The Liberal Project of International Organisation and the Lure of Professionalism

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Throughout the last century, much has been made of international organisation by students of international relations[1]. Originally alerted by hostilities that eventually culminated in World War I, many students of international relations have exhibited a pragmatic liberal persuasion and an 'international mind'[2]. They have analysed, and advocated, organised cooperation in the League of Nations (LoN) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) as the appropriate strategy to cope with threats to peace and problems induced by growing interdependence. The intensification of political and socio-economic crises around the globe has only confirmed internationalists about their purpose. For they have become ever more enthusiastic about the United Nations Organisation (UNO), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the European Union (EU), the World Bank System (WB), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) etc. being harbingers of peace, progress, and, respectively, social justice. Based on what they have meant that international organisations are and do, liberal internationalists have assumed an active stance to strengthen their performance, and to thus making the world a better place. Their enthusiasm has even led them to bemoan a new intellectual approach to international relations and organisation. In their opinion, studying international relations and organisations only through textbooks and from within academic institutions has proven inadequate. They now maintain that "[e]ven when the relevance of international affairs to everyday life is recognized intellectually, it is difficult to give the student a sense of how it *feels* to be a decision-maker at the national and international level."[3] Many internationalists have deplored what they see as a gap between the academic study of international relations and the active participation in the fora of international organisations. They thus deem it important to change the way students are being familiarised with international relations and organisations. They endorse what they perceive as a 'paradigmatic shift' in international relations teaching, namely the use of simulations and case studies, which arguably help teachers move both the world of international relations and the settings of various international organisations away from textbooks and lecture to where the action is. And indeed, since the days when it was at first popularised by

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[1] As a gerund, the concept international organisation refers to specific institutional activities. Employed in this sense, the term differs from international organisation as a noun, which implies that there is some thing-like entity out there. Throughout this article, I use both terms and discriminate in this fashion.

[2] For coinage of this phrase, see Nicholas M. Butler, *The International Mind: An Argument for the Judicial Settlement of International Disputes* (New York: Scribner's, 1912).

[3] Daniel McIntosh, "The Uses and Limits of the Model United Nations in an International Relations Classroom", *International Studies Perspectives*, Vol. 2 (2001), 269-280, 269.

"[…] university students in the northeastern part of the USA […]"[4], the new technique of simulation has been embraced by more and more internationalists around the world.

The UN attracts between three and four thousand students each year to assemble at its headquarters and to simulate the 'inner workings of its organs'[5]. In addition, there are meanwhile far more than a hundred Model UN Conferences in many countries around the world. The total number of students gathering at these conferences in order to simulate the proceedings of the UN Security Council and/or the UN General Assembly amounts to approximately one hundred thousand[6]. Not included in this figure are many students who apply in vain for a seat at the delegations. The same thing goes on in and around the EU and, respectively, the WTO. The number of students who simulate the EU is as yet comparatively small, though it is to be expected that the current number of 200 simulators will double and triple any time soon. This observation applies to the WTO as well. In all of these cases, students who think they already have a fair sense of what international organisations are undertake to know better what they actually do by simulating negotiation procedures in mock plenary and/or committee settings. The net gain in realism allegedly consists in that student participants gain some first-hand experience in the art of international diplomacy and intergouvernemental decision-making. It is through simulation that students presumably learn what it 'feels' like being a delegate to the UN General Assembly, or to the EU's Parliament or Council[7], and what is at stake for them as official participants in a WTO Ministerial Conference[8].

This kind of experience with simulated negotiation and voting procedures is probably exhilarating for all those involved. And I do not doubt that there are participants who are very serious about their undertaking. I firmly believe that there are students who harbour the best intentions when they apply for a seat at some student delegation. Yet, I think there are good reasons to pause and reflect about the real motivation of the average student, and what he/she actually 'feels' and 'experiences' at such occasions. For I suspect that the average student participant seeks participation in a mock plenary and/or committee session primarily for its making an eye-catching mark on her/his resume. The average participant may well experience his/her participation as a vital step on the way towards peace, progress, and social justice. But the average participant sure feels in a much more immediate sense that his/her delegation is primarily there to win many awards, not to speak of the feel that participation in a mock plenary and/or committee session is a good step on his/her envisaged career as a professional functionary. What the average student participant does almost certainly not feel and

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[4] James P. Muldoon, "The Model United Nations Revisited", *Simulation and Gaming*, Vol. 26 (1995), pp. 27-36, at p. 28.
[5] See http://www.nmun.org/discover/demographics.htm.
[6] See http://www.amun.org/experience.php.
[7] See http://www.aegee.rwth-aachen.de/meu/index.php?id=7.
[8] See http://www.model-wto.org/general_information.htm.

experience is how organised cooperation (not only) within the conference settings of multilateral diplomacy actually operates, not to speak of what it actually does. It is for this reason that I deem it sensible to ponder what liberal internationalists, based on their impressionistic 'feels' and 'experiences', increasingly tend to make of international organisation/s and the broader context of international relations. And I do not only mean students when they simulate, I also mean academics when they write this cosmos.

