject to

the object, establishing the UN's authority, while the actions described by infinitives are distanced from it both by the switch to the infinitive tense and by the switch to a new subject. Article 13 is the only article that does not contain a single to-infinitive, consisting of three independent clauses with predicates in present simple and no dependent clauses. It opens with the words 'success in meeting these objectives', indicating that it serves as a bridge between the first two articles which deal with poverty eradication on a more abstract level, and the rest of the chapter which is devoted to more concrete problems faced by 'developing' countries. It is also the only article opening on an agentless independent clause with the subject 'success', rather than 'we'. As the article recontextualizes the text around it, the switch to simpler sentences can be read as denoting an instance of particular importance. The abstract subject of its first two clauses, with the last one switching back to 'we', can be related to the following articles' placement of 'developing countries' in the object position. By switching to an abstract concept, it lays the groundwork for divorcing poverty eradication from 'developing countries' and reimagining it as an activity done by the UN to these countries. Like the previous chapter, this chapter contains references to other documents and upcoming conferences. It also contains several articles with clear time-frames. Article 15 refers to a conference in May 2001 as the time-frame for one of its goals, although it is prefaced by the word 'preferably', while article 19 establishes 2015 and 2020 as time-frames more unambiguously. However, these timeframes refer only to specific goals, and not to the agenda of the whole document.

Chapter four, Protecting our common environment, consists of three articles. The first uses the auxiliary 'must', with 'spare' and the object 'no effort', followed by a to-infinitive object and attributive clauses. As all other chapters, apart from chapters one and seven, open on 'we will spare no effort', it is safe to assume that it is expressing a necessary future. Moving the negation to the object part of this formulation seems to affirm the agent's active nature, making the predicate something that it does (sparing no effort), rather than something it does not do (not sparing any effort). Opening the chapters with it continuously grounds the document in the agency of its main actor and keeps the tone positive. The second article of chapter four reaffirms agenda 21, with its main clause's predicate in present simple. The third opens with 'we resolve therefore' followed by a to-infinitive object clause, the words 'as first steps, we resolve' and six more to-infinitive object clauses divided into bullet points. The first of these establishes a time-frame for its goal, enforcing the Kyoto protocol, by referencing the 10-year anniversary of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development which was to occur in 2002, but it is prefaced by 'preferably'.

Chapter five, Human rights, democracy and good governance, consists of two articles. The first opens with 'we will spare no effort' followed by a to-infinitive object clause, while the second states 'we resolve therefore' followed by seven to-infinitive object clauses. Chapter six, protecting the rights of the vulnerable, combines this formula within a single article. Graphically, it is divided into three sections comprised of the 'we will spare no effort+ to infinitive object and attributive clauses' formulation, 'we

resolve therefore', and three to-infinitive object clauses, producing the same effect as previous chapters which divided them into separate articles. Chapter seven, Meeting the special needs of Africa, consists of two articles. Unlike the rest of the document, it opens with two independent clauses with the subject 'we' and predicates in future simple, 'will support' and 'will assist'. This is not followed by to-infinitive object clauses, but by verbal nouns, consolidation, struggle, development, and eradication, acting as objects. As these relate to 'Africa' and 'Africans' the choice of predicates seems to put the UN in a supporting role. However, the use of verbal nouns turns the activities of Africa and Africans into states of being, and the closing part of the article 'thereby bringing Africa into the mainstream of the world economy' further undermines its agency by re-emphasizing its role as the object. The second article uses 'we resolve therefore' followed by four to-infinitive object clauses, two of which use Africa as a geographical setting, and one of which places it in the object position, cementing the power imbalance between 'Africa', the object, and 'we', the subject.

Chapter eight, Strengthening the United Nations, closes the document with four more articles. The first article opens with 'we will spare no effort to', while the second uses 'we resolve therefore' followed by 11 to-infinitive object clauses visually divided into bullet points. The last two have the predicates of their independent clauses in present simple. The first addresses the General Assembly and the Secretary-General and asks them to monitor progress on the document's goals through appropriate procedures. The last reaffirms the importance of the UN and closes on a sentence where the agent of the document, the heads of state and government embodied in the ubiquitous 'we', reaffirms its dedication to the document's goals. While the use of verbal nouns and, less often, adjectives punctuates the entire body of the document, turning potential dependent clauses into descriptive passages, it is especially clear in the last chapter. Its effect, especially when combined with the frequent use of infinitives, is one of timelessness. The topics being discussed seem divorced from both agents and their activities, and instead appear as reified objects, even as their content points to larger social processes: development, globalization, disarmament. On first glance, this contradicts the use of 'we' as the subject of most articles and other inter-textual means of reaffirming the organization's agency. However, this contradiction could be read as creating a distinction between the active UN who solves problems, and the problems themselves, decontextualized and divorced from any action the organization or its members may have taken to aggravate them.

## THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The a-priori node generated 86 association rules. After deleting doubles and unnecessary rules, we were left with table 6.3.

*Table 6.7.3: Association rules for the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*

Association (consequent: followed by antecedents)	Confidence %	Support %
function 1 (predicate): voice 1 (active), clause 1 (independent)	100	17, 523

function 1 (predicate): voice 1 (active), clause 1 (independent), auxiliary 0 (missing)	100	16, 856
function 1 (predicate): voice 1 (active)	99, 903	28, 742
function 1 (predicate): voice 1 (active), auxiliary 0 (missing)	99, 899	27, 613
function 1 (predicate): tense 1 (present simple), auxiliary 0 (missing)	99, 735	10, 469
category 2 (verb): voice 1 (active)	99, 71	28, 742
category 2 (verb): voice 1 (active), auxiliary 0 (missing)	99, 698	27, 613
category 2 (verb): voice 1 (active), clause 1 (independent)	99, 683	17, 523
category 2 (verb): voice 1 (active), clause 1 (independent), auxiliary 0 (missing)	99, 671	16, 856
category 2 (verb): tense 1 (present simple), auxiliary 0 (missing)	99, 469	10, 469
category 2 (verb): role 1 (predicate), clause 1 (independent)	97, 911	19, 939
function 4 (other): clause 4 (adverbial), voice 0 (missing)	90, 833	16, 622
voice 1 (active): category 2 (verb), role 1 (predicate), auxiliary 0 (missing)	90, 594	30, 408
voice 1 (active): category 2 (verb), auxiliary 0 (missing)	90, 511	30, 436
voice 1 (active): category 2 (verb), role 1 (predicate)	90, 131	31, 797
voice 1 (active): category 2 (verb)	90, 052	31, 824
voice 1 (active): category 2 (verb), role 1 (predicate), clause 1 (independent), auxiliary 0 (missing)	90, 03	18, 661
voice 1 (active): category 2 (verb), clause 1 (independent), auxiliary 0 (missing)	89, 896	18, 689
voice 1 (active): category 2 (verb), function 1 (predicate), clause 1 (independent)	89, 474	19, 522
voice 1 (active): category 2 (verb), clause 1 (independent)	89, 347	19, 55
voice 1 (active): function 1 (predicate), auxiliary 0 (missing)	88, 75	31, 102
voice 1 (active): function 1 (predicate)	88, 376	32, 491
voice 1 (active): function 1 (predicate), clause 1 (independent), auxiliary 0 (missing)	88, 355	19, 078
voice 1 (active): function 1 (predicate), clause 1 (independent)	87, 833	19, 939
category 1 (noun): role 3 (object), clause 1 (independent), tense 0 (missing)	86, 234	10, 691
voice 1 (active): tense 1 (present simple), function 1 (predicate), auxiliary 0 (missing)	86, 17	10, 422
voice 1 (active): tense 1 (present simple), auxiliary o (missing)	85, 942	10, 469
category 1 (noun): clause 1 (independent), tense 0 (missing)	85, 873	12, 58
function 3 (object): category 1 (noun), clause 1 (independent), tense 0 (missing)	85, 347	10, 803
function 3 (object): clause 1 (independent), tense 0 (missing)	84, 989	12, 58
function 3 (object): clause 1 (independent), category 1 (noun)	83, 834	12, 024
function 4 (other): clause 3 (adjective), category 3 (adjective)	83, 29	10, 803
category 1 (noun): role 3 (object), tense 0 (missing)	82, 087	17, 828

From this table, we can see that the most common tense was present simple, in active voice, and that it was mostly used in the predicates of independent clauses. However, we can see, for example, that the support percentage for predicates in active voice and without auxiliaries is 27, 613% while the support percentage for predicates in present simple and without auxiliaries is 10, 469% suggesting, perhaps, that the temporal setting of the Agenda are more diverse, but that no predictions can be made about tenses other than present simple. We can also see that associations were found between function ‘other’ and



adjective and adverbial clauses. As ‘other’ was mostly coded within reduced clauses where predicates, objects, and subjects did not technically exist, it is, at the moment, difficult to interpret. Finally, near the cut-off point, we find the association between objects and independent clauses. We can then assume that the Agenda will be mostly independent clause-led, and will most likely utilize non-verb forms when it needs to create distance, rather than a-temporal verb forms.

