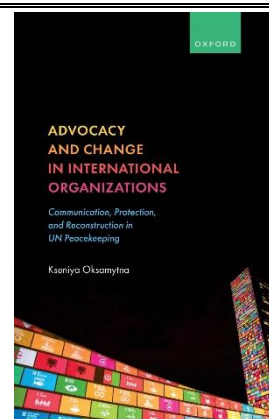# Book Review:
# Advocacy and Change in International Organizations

## Mohammad Amin Nouri Uoshanloei✳

Department of Regional Studies, Faculty of Law and Politics University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran. European and International Studies, Sorbonne Nouvelle University, Paris, France.

✳ ✉aminnouri509@gmail.com, iD https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6669-316X

*Advocacy and Change in International Organizations* by Kasniya Oksamytna is a comprehensive study that explores the pivotal role of advocacy in driving institutional transformation within international organizations (IOs). Over the course of six chapters, the book challenges conventional views that attribute change solely to formal state initiatives, legal reforms, or bureaucratic expansion. Instead, Oksamytna argues that strategic advocacy, undertaken by diplomats, officials, experts, and civil society actors through informal negotiations and background processes, is central to reshaping IOs.

In the introductory chapter, the author critiques the prevailing perception of IOs as static, bureaucratic entities resistant to change. Drawing on historical experiences and a careful analysis of institutional evolution, Oksamytna contends that fundamental changes do not emerge merely from formal decisions or structural reforms. Instead, they result from the persistent efforts of both internal and external actors who work behind the scenes to promote innovative ideas. Through examples drawn from early UN peacekeeping missions, such as operations in the Congo and initial civilian protection efforts, she illustrates how pioneers managed to redefine organizational roles despite facing significant political and cultural barriers. However, the review notes that the chapter could have benefited from a more detailed exploration of historical opposition, state responses, and the impact of emerging technologies like social media.

The second chapter introduces the advocacy-based theoretical framework. Here, Oksamytna delineates three key advocacy strategies: social pressure, persuasion, and authoritative discourse (negotiation). She explains the conditions under which each strategy is most effective, taking into account the characteristics of the advocate, the target audience, the issues at hand, and the environmental context. By contrasting these approaches with traditional theories, such as realism and liberal institutionalism, which tend to focus on formal, top-down changes, she highlights the limitations of conventional models. The author argues that while traditional theories emphasize official decisions, they often overlook the underlying cultural, behavioral, and crisis-driven dynamics that also influence institutional change. Although the framework is robust and well-documented, the review criticizes the lack of in-depth analysis of instances where advocacy efforts failed or encountered strong structural resistance.

Chapter three examines the evolution of mass communications within IOs and the UN's shifting approach to engaging local communities. During the Cold War, information activities were largely confined to formal reports sent to headquarters and media responses. However, with the end of the Cold War and the emergence of multidimensional missions like UNTAG in Namibia, the need for transparent and direct communication with local populations became increasingly evident. Oksamytna uses case studies to demonstrate how

modern communication tools, ranging from dedicated radio stations and television programs to digital media and visual branding, enhanced the legitimacy of peacekeeping operations. Nevertheless, the review points out that the long-term ethical and neutrality implications of these changes, including potential political misuse of disseminated information, were not fully addressed.

In subsequent chapters, the book delves into historical shifts in the concept of civilian protection in peacekeeping missions (chapter four), the role of rapid-impact projects designed to build local trust (chapter five), and the broader processes of institutionalization (chapter six). Oksamytna highlights how early efforts in the 1960s and the crisis of the 1990s, notably the Rwandan genocide, redefined the responsibilities of IOs toward civilian protection through persistent advocacy. She also discusses how rapid-impact projects, despite their short-term successes in generating local confidence, face long-term challenges such as unstable funding and blurred developmental versus military roles. In the final chapter, the author outlines indicators of successful institutionalization, like repeated mentions in official documents, resource allocations, specialized unit creation, and training programs, while noting the resistance stemming from entrenched cultural and structural factors.

Overall, Oksamytna's work provides a fresh analytical lens by integrating traditional theoretical perspectives with new approaches that account for cultural, behavioral, and technological influences. Although the book has some limitations, particularly regarding the insufficient examination of failures and structural resistance, it remains an essential resource for scholars, policymakers, and practitioners seeking to understand the multifaceted forces shaping international organizations in the twenty-first century.

## Conflict of interest
The author declared no conflicts of interest.

## Ethical considerations
The author has completely considered ethical issues, including informed consent, plagiarism, data fabrication, misconduct, and/or falsification, double publication and/or redundancy, submission, etc. This article was not authored by artificial intelligence.

## Data availability
The dataset generated and analyzed during the current study is available from the author on reasonable request.

## Reference
Oksamytna K. *Advocacy and Change in International Organizations*. New York: Oxford University Press. 2023, 304pp.