My preliminary conclusion is that what student and academic internationalists tend to make of their preferred object domain, what meaning they ascribe to international organisation/s in the context of international relations, seems generally very nice and appealing. Yet their images of the real seem completely out of synch with views and perceptions among contemporaries who observe this object domain in their capacity as critical observes and from a standpoint in history that, as such, lies outside the camp of liberal internationalism. This article is an attempt to understand the internationalist project from such a critical standpoint and to ascertain why its meaning-making activities seem so strange for critical observers that are otherwise sympathetic with its overall purpose to make the world a better place.

The overarching premise that underlies and guides my attempt at understanding liberal internationalism has purposive meaningful action, whether individual or collective action, whether action aimed at simulating the real or action aimed at representation, as a practice that is made possible by forces that emanate from a socio-cultural context. As I will show, the value and principle of 'professionalism' is a particularly influential cultural force in this regard. So my argument is eventually that the meaning-making activities of liberal internationalism are increasingly governed by a culture of professionalism. The logic through which this culture operates may be circumscribed as follows: ideas, norms, and values of a larger societal formation constitute a cultural code that impregnates agents and the societal activities in which they are engaged. Societal activities are based on meaningful interactions, due to their being composed of linguistic and symbolic acts. Said cultural code manifests itself as a 'web of significance'[9], a discursive formation. Agents are entangled in such a web, which affects not only what linguistic and symbolic resources they avail themselves of, but also what purposes they define for themselves, and where and how they engage in signifying practices so as to make their acts comprehensible to their interaction partners[10]. It is in this context that the institutional dimension of said formation needs to be taken into account as well. For influential ideas, norms, and values of the cultural code are channelled through institutions at various levels of society,

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[9] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), at p. 5.

[10] This may be dubbed the psychological dimension of culture which manifests itself in specific attitudes, values, and practical dispositions that agents acquire through participation in discourse/s. Cf. Mark H. Ross, "Culture and Identity in Comparative Political Analysis", in: M. I. Lichbach & A. S Zuckerman, *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 42-80, esp. p. 67-71.

encompassing class, law, education, disciplines and professions as well as interpersonal relations within the family[11]. Culture operates through such institutions as it predicates societal activities on needs and focal points that pertain to these institutions, but that also cohere with ideas, norms, and values that are embodied in the larger discursive formation. Thus agents who partake in signifying practices within specific institutions orient themselves at focal or reference points that are shared by interaction partners and that lead them to employ distinct conceptual categories so as to throw light upon particular objects, and to make up realisable social worlds. The purposes that they pursue thereby are considered natural at this level. Yet, said focal points and purposes also cohere with ideas, norms, and values of the cultural code, the discursive formation, in which institutions are always embedded. So the adherents of the internationalist project encounter particular reference points qua being participants in a discursive process that is inextricably linked with the institutional context in which they are situated[12]. Said discourse, plus the institutional context to which it is tied, are engulfed by a larger discursive formation and embody ideas, norms, and values, such as professionalism, that prevail therein.

I unfold my argument in the following steps: I first sketch the project of student internationalists and spell out what meaning they ascribe to international organisation/s when they simulate the inner workings of diplomatic settings. I then try to establish why more and more students see so much value in getting inside what they take to be the 'real'. This leads me to trace the internationalist project of students back to the meaning-making activities of academic internationalists. For it is them, and their discursive products, that provide the very context in which students evolve the perception of international organisation being comprised by an architecture in which thing-like entities called organisations perform pre-formulated functions that can be explored through simulation. The final step consists in an attempt at contextualising the meaning-making activities of student and academic internationalists with a view to the value and principle of professionalism that motivates them to represent the world of international relations and organisation in a specific fashion – and not in another.

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[11] This may be termed the sociological dimension of culture that is embodied in political, economic, legal, familial and still other institutions that constrain and direct attitudes, ideas, and practical inclinations of those who partake in discourse/s. Cf. Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Cambridge: Polity, 1992), at p. 64.

[12] I entertain here what has become a commonsense understanding of 'discourse', one that is in vital respects similar to the one Michel Foucault has outlined in "The Discourse on Language", appended to *Archaelogy of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon, 1970), pp. 215-237, and *Power/Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon, 1980). The writings of associates within the Ideology and Discourse Analysis Programme in the Department of Government at the University of Essex, such as those of David Howarth and Yannis Stavrakakis, "Introducing Discourse Theory and Political Analysis", in: D. Howarth, A.J. Norval & Y. Stavrakakis (eds.), *Discourse Theory and Political Analysis: Identities, Hegemonies, and Social Change* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 1-23, have made good use of this concept in the study of political phenomena.