The 2030 Agenda is divided into five broad topics: Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Declaration, Sustainable Development Goals and targets, Means of implementation and the Global Partnership, and Follow-up and Review.

Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the shortest, covering slightly more than one page. It is divided into sections titled Permeable, People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership. A particularly common formulation is ‘we are determined’ followed by to-infinitive led object clauses, which opens every section apart from the first. Apart from the first and the last, all of them contain at least one dependent clause which uses ‘can’ to describe a desired outcome and frame it as a possible future state stemming from the actions taken by ‘we’ in the present. As this action is itself a state, ‘are determined’, the goal can be read as a descriptor of the agent. The first and last article contain similar formulations, but use ‘will’ to denote necessity instead of possibility, with the first relating ‘will’ directly to the agent ‘we’ to create a factual statement about the future, and the last framing it as conditional. The first article also contains several clauses where the subject is not we, but ‘Agenda’ and ‘Goals’, who are given authority over other agents, and references to the MDGs, establishing a continuity between the MDGs and SDGs.

The second section, Declaration is divided into Introduction, Our vision, Our shared principles and commitments, Our world today, The new Agenda, Means of implementation, Follow-up and review, and A call for action to change the world, covering around 10 pages. Introduction opens on an article specifying the main actor, Heads of State and Government, and the time and place, a meeting held in New York from 25-27.9.2015, and later again refers to this meeting as ‘today’ to ground the document in a specific point in time. The following three articles stick with the subject ‘we’, mostly using present simple with object clauses and, occasionally, future simple. The effect is simultaneously a straightforward factual statement about what ‘we’ did or will do, and a sense of vagueness, as part of the action is moved to the object. The fifth and sixth article switch to ‘Agenda’ and ‘Goals’ as their subject, reestablishing their authority independently of any agents. The sixth article also switches to a past tense and grounds the document in previous conferences and documents, while articles two and three establish a time-frame for the future, 2030, referring to the whole document.

Our shared principles and commitments contains four articles. The first introduces the agenda through three agentless independent clauses with a passive voice in present simple and further references to previous UN documents and summits. The following two switch to the subject ‘we’ with the predicate

‘reaffirm’ followed by references to more documents and conferences. The fourth moves to abstract subjects, with two independent clauses in passive and one in active voice and present simple. The switch to active voice can be read as reaffirming the agency of ‘Heads of State and Government’, while the passive passages divorce UN documents and procedures from specific agents, reifying and strengthening them.

Our world today has four articles. The first opens by declaring ‘we are meeting at a time of immense change’, temporally grounding the document once more. The rest of the section is written mostly in present simple and without a clear agent. It opens by explaining the problems in need of addressing, moves to the progress that has already been made in addressing them within the scope of the MDGs, and, finally, deduces the SDGs as a logical continuation of the MDGs and a solution to the problems left unaddressed by them. It also uses a lot of passive constructions, interestingly, when referring both to the progress that was made and some of the remaining issues, while other issues are rendered in an active voice. As the few sentences that do use the subject ‘we’ refer to solutions, this may not be significant, but divorcing the agent from both problems and previous progress can be read as either strengthening the role that the MDGs, imagined as a semi-independent entity, had in fostering progress, or as lessening the obligations agents undertake within the document.

The new agenda has 21 articles, 16 of which use ‘we’ as the subject of most independent clauses, moving between present tenses and future simple, with the former being more common. Its first article announces the SDGs and grounds the document in ‘today’, the second reaffirms the Declaration of Human Rights, and the fourth moves back to the SDGs and declares when they will come into force and for how long. The fifth outlines groups of vulnerable countries and the sixth outlines vulnerable people, while the rest deal with more specific issues, with economic issues and climate change spanning over three articles each. They contain references to previous and future documents and activities, strengthening the continuity between the SDGs and the UN’s internal arrangements. Despite its fairly straight forward subject, ‘we’, and the simple tenses it mostly relies on, the section is written almost entirely in complex clauses, with infinitives and verbal nouns creating distance between the agent and its action and the outcome. This is compounded by the choice of predicates, with reaffirm and recognize, both fairly passive activities, being the most common.

Means of implementation has eight articles and is written somewhat similarly to The new Agenda. The main difference is that, while six articles open on the subject ‘we’, three of these go on to address other actors, two public finance and one government and public institutions. By addressing these multiple stakeholders, the document is essentially proclaiming its scope, not only in relation to the problems it wants to address but also in relation to the agents it tasks with finding solutions. Another difference is that it contains only one simple sentence, while the previous section had a few. This could be reflective of the difference in their length, but it is also important to note that many of the complex sentences of The new Agenda either open on very strong independent clauses or are themselves quite concise despite

the addition of dependent clause. For example the opening sentence of article 23 states ‘vulnerable people must be reached’, while article 35 opens on ‘sustainable development cannot be realized without peace and security.’ These sentences stand out, both because they are placed at the very beginning of an article, and because they are written as factual statements, without an agent or conditions to alter their message, and with the use of auxiliaries denoting necessity. By turning their subject matter into a permanent state of being, they both denote an instance of particular importance, while also diminishing the agency of any actor involved or affected by the underlying processes they reify. Finally, the last difference between these sections is that Means of implementation uses verbal nouns in its dependent clauses more frequently than infinitives. Much like passive voice and agentless clauses, this can be seen as a form of reification, where complex processes are stripped of context and distanced from particular agents. In contrast, to-infinitive led object clauses reify complex process, usually expressed as both a goal and a means of achieving that goal, to link them with particular agents, implying that the process logically follows from the action the agent took in the independent clause. This can be seen throughout the text, as the paragraphs, articles, and whole sections focused more on agency deploy infinitives, while those that down-play agency use verbal nouns more often, in combination with other features such as passive voice and agentless clauses.

Follow-up and review consists of only two articles. It switches between ‘we’ and other subjects and, like the rest of the document, uses primarily present tenses and future simple. Infinitives and verbal nouns are used with equal frequency, and the section contains more references to previous conferences, and one simple and one sentence in passive voice emphasizing key points.

A call for action to change our world contains five articles, although they are shorter than most of the articles of previous sections. The first article retells the founding of the UN as a victory for peace and prosperity after WW2, and frames the Charter as an embodiment of these values. The second and third articles draw a clear parallel between the Agenda and the Charter, and outline its main objectives. The fourth article reframes both the Charter and the Agenda as documents ‘of the people, by the people, and for the people’, while the fifth states its importance for the future of humanity. The section also brings in new subjects, including ‘us’, ‘millions’, ‘the younger generation’, ‘children and young men and women’, and ‘we the peoples’, and weaves them into a story about the goals and activities of ‘we’. This underscores a tendency present throughout the document: the use of descriptive passages with the structure of a logical argument. Much of the document will start out by focusing on a particular subject, whether an agent or not, and describe its state or activities. It will then go on to describe an outcome, either in the same or following sentence and, through this sequencing, imply a logical connection between them. However, this connection is not argued for or against, encouraging the reader to see it as a fact. In this section, as the articles themselves are ordered so that they flow from the UN to humanity at large, the effect is framing the future of humanity as an outcome of the UN’s activities. By introducing ‘a previous generation of world leaders’ as its first subject, followed by ‘we’ and then by the previously

mentioned subjects, it also frames the activities of the latter as following logically from the actions of the former. Finally, by reframing the UN's history as a history of 'the people', it both blurs the line and obscures any power imbalances that may exist between these different subjects, and preemptively recontextualizes the UN's future in the same vein.

The following chapter, Sustainable Development Goals and Targets, opens on six articles. The first two use 'Goals' as their main subjects and are written in present simple, relying mostly on verbal nouns in their dependent clauses. The third addresses governments and uses a simple future. The last three switch to we, present simple, and to-infinitive led object clauses with other agents, and occasionally processes, acting as objects. This is consistent with the trend of shifting between verbal nouns and object clauses we have noted earlier. Furthermore, as the different constructions appear with different agents, the use of temporality can be seen as expressing a fluid power relationship between them. Different grammar and word choice either emphasize or deemphasize different agent's capacities for agency depending on whose authority is being strengthened, over whom, and why.

The next page outlines the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. They are much shorter than other passages, with the longest barely spanning over three lines of text, and are written as strings of agentless independent clauses with predicates in imperatives. The most common predicates are 'ensure' and 'promote', slightly downplaying the otherwise prescriptive construction, but the departure from the document's earlier descriptive style is powerful nonetheless. Combined with the de-contextualization from specific historical conditions, the lack of agents, context, or temporal setting, it emphasizes the SDGs as universal.