Mike in Wonderland

The staff and student participants who annually gather at Model International Organisation Conferences place great value in simulating what they take to be the inner workings of international organisations. They seem to believe that seeing the world from inside the conference room bears out how actual diplomats and delegates behave in problem-oriented discussions about pressing issues. Together with many academic internationalists who profess to 'theorise' about international organisations but who see themselves as pragmatic problem-solvers just the same, they perceive the procedural frameworks of international organisations as instrumental for the handling of urgent problems in an efficient, effective, and legitimate fashion. Aimed at doing good through actively partaking in the making of international order, they define themselves as pragmatic functionaries who govern the world through rational means. What is crucial here, membership in this circle of like-minded fellows[13] fosters typical and fairly predictable communication habits that allow for meaningful exchange among student internationalists and that discursively constitute the object domain of international organisation, at this aggregate level, in a particular fashion. Consider the following interview with Mike Reed whom I regard as a typical student delegate to a National Model United Nations Conference:

"[…]

Why did you participate in the model UN?

I'm soon to be finished my Bachelor's degree in Political Science at the University of Victoria. International relations has been a significant area of study in my undergrad education, so to actually put my knowledge into practice at the Model United Nations Conference in New York seemed like a great opportunity. I have known about the UN Club at UVic for a few years now, but I hadn't joined in previous years because I thought it would be too time consuming with all the planning, fundraising, and studying that is required leading up to the conference. I went for it this year because I realized it would be my last chance to do it before I graduated and the experience would significantly open my eyes wider than what I was learning in the classroom.

What interests you most about international diplomacy?

The notion of peace. International diplomacy is there to provide a safe world and to prevent violence and injustice. With 193 sovereign states on the planet,

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[13] I infer the similarity of outlook in factual and normative respects from a survey of twenty letters of motivation that German student internationalists have attached to their applications for a seat at a delegation to the National Model United Nations Project in New York in 2008.

international diplomacy is absolutely crucial to global stability and maximization of peace.

What are some challenges you found when participating in the model UN?

The international system is extremely complex. Each country in the UN tries to push their own agenda, while simultaneously fulfilling their commitment to peace and cooperation. What is difficult about international diplomacy is getting all the dynamics to align. UVic was representing the Republic of Korea (South Korea) at NMUN this year and my particular role was a delegation to the UN in the Conference on Disarmament. To give you an example of the challenges I faced in my conference, I was trying to persuade the United States of America to work multilaterally and cooperatively, rather than aggressively sanctioning nuclear capable countries like North Korea. Inside the conference room there were other difficulties, like students who were taking the simulation a little bit too seriously, causing emotional tension at times. Particularly the delegates representing both Israel and Syria were at each other's throats, which made it difficult to get through the voting process and pass our resolutions. If countries are not getting along, it can be devastating to the development of resolutions.

Any amazing moments you had down in New York that altered your perspective or expanded your mind?

I felt the most inspired during the opening and closing ceremonies of the conference, which took place inside the UN headquarters. Some of the speakers were high profile individuals from the UN talking to us students about our future and our responsibility to play a role as individuals toward a more peaceful world. I was sitting in the same room where major decisions get made that have enormous impacts on our world. For the first time I could see that I had the opportunity and capability to contribute to a better world."[14]

The goings-on in the mock conference session and the student delegate's sense of mission are both premised on the sincere want to make the world a better place. Bequeathed with a sense of dignity and confidence, the average student delegate deems his task to assume responsibility and contribute his share to a more peaceful world. From the perspective of the student participant, actively partaking in multilateral diplomacy may help to prevent violence and injustice. For diplomacy within the conference room serves global stability and the maximisation of peace. Yet, while busying himself with making the world a better place through conference diplomacy, the average student delegate is in a distinct sense separated from both the objects he apprehends and from the contexts within which he is