The following 14 pages outline specific goals. Apart from Goal 17, they are written with several numbered articles, which outline the goals themselves, and articles marked with letters which outline the means of implementation. The document's text stresses several times that the means are an integral part of the Agenda, but the layout, which separates and moves them to the end of the sections outlining each goal, might suggest otherwise. On the other hand, placing them at the end creates the impression that they are logically deduced from the goals. Specific documents, conferences and internal procedures are referenced in the means more often than in the goals, which suggests that they form an integral part of the solution to the problems the Agenda aims to tackle. As the documents in question relate primarily to internal UN procedures, a logical connection, propped up by the sequencing, is created between internal procedures and solutions, positioning the UN as the central institution in solving the problems in question. Both articles outlining goals and means are agentless and have independent clauses' predicates in imperatives, imbuing the goals with independence and authority. The first somewhat-consistent difference is that goals open by establishing a timeframe, usually 'by 2030', and sometimes 'by 2020' or 'by 2025', more often than means do. This could stem from their more abstract subject matter, which makes their implementation more flexible, and, in a way, more feasible, and serve as a way of lending them additional relevance. Several goals do not establish time-frames, and this could be

indicative of their lesser importance, or greater complexity, where a clear time-frame may hinder their implementation.

The paragraphs are shorter than in the rest of the document, placing more emphasis on each sentence. Adverbial clauses are used throughout, relating to the predicates to answer the question of why the command is being given. Their function is similar to that of object clauses: elaborating the goal of an activity. To-infinitives are sometimes used in object clauses, although verbal nouns are more common. This keeps the clauses shorter and, if verbal nouns are used, reifies the processes the goal wants to influence, making that influence more feasible. Infinitives, on the other hand, keep these processes open, and a degree of distance between the command and the desired outcome is established. Infinitives appear more, proportion wise, in the additional articles, which could serve to distance the more concrete solutions they propose from their outcomes. Table 6.4. summarizes these features for goals 1-16.

*Table 6.7.4: Time frames and infinitives in SDGs 1-16.*

Goal	Articles	Infinitives	Timeframes
1	5 goals, 2 means	2 in means	5 in goals
2	5 goals, 3 means	2 in means	5 in goals
3	9 goals, 4 means	1 in goals	7 in goals
4	7 goals, 3 means	1 in goals	7 in goals, 2 in means
5	6 goals, 3 means	2 in means	0
6	6 goals, 2 means	1 in means	6 in goals, 1 in means
7	3 goals, 2 means	1 in means	3 in goals, 2 in means
8	10 goals, 2 means	4 in goals	5 in goals, 1 in means
9	5 goals, 3 means	2 in goals, 1 in means	3 in goals, 1 in means
10	7 goals, 3 means	1 in goals	2 in goals, 1 in means
11	7 goals, 3 means	1 in goals	6 in goals, 1 in means
12	8 goals, 3 means	2 in goals, 3 in means	5 in goals
13	3 goals, 2 means	1 in means	1 in means
14	7 goals, 3 means	3 in goals	6 in goals
15	9 goals, 3 means	5 in goals, 3 in means	7 in means
16	10 goals, 2 means	0	2 in goals

The final goal, goal 17, is divided into Finance, with five articles, Technology, with three, Capacity-building, with one, Trade, with three, and Systemic issues. Systemic issues are further divided into Policy and institutional coherence, with three articles, Multi-stakeholder partnerships, with two, and Data, monitoring, and accountability, with two. They are agentless, with predicates in imperatives, and use verbal nouns in abundance, as well as the occasional to-infinitive. Apart from the articles of Data, monitoring, and accountability, which open on ‘by 2030’, only two other articles specify a time-frame. This change in presentation seems relevant, as the formatting is changed in the only goal dealing with the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development itself. Since the partnership is largely a product of UN efforts, it should be easier to influence, but, looking at the articles themselves, we see that the measures proposed, for example enhancing global macroeconomic stability, are actually quite complex and uncertain. Turning specific problems and policy areas into sections could serve to balance out this

uncertainty, by transforming internal UN matters into broad processes, making implementation both more flexible and more relevant.

The next chapter, Means of implementation and the Global Partnership, has 12 articles and switches back to the longer passages of the first two chapters. The subjects switch between ‘we’, usually coupled with predicates in present simple, often followed by to-infinitive led object clauses, and more abstract subjects. Occasionally, ‘we’ will be followed by future simple, while the abstract subjects are coupled with a variety of tenses. The only clear pattern emerges in article 70, the eleventh article of the chapter. It opens on ‘we hereby launch a Technology Facilitation Mechanism’, and moves to a short paragraph, before using four additional paragraphs, divided into bullet points, to establish specific mechanisms. The agencies and bodies tasked with carrying out these mechanisms act as subjects, predicates are mostly in future simple, and passive voice is used much more than active. The passives indicate power being exercised over these bodies, presumably by ‘we’, while the active voice occasionally reaffirms their agency, mapping out a shifting relationship between the two.

The final chapter, Follow-up and review, has 20 articles. The first opens with ‘we commit to engaging in a systematic follow-up and review of the implementation of this Agenda over the next 15 years’. This reaffirms the agency of ‘we’ and introduces a time-frame while placing several layers between it and the outcome, using both a to-infinitive led object clause and verbal nouns. After grounding the text in this declaration, the subject becomes impersonal, using ‘it’ to refer to the follow-up and review process, and predicates switch to future simple. The third article states that ‘follow-up and review processes at all levels will be guided by the following principles’ and moves to nine paragraphs with the subject ‘they’, visually divided and marked with letters a-i. While the initial declaration uses a passive construction, these paragraphs switch back to an active future simple, combined with verbal nouns, to imbue the processes themselves with agency. The following article, article 75, uses impersonal subjects, ‘Goals’, and ‘indicators’, with agents in the object position. However, the tense used is a passive future simple, giving the agents power over the goals and indicators, while still centering the goals and indicators as subjects and giving them a degree of independence. Article 76 uses the subject ‘we’ and active future simple, and article 77 opens on the same construction, but switches to impersonal subjects, also with active future simple, to open up the following sections dealing with different levels of follow-up and review.

The first two levels, the National level and the Regional level, are shorter, with two articles each. The national level uses ‘we encourage’ and to-infinitive object clauses in its initial independent clauses, while additional independent clauses switch to impersonal subjects and use predicates with the auxiliaries ‘can’ and ‘should’ to denote possibility. This is somewhat common throughout the document, as its longer paragraphs lend themselves to strings of shorter independent clauses. These elaborate on the conditions or expected outcome of a given action, or the features of an actor, without using dependent clauses and lessening the impact of initial independent clauses. Initial independent clauses can remain

universal, while subsequent clauses introduce certain conditions and prescribe appropriate procedures. The regional level does not follow such a clear pattern, although its independent clauses with the subject 'we' do use present simple, while independent clauses with more impersonal subjects show more variety. The third level, the global level, is longer, with 10 articles. Most of its independent clauses have 'the high-level political forum' as the subject, and use future simple, although clauses using 'we' and present simple are not uncommon. It is interesting to note that the clauses using future simple use both will and 'shall', indicating not only a future action, but also the necessity of such action. It is also interesting to note that, while the first two chapters also commonly couple 'we' with present simples, they will occasionally couple it with future simples as well. The use of future simple with a clear agent can perhaps be seen as mitigating the uncertainty stemming from the grander ambitions of the first two chapters, and from the complexity of the global level the high-level political forum is tasked with monitoring. By moving an action to the future, it becomes both less certain, and more general, at the same time more important and less constraining upon the agent.

## DISCUSSION

The discussion is divided into four topics: subjects, temporal settings, static language and ambiguity, and superstructures and intertextuality. The first, second, and fourth are derived from our methodological focus, describing trends in the main subjects, predicates, and clause structures between the documents. The third addresses a trend in the documents which emerged during the coding process: the use of verbal nouns and infinitives.

## SUBJECTS

Most of the Charter's independent clauses use clear agents, such as 'the Assembly', or 'the Security Council', the Millennium Declaration uses 'we', and the 2030 agenda switches between 'we' and abstract subjects, such as 'Goals' or 'the Agenda'. To understand this trend, it might be helpful to use O'Brien's (1986) notion of two UNs: one, composed of member states and agencies struggling for influence and power with each other which he calls the real UN, and another, composed of ideas about what the UN is, or should be, which he calls the platonic UN. Naturally, the two are not separate, as agents belonging to the 'real' use ideas about the 'platonic' to legitimize their actions and goals. On the other hand, dominant ideas from the 'platonic UN' constrain what agents belonging to the 'real UN' can do, by defining what can be said and done, and by whom. Using O'Brien's (ibid.) notions, we could say that the switch to more abstract subjects is indicative of agency increasingly belonging to the platonic over the real UN. The question we then need to ask is: Is there an agent who was successful in asserting its narratives as the dominant ideology? Or, alternatively: Is there a growing consensus among different agents on what the dominant framework is or should be?

Looking at this from a historical angle, we can notice that the Charter was written before, while the MDGs and SDGs were written after the fall of the Soviet Union. It could be argued that this created a

unipolar world, with the US as hegemon (Wohlforth, 1999, Jervis, 2006, Walt, 2009), and to then interpret the increasingly abstract language of our documents as the normalization and obfuscation of US dominance. However, while the US is often credited with being one of the UN's forefathers, it has, both before and increasingly after the fall of the USSR, acted unilaterally<sup>5</sup>. In light of this, we would argue that the growing dominance of O'Brien's (1986) 'platonic UN' is not tied to any one particular state, but rather to the triumph of capitalist realist discourses. This is not to say that the fall of the USSR did not drastically alter the distribution of power, resources, and the structure of state's interests, but merely to emphasize that it also altered the social imaginary. According to Laclau (1990), a social imaginary can be understood as the horizon of a particular discourse, the line separating the possible from the impossible. Our argument is that, with the fall of actually existing socialism, the social imaginary contracted, so that a broad consensus was reached on the necessity and inevitability of capitalist development (Chatterjee and Finger, 1994, Escobar, 1995). Whether the UN is dominated by, or acts as, a hegemonic power, then, does not affect its ability to claim the universal character of its 'Goals' and 'Agenda' and imbue them with agency.

This explanation, arguably, fits the more subtle changes from the MDGs to the SDGs as well. Specifically, as we have mentioned earlier, the 1990ties saw an expansion of UN responsibilities, mostly in relation to democracy-building, development, and peace-keeping in former non-aligned states. (Wedgewood, 1995, Hulme, 2009). However, they also saw a decrease in the UN's military responsibilities, which were taken over by NATO. (Rawski and Miller, 2004). By the 2000nds, when the MDGs emerged, this division of labor between the UN and NATO was still in its nascent form, with both the UN and NATO leading operations in Serbia, Kosovo, and Bosnia and Hercegovina, among others (Rawski and Miller, 2004). In light of this, it would be difficult to argue that the subject 'we' represents a more empowered UN. Instead, it seems more justifiable to suggest that 'we' reflects a broad ideological consensus on what 'we', in our reading translating to the world's states, are, which related to a contraction of what 'we' could be. We should note that this contraction is in no way purely ideological, as the entrenchment of capitalist realism and the integration of former socialist and non-aligned states into the global market under unequal conditions went hand-in-hand. (Saul, 1999, Bohle, 2006, Chelcea and Druta, 2016). To put it simply, it could be proclaimed that there is no alternative to capitalist development because, in material terms, no alternative existed.

The move from 'we' to abstract subjects between the MDGs and SDGs could then be seen as a continuation of this trend, moving agency from individual states towards a collective of states embodied in the UN and, finally, towards abstract principles. The changes in the international environment from the 2000nds to the 2010ns could be seen as both reflective of and contributing to this shift. Perhaps most

---

<sup>5</sup> Some examples include: the invasion of Grenada in 1983, the bombing of Libya in 1986, the invasion of Panama in 1989, the 1998 attacks on Sudan and invasion of Afghanistan, and the bombings of Iraq in 1993, 1996, and 1998. (Rawski and Miller, 2004).



important, or at least most interesting, for this work is the growing power of non-state actors. The competition state theory (Jessop, 1990, Cerny, 1997) which explains this shift in terms of a move from Fordist to post-Fordist modes of production, can offer some particularly interesting interpretations, although we in no way claim that the following explanation is exhaustive.<sup>6</sup>

According to Jessop (1990), the switch from a Fordist to a post-Fordist mode of production facilitated a change in the role of the state as it relates to markets. Under Fordism, and under conditions of US-USSR political competition, the role of the state, at least in capitalist societies, was to provide welfare and ensure the reproduction of the workforce necessary for the production-based Fordist economies. The switch to a post-Fordist, consumption-based model saw the state's role move towards regulation aimed at increasing competitiveness in global markets. Jessop (ibid) argues that this entailed a dislocation of power from centralized states to decentralized local organizations, such as the civil sector, and towards supra-national bodies, such as the UN. These organizations took over the role of providing social services, primarily through 'development', which could be used to further the interests of the 'developer' countries towards the 'developing'. In doing so, they contributed to the integration of unevenly developed states and regions into the market and solidified existing power structures, contributing also to the contraction of the social imaginary. What this means for our work is that the shift from 'we' in the MDGs, which still reflected a, supposedly unanimous, collective of states, towards abstract subjects in the SDGs can be seen as reflective of the decentralized power structures which include both states and non-state actors, and which operate under an increasingly better connected and integrated market. At the same time, this switch can be seen as contributing to these same changes, in so far as the SDGs aim to expand the scope of UN activities, and in so far as abstract subjects allow them to do so by establishing the power of 'the platonic' over 'the real' UN.

## TEMPORAL SETTINGS

In contrast to the increasing abstraction of the document's main subjects, temporal settings get more and more concrete as we move from the Charter to the SDGs. Regarding verbal tenses, the Charter is the most varied, but the most common formulations express either a necessary future with 'shall' or a possible future or present with 'may.' The Millennium Declaration uses present tenses, combined with to-infinitive led object clauses, almost exclusively. The 2030 Agenda is somewhat more varied, especially in its use of imperatives, but relies heavily on present simple. Similarly, time-frames do not appear in the Charter at all, appear for some goals in the Declaration, and mark almost every goal of the

---

<sup>6</sup>The competition state theory locates a shift from Fordism to post-Fordism during the Raegan and Thatcher administrations, and focuses mostly on the US and Western Europe. While we are using its insights, we would like to note that this theory has been criticized as, among other things, euro-centric. A less euro-centric perspective, which takes into account the global changes which started in the 1980ties, but continued well into the 21st century, might claim that, together with a change in the mode of production, the integration of new markets, first former colonies and then former socialist states, also contributed to the global expansion of capitalism, to the inescapability of competitiveness and the states' role in fostering it, and to the growing power of non-state actors. In a similar vein, the production/consumption dichotomy employed by Jessop (1990) should be considered more as a move of production towards the afore-mentioned former colonies and socialist states.

Agenda. References to previous events, mostly in the form of previous documents and conferences, are very rare in the Charter, much more common in the Declaration, where they are often noted in footnotes, and, finally, appear in abundance throughout the Agenda. This suggests that the subjects in question can exercise more influence over their surroundings, as they are more active in the present, more grounded in their past activities, and more confident about future outcomes.

At first glance, increasingly abstract subjects taking on increasingly concrete activities seems contradictory. However, returning to the notion of hegemony, this time understood through a Gramscian lens as the domination of a given ideology, rather than the domination of an actor, can perhaps clarify some of the confusion. Following Fisher (2009) we can refer to the ideology in question as capitalist realism, defined as “the widespread sense that not only is capitalism the only viable political and economic system, but also that it is now impossible even to imagine a coherent alternative to it” (ibid.: 2). To illustrate this, we can turn to the Charter, specifically, the sentences where members, in present time, confer their authority onto UN bodies, grounding the Charter’s legitimacy in members’ sovereignty. These sentences are missing in both the Declaration and the Agenda while, at the same time, a growing number of scholars (Makinda, 1996, Taylor, 1999, Thakur, 2002, Slaughter, 2005, Donnelly, 2014) argue that the principle of sovereignty lost ground in UN practice. Instead, they argue, the UN’s legitimacy increasingly comes from within, from the wide-spread recognition of the norms and principles it embodies as universal. This recognition had to have been constructed through concrete processes of negotiation and interaction, but, as reified social facts, the norms and principles in question have a life of their own and act back upon the agents constructing them. Specifically, we would argue, the growing acceptance of capitalist realism, helped along by the contraction of the social imaginary, constrains agents in their ability to pursue alternative developmental paths. Their actions are, in a way, pre-determined by the scope and shape of possibilities contained in the dominant paradigm. This determinism leads to a constriction of agency, while also, paradoxically, increasing the UN’s ability to act with confidence, as it can expect a limited set of actions and outcomes and plan accordingly.