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[14]   http://www.bravenewtraveler.com/2007/04/10/lessons-from-the-united-nations-an-interview-with-mike-reed/

apprehending them. He discusses issues concerning, for example, 'disarmament' in a normative and problem-oriented fashion. But while doing this, he seems entirely liberated from the very forces that usually meddle in the real-world situation of an official meeting. Neither does he sense any strictures that usually come with allegiances, rivalries, and competing appraisals concerning possible solutions amongst other represented countries. Nor does he recognise himself as an active participant in a more encompassing process of allocating life and death. From the perspective of the student delegate, the issues to be dealt with require some willingness on all sides to get along peacefully, to observe diplomatic etiquette, and to not hamper the voting process so that a resolution can be passed. By seeing himself and his peers largely unconstrained of forces that diplomats and delegates face in the institutional settings of international organisations, the typical student internationalist undertakes to solve problems through rational argumentation. Sublimating himself over emotional troubles that are often linked with questions regarding the assignment of deprivation undoubtedly has the advantage that the student delegate is able to retain his dignified self-image and confident sense of mission. Indeed, from the perspective of the student delegate, engaging his likes in rational discussions and to solve the most critical issues through consensus is greatly facilitated if he and other student delegates do not let them getting disturbed by outbursts of 'emotional tension'.

The average student delegate clings to the belief that he is free to define his goals in a relatively autonomous fashion and to procure rational solutions to pre-formulated ends. This image of himself allows the internationalist-as-delegate to choose whatever position and strategy he/she deems appropriate vis-à-vis both the concrete issue at stake and possible courses of action in the field of multilateral diplomacy. When the internationalist-as-delegate enters diplomacy as a field of positions, he/she encounters facts, theories, ideas, or strategies as ready-made things whose value – or lack thereof – lies in their propositional content. Reducing complicated factual issues that form part of complex and protracted problems in real world settings to stabilised propositional forms serves the student internationalist in two ways: he/she is able to take the objects and events to which statements refer as ready-made patterned wholes, and he/she is in a position to subjugate these objects to a regime of rational control[15]. The various instances in the field of international organisation, such as bureaucratic procedures, delegates, and problems they deal with are thus available to be reproduced in a curtailed and miniaturized form so that they can be more easily engaged by mind and body[16].

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[15] Cf. Laura Zanotti, "Governmentalizing the Post–Cold War International Regime: The UN Debate on Democratization and Good Governance", *Alternatives*, Vol. 30 (2005), pp. 461-487, at p. 478 who asserts that modes of governance favoured by internationalists rhetorically "[…] foster standardized systems of control, monitoring mechanisms, and governing from a distance by international organizations."

[16] I mean here shortcuts such as ‚P5' and ‚SC' in 'the' UN; 'Coreper' and 'Ecofin' in 'the' EU; or 'NACC' and 'P4P' in 'the' NATO (at the beginning of the 1990s). The great appal of such shortcuts is not only that they allow for a more efficient exchange about relevant items among interns

The mock conference situation becomes not only available as 'the' GA, 'the' SC, and 'the' UN, but as a more intricate system in which multilateral diplomacy works like a soberly fine-tuned and tightly regulated mechanism towards preferred states like 'stability' and 'peace' of the 'international system'. Simplified representations of this sort are then amenable to be controlled by transferring them from one context to another, say from the issue area of 'security' to the one of 'trade' and then maybe to 'development'.

The problem with this position is that the student delegate is able to retain this wonderful vision about making the world a better place only to the extent to which he imagines himself as participant in a rather unrealistic situation. To be sure, the problem is not that the student delegate thinks and acts on decidedly normative premises. For any well meaning internationalist like myself, aspiring to peace, progress, and social justice is a fully respectable stance. Yet what is inherently problematic about the liberal simulation project is the almost total lack of awareness on the side of the average student delegate about what the narrow conference setting of an international organisation actually stands for. What the student delegate fails to understand is that the very same rhetoric that he encounters within a conference setting, and that he deems suited to bring about peace, progress, and social justice, is tailored to the conference setting that he simulates. What goes on in this conference setting, however, is only a tiny fracture of multilateral diplomacy, which is highly complex, emotionally laden, and vigorously contested inasmuch as it *is* the pattern by which the distribution and institutional allocation of life and death is rationalised and ultimately legitimated. By leaving completely out of consideration that the official rhetoric of peace, progress, and social justice is actually tied to institutional structures and processes in and through which it attains a meaning that is specific for this official and hermetically shielded context, the typical student delegate fails to understand that he tends above all else to project his own fantastic image of what multilateral diplomacy is about in this rhetoric[17]. The typical student delegate deems peace, progress, and social justice popular currents that are only a few steps away. For diplomats and delegates in the real world, however, there is more often than not barely a minimum of consensus about what peace, progress, and social justice might actually mean in the state of crisis that has become such a pervasive condition of modern international relations.

What is relevant for the purposes of this article is the fact that, however much the average student delegate may think of himself as an individual that chooses in a rational fashion what he deems useful for the establishment of peace,

to the respective setting; they also convey a sense of membership to an exclusive circle of competent professionals.