Another possible argument in favor of this interpretation is the shift from future to present tenses between the Charter and the MDGs and the SDGs. While all three documents can be seen as constructing a ‘present future’ (Luhmann, 1976), the Charter is the only one to use future tenses more than present tenses. Reading this from the ‘temporal politics’ approach, a present future is essentially a discursive plane where the notion of the future serves as a stand-in for current political interests. In other words, the attempt to define future outcomes is at the same time an attempt to mold the present in a way that will facilitate those outcomes, and consequently to redistribute resources and power in line with both the desired outcome and the strategy legitimized by it. By choosing to write the MDGs and the SDGs in present tenses, their writers make this connection more explicit and paint the path from now to the future as more certain. The Charter, written in a time where the global distribution of power was still uncertain, perhaps, had to be more cautious with its language. Its use of future tenses might then stem from a

strategy of decontextualizing the interests of ‘the big three’ and projecting them onto a future plane, where they could be made more abstract and less at odds with each other.

At the same time, the MDGs and the SDGs are meant to deal with matters outside of the UN itself, whereas the Charter is meant to establish the UN and its organs. Given that the functioning of the organization itself should be easier to predict than the functioning of the world as a whole, the Charter’s temporal ambiguity seems out of place. This could stem from the UN’s composition and the, arguably, greater power of individual states at the time of the Charter’s, as compared to the time of the MDGs’ and SDGs’, writing. Additionally, in line with their goals, the MDGs and SDGs are concerned more with governing the world, whereas the Charter, in a number of occasions, points to external issues in order to explicate and legitimize the functions it establishes for the organization and its various bodies. The Charter’s search for legitimacy outside of the organization itself, in contrast to the MDG’s and SDGs subsuming of external issues under UN procedures, is, in a way, analogous to its use of future tenses. Both construct a separate plane which is imagined to be determined by objective factors. Due to the inevitability of these factors, the strategies contained in the Charter can be presented as logical and necessary, and can serve as the basis for the UN’s power. The use of shall, denoting necessity, also supports this conclusion. The MDGs and SDGs, on the other hand, do not need to present the external world as immovable, as their attempts at controlling it have the benefit of existing in a world with fewer competing alternative modes of collective organizing and action. This is why, we would argue, they can use more abstract subjects, ground themselves in the present, and construct clearer time-lines.

#### STATIC LANGUAGE AND AMBIGUITY

Verbal nouns and infinitives are abundant in all of the documents, and the various purposes they serve have already been discussed. What interests us here is their paradoxical tendency to both undercut agency by introducing a degree of distance between a subject’s action and its outcome, and to augment it, by reifying complex processes and placing them into the object position. For an example, we can turn to the opening sentence of the Charter, ‘we the peoples of the United Nations determined to end the scourge of war.’ Ending the scourge of war, the goal, is qualitatively different from the action being taken, determining, which creates a degree of distance between them. Furthermore, by choosing the predicate ‘determined’, the goal is turned into a part of the subject’s state of being who is now, permanently, ‘determined to end the scourge of war.’ Finally, a logical connection is implied, although not explicated, between being determined and ending the scourge of war, and is at the same time legitimized by the subject’s state of being ‘determined to end the scourge of war’.

With some exceptions, this push and pull between agency and powerlessness, and between action and stagnation, marks all of the documents, and partially contradicts the trend of increasingly concrete temporal settings. At this point, it is important to emphasize that the contraction of the social imaginary is best seen as pre-determining what can be thought of as possible within the dominant paradigm, and not what will actually happen. The greater confidence with which the SDGs were proclaimed is therefore

not necessarily related to the degree of confidence with which their implementation can be expected, but rather to the degree of confidence with which alternatives can be expected not to appear. From this perspective, the ambiguity between agency and powerlessness is best understood as an attempt to inject certainty into an uncertain future. Borrowing Luhmann's (1976) terms, we can see the project to construct a better future, laid out in these documents, as a present future. On the other hand, the actual future present, which the documents hope to mold in line with their vision, is as of yet unknown. Given the growing interdependency, vulnerability, and uncertainty of our world, the discrepancy between the present future and the future presents needs to be overcome. This is done, to some degree, by simultaneously reaffirming the desired future and the agent tasked with bringing it about, and leaving the outcomes open, so that new spaces of possibility are subtly opened up and closed. If we return to the first sentence of the Charter for example, the space for not ending war is opened, but the space for ending war without the peoples of the United Nations is closed. In a way, the path towards the future is closed, while the future is open. At the same time, agency as the ability to act is reaffirmed, while agency as the ability to influence the world through action is unclear.

It may be interesting, from this perspective, to consider some differences between our documents as they relate to verbal nouns and infinitives. Our quantitative analysis found that nouns were likely to be coded in independent and adjective clauses in the Charter either as 'other', most likely because the clauses in question were reduced, or as objects, and that adjectives were likely to be coded as 'other' in adjective clauses. In the Millennium Declaration, we found nouns as objects of object clauses, and we found infinitives as predicates of object clauses. In the 2030 Agenda, we found nouns as objects of independent clauses, and adjectives as 'other' in adjective clauses. As we have noted previously, nouns were commonly used to reify complex processes, while infinitives left them more open and fluid. Since nouns functioned as objects in all three documents, we can assume that they all used the same strategy to establish control over external processes. However, the range of roles they took on was the broadest in the Charter, appearing in both independent and adjective clauses, and in reduced clauses, where they were coded as 'other'. This suggests that the Charter's attempts at establishing control were the most pronounced, which would be consistent with the still young UN and the unclear post-war geopolitics. On the one hand, the static language created by the use of nouns may have compensated for uncertainty. On the other, the ambiguous a-temporal constructions may have left more open spaces for future interpretation, which could have facilitated consensus between the great powers of that time by moving more contentious problems onto a future plane.

The Declaration's use of infinitives is also quite interesting in this respect. By using nouns as objects to object clauses, and using infinitives as predicates, it created at least two layers of distance between the activities expressed in the independent clauses' predicated and the goals expressed in the objects. However, unlike in the Charter, this connection was made clearer by keeping the object clauses complete, rather than using reduced dependent clauses. The use of object clauses might also suggest that

the Agenda is more goal-oriented, which can be substantiated when we look at its fairly short and abstract text, when compared with the Charter's text which establishes the UN's main organs, prescribes their procedures, and delineates functions, and with the Agenda's text which establishes means of implementation and follow-up and review mechanisms alongside its 17 goals. Arguably, the Declaration's role as a fairly abstract set of guidelines was related to the historical moment of its conception. Mainly, Hulme (2009) notes a revived enthusiasm for the UN's ability to impact the world following the fall of actually existing socialism, whereas Shakwi (2016) remarks that, by the time of the Agenda's writing, the 2008 financial crash and the ecological crisis had undermined the credibility, not only of the UN, but of liberal governance at sub, supra, and national levels. It seems that, without alternative social systems to compete with, and without an internal legitimacy crisis which Altvater (2009), Roth (2009), and Helleiner (2010), for example, claim emerged after the 2008 crash, the Declaration could use infinitives to leave the future open, rely on complete clauses to relate it clearly with present activities, and focus more on goals than mechanisms. In a reversal of what we argued was the case in the Charter, the greater confidence with which a positive, at least from the UN's point of view, future could be expected allowed for the Declaration's text to imagine the external world as more dynamic and subject to active influence.

What could be expected from this reading is that, following the 2008 crash and under conditions of increasing instability, the Agenda would revert into ambiguous and static language. One part of this prediction is correct, as the Agenda, according to the association rules we found for it, does use nouns and adjectives more than infinitives. However, unlike in the Charter, nouns, in particular, appear as objects to independent clauses, which suggests that influence over them is established directly, without reduced dependent or adjective clauses. Looking at the available literature on pre and post-2008 geopolitics, we can find a similarly confusing trend, with Labonte (2012), Peck, *et. al.* (2012), and Azimova (2013) claiming that neoliberal hegemony, in terms of increased austerity, competitiveness, and a sense that alternatives cannot be found, was strengthened after the 2008 crash. It seems that, with the world's dependencies and weaknesses exposed by both financial and ecological hardship, the social imaginary contracted even further. The 'legitimacy crisis' school of thought cannot explain this trend, as it posits that crises will lead to the creation and dissemination of alternatives. Instead, Labonte (*ibid.*), Peck, *et. al.* (*ibid.*), and Azimova (*ibid.*) argue that the successful implementation of austerity, which cemented neoliberal hegemony, was helped along by the depoliticization of public issues which were moved from the sphere of collective bargaining and action to the sphere of market-led management. The reasons for this shift are numerous but, among others, we could point to the before-mentioned triumph of market economics, the end of the welfare state, as well as the security lock-down which was justified by the "war on terror" (Jarvis, 2009), and the potential of new technologies and big data for strengthening social control (see: Završnik, 2018).

Whatever the case may be, the Agenda’s use of nouns as objects to independent clauses seems to suggest a more direct attempt to establish control over complex processes which reflects a narrower social imaginary. As far as the text itself is concerned, the noun form presents social reality as consisting of objective, external, and inevitable facts, but, on the other, they are placed in the position of direct objects and related to the activities expressed in independent clauses’ predicates, suggesting that the subjects can act over them. Because of this, the ambiguity of agency is the clearest in the Agenda. Agents are left with very little space to operate within, limited by the supposedly immovable external world, yet, the actions they can take are still seen as impactful.

### SUPERSTRUCTURES AND INTERTEXTUALITY

The first thing to note in this section is that each document has an internal, stylistic logic to it. The Charter is divided between chapters outlining specific bodies, themselves divided into Composition, Functions and powers, Voting, and Procedures, and chapters outlining broad policy areas. The Millennium Declaration is broken up by the repeating phrases ‘we will spare no effort’ and ‘we resolve therefore’. The 2030 Agenda is somewhat more varied, but still breaks up its chapters into subsections which follow self-contained patterns, most clearly in the opening section and the section outlining the SDGs. In line with Van Dijk (1980), we will call this superstructure and define it as “the schematic form that organizes the global meaning of a text” (ibid.: 108-109). In other words, superstructures divide texts into smaller, easier to digest segments and, through sequencing, repetition, and implicit or explicit logical connections, suggest how individual propositions and segments should be combined.

In our case, the superstructures of all three texts can fall under Van Dijk’s (1980) argumentative schemata, with actions being deduced from broad goals. This can be seen in the organization of the texts which start with chapters outlining values and principles and end on chapters about internal matters. It can also be seen in individual chapters, for example in the opening section of the Charter, in the section outlining the SDGs in the 2030 Agenda, and in every chapter of the Millennium Declaration. Finally, it can be seen in individual clauses. In the Charter, dependent clauses, usually attributive, outline the specific conditions for pursuing a given outcome. In the Millennium Declaration, object clauses dominate and connect ‘goals’ and ‘means’ in a less reserved manner. In the 2030 Agenda, we see more direct independent clauses, usually followed by conditions outlined in a separate independent clauses.

The frequencies, expressed as percentages, of the different types of clauses are summarized in table 7.1. They were computed by using SPSS Statistics and the excel tables we used to code individual words and short phrases, and may exclude reduced clauses where no words which could have acted as predicates were found.

*Table 7.1 Percentage of clause types between the Charter, the MDGs, and the SDGs*

Clause	Charter	Declaration	Agenda
Independent	30, 4%	16, 1 %	36, 3%
Object	6, 7 %	27, 0 %	8, 8 %

Adjective	39, 6 %	39, 3 %	35, 6 %
Adverbial	22,6 %	17, 1 %	19, 1 %
Other	0,6 %	0, 6 %	0, 2 %

We can see that object clauses dominated the Declaration, whereas the Charter and the Declaration had comparatively more independent clauses. This might suggest that the Declaration is more goal-oriented while the Charter and Declaration focus more on activities, which is consistent with the greater optimism that was noted at the time of its writing. However, all three documents have a fairly large percentage of adjective clauses, which, coupled with the use of nouns and infinitives, suggests descriptive language. As the documents are structured to suggest a deductive line between broad goals and concrete measures, and since they serve as prescriptions for what should be achieved, by whom, how, and by when, this descriptive language seems out of place.

To understand it, we can turn to another feature of the documents: the self-referential nature of the Charter and the abundant references to other UN documents and activities throughout the Declaration and the Agenda. While self-referentiality is a common feature of legal documents, taken with the limiting of agency to acting, but not influencing the world, it also suggests that the one object which can, with some certainty, be acted upon is the subject itself<sup>7</sup>. To put it more simply, the only measures which can be guaranteed with some certainty are the measures which the UN undertakes internally. From this perspective, verbal nouns, adjective clauses, and infinitives supplement the deduction of concrete measures, in the form of internal procedures, from broad goals, as they turn these goals into either a descriptor of the agent, or a static object which it can influence.

Intertextual references have a number of other interesting effects, starting from how they ground the documents in pre-existing frameworks. On one hand, references import elements of other texts and change the meaning of the host text but, on the other, they recontextualize and change the meaning of what they refer to. For the purposes of this work, we will focus on three ways in which they do this: a) by establishing a continuity between the documents in question and an over-arching framework of UN textual output, b) by recontextualizing past events in line with the document's narrative, and c) by creating connections between the past, the present, and the future which reframe all three simultaneously.

Starting with the references' role in establishing continuity, and from a temporal politics approach of focusing on why a particular reference was chosen and how it was framed to create the effect of consistency, we can note some changes between the documents. The Charter mostly references itself, perhaps because there were no other UN documents at the time. When it does reference other events, it refers to World War II and conferences held by the members. It is usually centered on individual states

---

<sup>7</sup>The fact that specific sections dealing with internal procedures do not deploy less ambiguous language should not be seen as contradictory to this reading. As we have noted in our description of the 17th SDG, for example, the individual clauses of these sections still follow the same deductive pattern on a smaller scale.

as attendees and signatories, which is consistent with the greater importance it places on their agency, as compared to the MDGs and SDGs. The Declaration and the Agenda reference other UN documents without agents, the Declaration in text and in footnotes, where they are usually noted with more technical details, and the Agenda only in text. By weaving references into its means of implementation and follow up procedures, the Agenda recreates previous documents, conferences, and other activities as integral to its project and closes the space for solving the problems it aims to address without accounting for these procedures. In doing so, it blurs the line between goals and activities. Since the activities in question are mostly technical in nature, this could support our analysis of the changes between the Declaration and Agenda as entailing an increasingly technocratic form of politics and a narrower social imaginary.

Similarly to how they ground documents in other documents, intertextual references also ground them in past events, which they often refer to. Specifically, we would argue, they recontextualize the past in line with present needs. According to Van Leeuwen (2008), all discourse is recontextualizing: turning an activity into a noun or a principle into a subject takes them from one context to another and changes their meanings. Taking a past event into the present has the same effect, turning it into, in Luhmann's (1976) terms, a present past. For example, when the Charter refers to WW1 and WW2, it recontextualizes them as the inspiration for seeking peace. When the Agenda refers to unfulfilled MDGs, it recontextualizes them as the inspiration behind more ambitious goals. These instances of recontextualizing the past, although not as common as attempts to construct a future, serve a vital purpose in constructing the 'platonic' and legitimizing the 'real' UN. Firstly, opposite to the Charter's use of future tenses which resolve tension by moving it onto a, as of yet unknown, future plane, referencing the past resolves tension by erasing it. To put it simply, if the future is imagined as an open plane of possibility and uncertainty, then the past is a closed plane of known facts. Placing a narrative into the past, consequently, makes it into an objective historical fact, and opposing, changing, or questioning it becomes more difficult. In line with this, the Agenda's more direct use of references can be seen as another technique of closing down spaces of possibility.

Secondly, references, especially if they are framed within the text as part of a larger narrative, can be used to re-tell past events in line with current needs which, once retold, legitimize present activities. Since references are occasionally used to create a time-line for the future, and since the documents are future-oriented in general, these justifications are extended even further on. However, we should note, the future can be used in a similar way, with future outcomes justifying present activity. Ultimately, both the past and the future appear to be spaces which are constructed in the present moment, and which serve as fields where current objectives and struggles are placed, contended, and justified.

Finally, the connections which are in this way constructed between the present, the past, and the future represent time as linear, and, more importantly, as meaningful, logically proceeding from one point to the next. The deductive superstructure of the documents feeds into this, as the UN's internal rationality and the rationality of the external world follow the same rules. The UN's attempts at establishing



influence over the world, while still uncertain, can at least be expected to proceed according to these rules. This brings us back to the necessity of injecting certainty into an uncertain future. According to Andersson (2018) the growing complexity of our world was countered with technical solutions which manage uncertainty not by avoiding it but by calculating it. A consequence of this has been the proliferation of scientific, technical discourses on the future which obfuscate the political projects of constructing and controlling the future. Somewhat simplistically, we can say that her central thesis is as follows: if the future, as a field of uncertainty, is by necessity a field of struggle, then the erasure of uncertainty through prediction is simultaneously the erasure of these underlying power dynamics. What this means for us is that the UN is empowered to act, as it can count on the world around it to react in a predictable manner, but it is only empowered to act within a predetermined set of activities, derived from the dominant social, political and economic paradigm.