[17] Cf. Jacques Fomerand, "Recent UN Textbooks: Suggestions from an Old-Fashioned Practitioner", *Global Governance*, Vol. 8 (2002), pp. 383-403, at p. 392: "Notwithstanding the verbal niceties of multilateral diplomacy, the struggle for power within the UN for control of its agenda is what fuels the system. The means vary with one's position in the international pecking order. […] Multilateralism at the UN is fed by the dynamics of unequal power relationships that determine who gets what and how as well as who will be treated as a subject or an object of international relations."

progress, and social justice, he shares in a disposition and exhibits a cognition that is characteristic of a great many student internationalists who have by and large the same rosy image of international relations and organisation. Their collectively shared sense and cognition motivates them to foster peace, progress, and social justice through diplomatic conventions that they deem operative in the real world. And it is the very same collectively shared sense and cognition which leads them to think that they share in the same outlook as real world diplomats. They do not reckon with the fact that their perspective is enormously different from the one of the practitioner. Their pragmatic liberal take on things leads many of them to view the world as a coherent whole that looks more or less the same from whatever viewpoint. And they seem convinced that urgent real-world phenomena are most appropriately re-presented by recourse to concepts and categories that form part of the vocabulary that diplomats and delegates use in official settings. What many student internationalists fail to recognise is that the idiom they avail themselves of when they enter the conference room is at this very moment pressed into the service of their own normative belief. They conceptually categorise every instance of international organisation as an elementary part in a web of systematic relationships that has instrumental value for the attainment of pre-formulated normative ends that are ultimately their own. Understanding the instrumental value of international organisations and to be in control over their applications yields of course desirable, and reliable, products. But the images and ideas upon which they rest are not so much grounded in the real world of international relations as they are grounded in the normative desire of privileged Western students to internationalise the bureaucracy of public administration that they have learned to see as a practical and a-political solution for every imaginable social problem.

Many student internationalists tend to think of themselves as very liberal, given that they are very peace-oriented, very progressive, and very pro-justice. Yet, student internationalists end up approaching the object domain of international relations and organisation in a rather conservative fashion. My own exposure to the inner life of organisations together with my teaching experience over the last couple years have fed my impression that students are on average not inherently suspicious vis-à-vis the institutional architecture of international organisation and do not favour radical change. They know about dramatic failures on a global scale but draw no connection between problems and institutions. They fervently support the operation of existing procedures as the best means to arrest the political that they think looms under the surface of national interests threatening the order in-place. In their view, international organisations function as mechanisms that establish peace, progress, and social justice through rational problem-oriented discussions. Participation in the diplomatic functions of international organisations is tantamount to promoting noble purposes. My point here is that, *because* they identify so enthusiastically with what they perceive as the good work of professionals within international organisations, and because they subscribe to goals that they deem transparent and sought for by diplomats and delegates, internationalists understand themselves not as astute, let alone critical, observers of

international relations and organisation. They think of themselves as loyal supporters of what they deem well-meaning activities, and celebrate, at times enthusiastically, the machinery of existing international organisations as arenas in which these activities are presumably at home.

It may of course be objected that student internationalists are a quite heterogeneous group, if only because they are from many different countries. It may thus be deemed unlikely that they all share the same sense, the same cognition, and the same conservative approach. And this is certainly true to a certain extent. Yet, student internationalists around the globe are increasingly alike in that they grow out of, and then into, very similar settings. They thus come to share very similar cognitive categories and ways of thinking that narrow their perspective on abstract and formal entities, that frame their preoccupations with distinct purposes, and that define their approach as one that is liberal and pragmatic in a very peculiar sense. They converge around a rationalist apprehension of things and deem it possible to realise states of peace, progress, and social justice that they have had the opportunity to know from their own experience in sheltered environments. The phenomena that many student internationalists perceive as pertinent to the field of international relations and organisation come in distinct object-forms such as constitutional documents, organs, committees, conferences, programs, resolutions, decisions, missions, monitoring, compliance, sanctions etc. which are held against problems such as genocide, ethnic cleansing, human rights violations and what have you. Insofar as student internationalists deal with phenomena that lend themselves to be represented as issues, negotiations, decisions, resolutions, and outcomes, the relevant object domain of international relations and organisation attains a formal ontology that accords with the view of government residing in public administration, and governance operating as neutral machine-like mechanism. Problems are cast as threats to normatively warranted and institutionally sanctioned purposes. By organising their doing under the same epistemic principles, the same factual considerations, and the same normative goals that they think correspond with those of the organised world community at large, internationalists may differ as far as their geographical location is concerned. Yet they nevertheless form a quite homogenous group as regards the ontology they presuppose and what it takes to be making the world a better place.

A very critical aspect of the problem lies in the forces that constitute and reproduce this homogeneity. At issue is the invisible college, or network, of academic internationalists that shapes the cognitive and sense-making activities of many student internationalists. Available course syllabi and textual products are very similar as far as referential objects and their interrelations are concerned. They exhibit patterns, which impose cognitive constraints that many student internationalists do not interrogate, out of ignorance or mere lack of time. Many student internationalists come to accept the dominant conceptions of social reality and buy into prevailing frames that lead them to ascribe meaning to international relations and organisation in a particular fashion. I shall now point out that and

how this network of academic internationalism operates as a system of social inscription[18].

Academic Internationalism: the Fabric of (Conservative) Cognitive Frames

Academic internationalists all over the world are busy with communicating conceptual notions and producing texts that are mainly responsible for the perception that student internationalists bring to the object domain of international relations and organisation. Said texts and courses, plus the many research programmes at graduate and postgraduate levels, constitute a dense 'web of significance' in and through which student internationalists are endowed with cognitive frames that spur their meaning-making activities. It will turn out highly suggestive to look more closely upon some knots and focal points that academic internationalists fix through their activities, and that exert such a strong formative influence upon students. My focus is upon the conceptual notions of 'agency', 'mission'/'mandate', and 'performance' of international organisations to which academic internationalists have attached characteristic figurative understandings.

The Concept of Agency

The perhaps most important discursive move on the way to conceive international organisation as an entity in its own right is to attribute agency to 'it', i.e. to first talk and write some 'it' into existence with the help of a noun, and to then make this very same 'it' active for analytical purposes. A vital step on the way is to come up with a category of actor, like the concept of collective actor, which can be perceived as bounded and unified. In many writings of academic internationalists, said 'it' stands for a thing-like entity that has some sort of corporate personality and that serves the purpose that agency can be ascribed to it. This move is pretty widespread in the network of academic internationalists. Consider the following statement in a known introductory textbook to what is called 'international organization': "Thus the United Nations, the World Bank, the European Union and NATO are international organizations because they can function as or like collective actors. In their instrumental capacity, international organizations function as quasi-actors [sic!], often at the bidding of their most powerful member states."[19] The mechanism in and through which international organisations come

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[18] The notion that the network of internationalists operates as an institution that contextualises and socialises students of international relations and organisation resonates with the views of Peter L. Berger & Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality* (New York: Doubleday, 1966), at p. 59-61, on the one hand, and Karl E. Weick, *Sensemaking in Organizations* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1995), at p. 9-11, on the other.

[19] Volker Rittberger & Bernhard Zangl, *International Organization: Polity, Politics and Policies* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2006), at p. 7. In the same vein, cf. Margaret P. Karns & Karen A. Mingst, *International Organizations: The Politics and Processes of Global Governance* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2004), at p. 17: "In considering the significance of IGOs in shaping global governance, we focus not on the structural attributes and programs but on the organizations as actors."

into existence as actors that are endowed with the capacity to function as agents in their own behalf is often named 'delegation'[20]. The EU, for instance, is portrayed by internationalists as an actor that has agency to the extent to which states have granted it the competence to decide on certain matters in a more or less autonomous fashion[21]. The same goes for 'the' WTO and/or 'the' IMF[22]. To be sure, liberal internationalists have exhibited more and more sophistication as they have differentiated between large collective actors, like the UN or the EU, and the special organisations or organs of which they are composed. The latter putatively have agency, too, an interesting question pertaining to the leeway that these organisations and organs have within the respective system, and vis-à-vis states. Internationalists have thus conceived the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, or the UN Conference on Trade and Development, as agents in their own right[23]. They have also depicted the European Commission and/or the European Parliament and/or the European Court of Justice as agents with the capacity to fulfil certain functions within, and sometimes even beyond, the range of competencies that has been granted to them by states through delegation[24]. The councils, panels, and commissions in the WTO, by contrast, are agents to which states have been much more reluctant to delegate far-reaching powers. For many, the typical reason underlying such a granting of power through delegation from states, in their capacity as principals, to organisations, in their capacity as agents, lies in the envisaged effects that the latter produce so as to benefit the former[25]. In this view, international organisations function as instruments for their principals once they, and their organs, have been instituted as agents.

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[20] Delegation is a figurative understanding that often implies what has been dubbed a 'principal-agent-relationship' between states as principals and organisations as agents. This concept and figurative understanding is particularly popular among adherents to rationalist theories of international organisation. Cf. Roland Vaubel, "Principal-agent Problems in International Organizations", *Review of International Organizations*, Vol. 1 (2006), pp. 125-138.