In the case of the Charter, this paradigm is expressed as ‘maintaining international peace and security’, framed as the only way of escaping another World War. In the MDGs and SDGs, the paradigm is expressed as ‘sustainable development’ which appears in relation to such heterogeneous problems as uneven development, ecological crisis, child labor, and gender-based discrimination. Through the use of references, static language, implied logical connections, and a myriad of other techniques, these paradigms are framed as necessary and natural. As we have hopefully shown, they are everything but, changing not only from document to document but also, more subtly, gaining different connotations and denotations between different parts of the same document. Ultimately, we would argue, they should be seen as sets of symbols which function as more-or-less empty spaces where meaning is constructed and overwritten depending on the reading, which is itself shaped by the reader’s position in relation to the text and to their broader social and historical context. Keeping in mind the limits of our own reading, we would like to posit that the Charter’s focus on peace and security was not shaped purely by post-WW2 trauma, but also by early Cold War politics, especially by US-USSR contention in the field of global security. The Declaration’s focus on sustainable development, in our reading, can also be related to the economic and geopolitical restructuring which followed the fall of actually existing socialism, and led to the integration, under unequal conditions, of former non-aligned states into the global market, helped along by the paradigm of development. The Agenda’s use of the same paradigm, when we consider its greater focus on technical mechanisms for implementation and follow-up, can be understood as stemming from an entrenchment of neoliberal governance facilitated by the dominance of market-based management over traditional politics.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Regarding our first question, how time was constructed in the documents and what that suggests for the UN’s agency, we can conclude that temporal frameworks were, at times, used to alternately emphasize

and deemphasize the UN's agency. We have argued that this can be understood as an attempt to map out a shifting net of relations between the agents who make up the UN, and to open up and close spaces of possibility and avenues of action.

Regarding our second question, how temporal frameworks have changed between the documents and what that suggests for the UN's evolving view of its agency, we can conclude that a trend of increasingly abstract subjects, coupled with more concrete temporal settings, can be seen from the Charter, through the Millennium Declaration, to the Sustainable Agenda. We have argued that this can be understood in relation to the contraction of the social imaginary following the fall of the USSR and the triumph of capitalist realism. We have also noted a more subtle set of changes between the Declaration and Agenda, and have argued that they reflect a growing power of non-state actors and a more pronounced connection between politics, markets, and technocratic management, although, given how comparatively recent both documents are, this explanation should be regarded as incomplete and in need of further attention.

Taken together, these two tendencies suggest a link between agency, power, and discursive spaces of possibility. Specifically, we have argued that the definition of discursive spaces of possibility, of what can be thought of as possible or impossible within a given paradigm, constrains agent's ability to act by delineating between what they can and cannot do. However, we are presented with a paradox. It seems that the more that agents are constrained in exercising their agency, the more empowered the UN is to act. If we see the UN as the product of complex webs of interactions between different agents, from states to NGOs, this should not be possible.

The resolution of this contradiction comes in the shape of the discursive construction of spaces of possibility. Agents are less powerful when they have less options to choose from, but their activities are more predictable, and their power over an uncertain future is more easily constructed. In order to substantiate this conclusion, we have to bring in two underlying assumptions which have not been explicated thus far: that, much like discourse, agency and time can be seen as having a dual nature. Agency, as the ability to act and the ability to influence the world (in a desired way). Time, as an objective reality and as a construct. Time as an external factor and agency as the ability to influence external reality appear as insurmountable obstacles to all human action attempting to establish control over the external world. To overcome them, they need to be reconstructed as internal features: as the ability to act and as the field in which action takes place. This is precisely what our documents have done, especially by using static language to reify complex and fluid processes and by increasingly relying on abstract subjects which overtake and homogenize the numerous bodies and agents who make up the UN.

As we have argued, the more that time as a field of action can be analyzed, predicted, and, ultimately, controlled, the easier it is to influence the world. This can be seen through a post-structuralist lens as the power that comes from the ability to define the world. To put it simply, the act of defining something,

in our case, time, gives the subject defining it the ability to act over it. At the same time, the opposite is true: the more that the external world is rigid, the less power we have to change it. In line with this, power can be understood as a stemming from a dialectical process. In our case, we can see power as stemming from the cyclical resolutions of antitheticals, or, in other words, as a trade-off between certainty and possibility, restriction and freedom, rigidity and fluidity. The question which then becomes paramount is how these contradictions are resolved. Since the documents analyzed in this work lean heavily towards establishing control through restricting the scope of possibilities, the answer seems to be: by erasing the political dimension of time. More specifically, by flattening out the struggle to construct a future through flattening out the struggle to imagine it. The consequence of this approach is the normalization of a particular set of discourses which, far from being seen as historically contingent, appear as universal, acontextual, and almost timeless. The past, present, and future are filtered and understood through these discourses and, as a result, the social, political, and economic configurations which produced them are decontextualized, legitimized, and reified as eternal, objective truths which need to be abided by.

This, in turn, solidifies a particular set of power dynamics, wherein those who are able to assert their definitions as dominant, most likely because they already have access to the resources necessary to do so, are able to further their interests in relation to those whose definitions lack legitimacy. As it was our position that individual agents' ability to access power and resources is largely determined by their position in over-arching social structures, the trend of an increasingly narrower space of possibilities seems to suggest that the structures in question have become further entrenched between our documents. We have noted some possible reasons for this, including the end of actually existing socialism, the dismantling of the welfare state, and the technocratization of politics, but, we should reiterate, they should not be seen as exhaustive or complete.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Amin, Samir (2006), "Millennium Development Goals: A Critique from the South", *Monthly Review*, n° 57
- Altwater, Elmar (2009), "Postneoliberalism or postcapitalism? The failure of neoliberalism in the financial market crisis", *Development Dialogue*, n° 51
- Andersson, Jenny (2018), *The Future of the World: Futurology, Futurists, and the Struggle for the Post-Cold War Imagination*, Oxford, Oxford University Press
- Anderson, Ben (2015), "Governing emergencies: the politics of delay and the logic of response", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, n° 41
- Anderson, Ben (2017), "Emergency futures: Exception, urgency, interval, hope", *Sociological Review*, n° 65
- Anderson, Ben et al (2019), "Slow emergencies: Temporality and the racialized biopolitics of emergency response", *Progress in Human Geography*
- Anderson, Kenneth, (2010), "'Accountability' as 'Legitimacy': Global Governance, Global Civil Society and the United Nations", *Brooklyn Journal of International Law*, n° 33
- Aradau, Julia and Rens van Munster (2012), "The Time/Space of Preparedness: Anticipating the 'Next Terrorist Attack'", *Space and Culture*, n° 15
- Argyrou, Vassos (2003), "Reflexive Modernization and Other Mythic Realities", *Anthropological Theory*, n° 3
- Auchter, Jessica (2014), *The Politics of haunting and Memory in International Relations*, London and New York, Routledge
- Austin, John Longshaw (1962), "How to Do Things with Words: The William James Lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955", Urmson, J. O. and Sbisà, M. (orgs.), Oxford, Calderon Press.
- Azimova, Albenà (2013), "The 'crisis of capitalism' and the state: more powerful, less responsible, invariably legitimate", in: Lemay-Heberté, Nicolas *et al.* (orgs.), *Semantics of Statebuilding: Language, meanings, and sovereignty*, London, Routledge
- Baudrillard, Jean (1994), *Simulacra and Simulation*, Michigan, University of Michigan Press
- Bauman, Zygmunt (2000), *Liquid Modernity*, Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Bergmann, Werner (1992), "The problem of time in sociology: An overview of the literature on the state of theory and research on the 'Sociology of time', 1900-82", *Time and Society*, n° 1
- Beckert, Jens (2016). *Imagined Futures: Fictional Expectations and Capitalist Dynamics*, Cambridge, Ma, Harvard University Press
- Beynon-Jones, Sian and Emily Grabham (orgs.) (2018), *Law and Time*, London, Routledge
- Bloor, Meriel and Thomas Bloor (2004), *The Practice of Critical Discourse Analysis: An Introduction*, London, Hodder Education.
- Bohle, Dorothee (2006), "Neoliberal hegemony, transnational capital and the terms of the EU's eastward enlargement", *Capital and Class*, n° 30
- Brun, Catherine (2016), "There is no Future in Humanitarianism: Emergency, Temporality, and Protracted Displacement", *History and Anthropology*, n° 27
- Calkins, Kathy (1970), "Time: Perspectives, marking, and styles of usage", *Social Problems*, n° 17
- Castells, Manuel (2000), *The rise of the Network Society*, Cambridge, Blackwell Publishing
- Cerny, Philip (1997), "Paradoxes of the Competition State: The Dynamics of Political Globalization", *Government and Opposition*, n° 32
- Chatterjee, Pratap and Matthias Finger (1995), *The Earth Brokers: Power, Politics, and World Development*, London, Routledge.