[21] Cf. Fabio Franchino, *The Powers of the Union: Delegation in the EU* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

[22] Cf. Darren Hawkins, David A. Lake, Daniel L. Nelson & Michael Tierney (eds.), *Delegation and Agency in International Organizations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), especially the contributions of Lisa A. Martin and Erica R. Gould to the IMF, and the contribution of Andrew P. Cortell & Susan Peterson to the WTO.

[23] Ignaz Seidl-Hohenveldern, "The Attitude of States towards the Proliferation of International Organizations", in: N.M. Blokker & H.G. Schermers (eds.), *Proliferation of International Organizations: Legal Issues* (The Hague: Kluwer, 2001), pp. 51-64, at p. 55.

[24] Cf. the contributions to Mathias König-Archibugi (ed.), *New Modes of Governance in the Global System: Exploring Publicness, Delegation, and Inclusiveness* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); cf. Carl-Fredrik Bergström, *Comitology: Delegation of Powers in the European Union and the Committee System* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); and cf. Mark A. Pollack, *The Engines of European Integration: Delegation, Agency, and Agenda Setting in the EU* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), at p. 75-82, for a "[…] brief historical survey [which] demonstrates that questions of delegation and discretion were, in fact, explicit and central to the motivations of member governments in creating the basic institutions of the ECSC and its successors."

[25] This is obviously the so-called 'functional' explanation of delegation. Cf. Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), at p. 80.

Other internationalists have deviated from this rationalist conception of agency as they have pointed out that international organisations are not so much directed by principals, as they evolve their own preferences and strategies[26]. Due to their alleged nature as bureaucratic complexes, international organisations such as the UN, for instance, are composed of various special organisations and administrative-executive units that formulate their own agendas and devise strategies how to realise them. They act themselves as principals vis-à-vis states[27]. In this view, international organisations are not so much agents that act on behalf of principals, they are rather agents that work back on states insofar as they change their preferences or influence their strategies, in a recursive manner as it were. Irrespective of their affiliation with this or that camp, internationalists do generally show some caution in that they are hesitant to ascertain agency in too general a fashion. Some take into consideration that it matters what international organisations are actually concerned with. It has thus been asked whether, for example, the United Nations is an important or marginal actor as regards the management of more specific issues in the field of international peace and security[28], or what specific international organisations accomplish in distinct issue areas, ranging from peace and security over economic issues to social and humanitarian activities[29]. Yet, the important point here is that academic internationalists tend to champion some notion of international organisations being agents, either in that they infer agency from the functions that international organisations fulfil for states, in that they infer agency from a constructive role of international organisations as more or less autonomous actors, and/or in that they bear in mind the specificity of the issue area in which they are involved as actors.

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[26] Cf. Michael N. Barnett & Martha Finnemore, "The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations", *International Organization*, Vol. 53 (1999), pp. 699-732, at p. 707. "IOs can become autonomous sites of authority, independent from the state 'principals' who may have created them, because of power flowing from at least two sources: (1) the legitimacy of the rational-legal authority they embody, and (2) control over technical expertise and information. […] Since rational-legal authority and control over expertise are part of what defines and constitutes any bureaucracy (a bureaucracy would not be a bureaucracy without them), the autonomy that flows from them is best understood as a constitutive effect, an effect of the way bureaucracy is constituted, which, in turn, makes possible (and in that sense causes) other processes and effects in global politics."

[27] Cf. Martha Finnemore, "International Organizations and Teachers of Norms: The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization and Science Policy", *International Organization*, Vol. 47 (1994), pp. 565-598, for an explication of how bureaucratic organs may act as 'norm teachers' vis-à-vis states; and cf. Michael N. Barnett & Martha Finnemore, *Rules for the World: International Organization in Global Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), and especially pp. 121-155 with an explication of how the UN-Secretariat operated in an autonomous fashion vis-à-vis the UN-Security Council as it (mis-)directed the Peacekeeping forces in Rwanda in 1994, and as it withheld information from the Security Council's Permanent Members.

[28] Cf. Keith Krause, "Facing the Challenge of Small Arms: The UN and Global Security Governance", in: Richard M. Price & Mark W. Zacher, *The United Nations and Global Security* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 21-38.

[29] Cf. the contributions to Diehl, op. cit., pp. 167-466.