Chelcea, Liviu and Oana Druta (2016), "Zombie socialism and the rise of neoliberalism in post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe, *Eurasian Geography and Economics*, n° 57

Cooper, Andrew and Flemes Daniel (2013), "Foreign Policy Strategies of Emerging Powers in a Multipolar World: an introductory review", *Third World Quarterly*, n° 34

De Goede, Marieke (2008), "Beyond Risk: Premeditation and the Post 9/11 Security Imagination", *Security Dialogue*, n° 39

Derrida, Jacques (1978), *Writing and Difference*, Chicago, Chicago University Press

Donnelly, Jack (2014), "State Sovereignty and International Human Rights", *Ethics and International Affairs*, n° 28

Escobar, Arturo (1995), *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*, Princeton, Princeton University Press

Fabian, Johannes (2014), *Time and the other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), New York, Columbia University Press

Fisher, Mark (2009), *Capitalist Realism: Is there no alternative?* Winchester, Zero Books

Gareau, Fredrick (2002), *The United Nations and Other International Institutions: A Critical Analysis*, Chicago, Burnham Inc.

Giddens, Anthony (1984), *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*, Cambridge, Polity Press

Giddens, Anthony (1999), *Runaway World*, checked 11.10.2019., Available at: <http://www.looooker.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Giddens-lectures-in-london.pdf>

Glaser, Barney and Strauss, Anselm (1966), "Temporal Aspects of Dying as a Non-Scheduled Status Passage", *American Journal of Sociology*, n° 71

Helleiner, Eric (2010), "A Bretton Woods Moment? The 2007-2008 crisis and the future of global finance", *International Affairs*, n° 86

Hodgkin, Katherine and Susan Radstone (orgs.) (2003), *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory*, London and New York, Routledge

Hulme, David (2009), "The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): A Short History of the World's Biggest Promise", BWPI Working Paper 100, checked on 13.04.2019. Available at: [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1544271](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1544271)

Hurd, Ian (2007), *After Anarchy: Legitimacy and Power in the United Nations Security Council*, Princeton, Princeton University Press

Jaszcolt, Kasia and Louis de Saussure (orgs.). (2013), *Time: Language, Cognition and Reality*, Oxford, Oxford University Press

Jarvis, Lee (2009), *Times of Terror: Discourse, Temporality and the War on Terror*, New York, Palgrave MacMillan

Jervis, Robert (2006), "The remaking of a unipolar world", *The Washington Quarterly*, n° 29

Jessop, Bob (1990), *State Theory: Putting the Capitalist State in its Place*, University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press.

Kadah, Mohamed Mansour (2010), "United Nations: Building Legitimacy and Maintaining Relevance in a Weakened Institution", *Portuguese Journal of International Relations*, n° 4

Krasno, Jean (2001), *The Founding of the United Nations: International Cooperation as an Evolutionary Process*, Waterloo, Canada, Academic Council on the United Nations System

Labonte, Ronald (2012), "The austerity agenda: how did we get here and where do we go next?" *Critical Public Health*, n° 22

Laclau, Ernesto (1990), "New Reflections on the Revolution of Our time", In: Laclau, Ernesto (org.), *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, London, Verso.

LeShah, Lawrence (1952), "Time orientation and social class", *The Journal and Abnormal and Social Psychology*, n° 47

Locke, Terry (2004), *Critical Discourse Analysis*, London and New York, Continuum.

Luhmann, Niklas (1976), "The future cannot begin: temporal structures in modern society" *Social Research*, n° 43

Makinda, Samuel (1996), "Sovereignty and International Security: Challenges for the United Nations", *Global Governance*, n° 2

Marcuse, Herbert (1964), *One-Dimensional Man*, Boston, Beacon Press

Mead, George Herbert (1932), *The Philosophy of the Present*, LaSalle, Open Court.

Mozersky, Joshua (2015), *Time, Language, and Ontology: The World from the B-Theoretical Perspective*, Oxford, Oxford University Press

Niesser, Florian and Simon Runkel (2017), "The future is now! Extrapolated risksapes, anticipatory action, and the management of potential emergencies", *Geoforum*, n° 82

O'Brien, Conor Cruise (1986), *United Nations: Sacred Drama*, London, Hutchinson.

Opitz, Sven and Ute Tellmann (2014), "Future Emergencies: Temporal Politics in Law and Economy", *Theory, Culture, and Society*, n° 32

Peck, Jamie, *et. al.* (2012), "Neoliberalism Resurgent? Market Rule After the Great Recession", *South Atlantic Quarterly*, n° 111

Peck, Jamie, *et. al.* (2018), "Actually Existing Neoliberalism", In: Cahili, Damien, *et. al.* (orgs.), *The Sage Handbook of Neoliberalism*, London, Sage

Puchala, Donald, *et. al.* (2007), *United Nations Politics: International Organization in a Divided World*, London and New York, Taylor and Francis

Rawski, Frederick and Nathan Miller (2004), "The United States in the Security Council: A Faustian Bargain?" In: Malone, David (org.), *The UN Security Council: From the Cold War to the 21st Century*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers

Roth, Julius (1963), *Timetables: Structuring the passage of time in hospital treatment and other careers*, New York, Bobbs-Merrill

Roth, Felix (2009), "The effect of the financial crisis on systemic trust", *Journal of Innovation and Entrepreneurship*, n° 44

Saul, John (1999), "Magical Market Realism", *Transformation*, n° 38

Sayward, Amy (2017), *The United Nations in International History*, London and New York, Bloomsbury

Schneider, Louis and Sverre Lysgaard (1953), "The Deferred Gratification Pattern: A Preliminary Study", *American Sociological Review*, n° 18, num. 2

Shakwi, Noah (2016), "Norm Evolution and Change: Analyzing the Negotiation of the Sustainable Development Goals" In: Shakwi, Noah (org.), *International Norms, Normative Change, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals*, Lanham, Lexington Books

Slaughter, Anne-Marie (2005), "Security, Solidarity, and Sovereignty: The Grand Themes of UN Reform", *American Journal of International Law*, n° 99

Shields, Rob (2006), "Boundary-Thinking in Theories of the Present: The Virtuality of Reflexive Modernity", *European Journal of Social Theory*, n°9

Thakur, Ramesh (2002), "Outlook: Intervention, Sovereignty, and the Responsibility to Protect: Experiences from ICISS" *Security Dialogue*, n° 33

- Takhur, Ramesh (2010), "Law, legitimacy and the United Nations", *Melbourne Journal of International Relations*, n° 11
- Taylor, Peter (1994), "The state as container: territoriality in the modern world-system", *Progress in Human Geography*, n° 18
- Taylor, Paul (1999), "The United Nations in the 1990s: Proactive Cosmopolitanism and the Issue of Sovereignty", *Political Studies*, n° 47
- Turner, Susan (2009), "Russia, China, and a Multipolar World Order: The Danger in the Undefined", *Asian Perspective*, n° 33
- un.org (2019a), "United Nations Security Council", checked 03.05.2019. Available at: <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/>
- un.org (2019b), "Security Council Presidency", checked 03.05.2019. Available at: <https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/presidency>
- un.org (2019c), "General Assembly of the United Nations", checked 03.05.2019. Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/ga/about/>
- un.org (2019d), "Secretariat", checked 03.05.2019. Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/sections/about-un/secretariat/>
- un.org (2019e), "International Court of Justice", checked 03.05.2019. Available at: <https://www.icj-cij.org/en>
- un.org (2019f), "United Nations Economic and Social Council", checked 03.05.2019. Available at: <https://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/home>
- un.org (2019g), "Trusteeship Council", checked 03.05.2019. Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/sections/about-un/trusteeship-council/>
- un.org (2019h), "Funds, Programs, Specialized Agencies, and Others", checked 03.05.2019. Available at: <https://www.un.org/en/sections/about-un/funds-programmes-specialized-agencies-and-others/>
- Van Dijk, Teun (1980), *Macrostructures: An Interdisciplinary Study of Global Structures in Discourse, Interaction, and Cognition*, Hillsdale, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates
- Van Dijk, Teun and Walter Kintsch (1983), *Strategies of Discourse Comprehension*, New York, Academic Press
- Van Leeuwen, Theo (2008), *Discourse and Practice: New Tools for Critical Discourse Analysis*, Oxford, Oxford University Press
- Walt, Stephen (2009), "Alliances in a unipolar world", *World Politics*, n° 61
- Wedgwood, Ruth (1995), "The Evolution of United Nations Peacekeeping", *Cornell International Law Journal*, n° 28
- Wodak, Ruth and Michael Meyer (eds.). (2001), *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, London, Sage
- Wohlforth, William (1999), "The Stability of a Unipolar World", *International Security*, n° 24
- Završnik, Alec (org.) (2018), *Big Data, Crime, and Social Control*, London and New York, Routledge
- Zebrowski, Chris (2019), "Emergent emergency responses: Speed, event suppression and the chronopolitics of resilience", *Security Dialogue*, n° 50