The Concept of Mission/Mandate

For internationalists, international organisations are typically created through signature and ratification of constitutional documents such as covenants and charters[30]. International organisations are thus grounded in rational-legal arrangements that define the overall 'mission' and that ascribe certain powers that are suited for the realisation of this mission. The particular purposes for which a specific international organisation has been created, and/or the specific ends for which governments take recourse to it as an agent, can allegedly be inferred from a look at said constitutional documents[31]. What is thus hypostatised by academic internationalists is that organisations are instituted and maintained by their sponsors so as to instantiate specific states of affairs, as they are described in official texts. In the case of the EU, for instance, "[…] the 1957 EEC Treaty was the founding 'constitutional document' of the European Community, and has since been amended numerous times, most notably in three landmark treaties: the 1986 Single European Act (SEA), the 1992 Maastricht Treaty on European Union, and the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam."[32] The basic objectives, as they have been formulated in what may be seen as the 'Preamble' to the EEC Treaty, are the promotion of peace, economic and social progress, and liberty through (economic) integration. These goals, in turn, are to be realised through intergouvernemental cooperation and the delegation of decision-making powers to what are nowadays known as the Commission and the Council of Ministers. In the case of the UN, the primary purpose of this organisation, as set out in its Charter, has been the maintenance of international peace and security[33], other goals such as criminal justice, democracy, human rights, or economic and social progress being secondary to, and dependent for their realisation on, this primary purpose. When internationalists give meaning to the WTO, they often point out that it came into existence as an organisation with the agreement finalizing the so-called Uruguay Round, which was signed in Marrakesh in 1994 and subsequently approved by the legislatures of most member countries[34]. The WTO, as an agent in its own right, replaced the multilateral trading regime of the GATT in 1995 by writing forth the regime's basic purposes, such as raising living standards, ensuring full employment, increasing real income and effective demand, and assuring the full use of the resources of the world by expanding the production and exchange of

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[30] Cf. Rittberger & Zangl, op. cit., at p. 63: "In general, international organizations are set up by a treaty between three or more states. Such treaties are frequently negotiated at diplomatic conferences before being signed and the ratified upon approval by the competent organs of each signatory state." Cf. Niels M. Blokker, "Proliferation of International Organizations: An Exploratory Introduction", in: Blokker & Schermers, op. cit., pp. 1-49, at p. 12.

[31] Cf. Robert W. Gregg & Michael Barkun (eds.), *United Nations System and its Functions: Select Readings* (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1968), at p. 5-6.

[32] Cf. Pollack, op. cit., at p. 83.

[33] Cf. Nigel D. White, *The United Nations System: Toward International Justice* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002), at p. 12-13 and pp. 139-172.

[34] Cf. Elaine Hartwick & Richard Peet, "Neoliberalism and Nature: The Case of the WTO", *Annals of the American Academy of Political & Social Science*, 590 (2003), pp. 188-211, at p. 192.

goods through reducing tariffs and other barriers to trade. As an international organisation, it exists now primarily "[...] for the purpose of liberalizing trade across national boundaries"[35] and to therewith promote economic and social progress.

Again, my point here is that the missions and mandates internationalists deem relevant as guideposts for international organisations circumscribe states of affairs that are all but secretive, inherently desirable, and very appealing. Internationalists, that is, are by and large agreed that the covenants and charters by which international organisations are founded define goals such as peace, progress, and/or social justice that are inherently stable, widely known, and not subject to controversy. Their founders, and probably the inhabitants of the world at large, can thus be deemed loyal supporters of these goals. This means that, by virtue of their mandates, as they have been formulated in official legal texts, international organisations pursue goals that are not only transparent as regards their original meaning but highly desirable and legitimate in and of themselves. As a matter of those purposes and principles laid down at their foundations, international organisations are thus not to be seen as agents that pursue partisan political objectives. Precisely because their performance is predicated upon transparent, desirable, and inclusive normative ends, students learn to see international organisations as the portents in and through which the sectarian impulses of the political may be arrested, perhaps even overcome, in the daily procurement of peace, progress, and social justice. The extent to which academic internationalists belabour the notion that international organisations pursue highly desirable and legitimate ends correlates with the extent to which this idealised image of international relations and organisation is held to be natural and self-evident among students.

The Concept of Performance

Another focal point pertains to the extent to which international organisations, conceived as agents, succeed or fail in realising their putative goals. At issue is the notion of 'performance, which is often tied to behavioural categories such as coordination, deliberation, negotiation, decision, implementation, compliance, mediation, administration, sanction and so on. Once internationalists have learned to conceive international organisations as agents of some sort, the most interesting question for them is what they actually do, meaning what typical steps they take to realise widely known pre-formulated ends. It so comes that many internationalists tend to focus upon decisions that they associate with clarification, coordination, and/or prescribing functions of international organisations[36]. Another widespread

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Cf. Darryl Robinson, "Defining 'Crimes Against Humanity' at the Rome Conference", *American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 93 (1999), pp. 43-57; cf. Kenneth W. Abbott & Duncan Snidal, "Why States Act through Formal International Organizations", in: Paul F. Diehl (ed.), *The*

tendency among internationalists is to conceive deliberation, information transmission, and decision-making activities, say, in the UN-Security Council as the most typical responses to threats to world peace and security[37]. Internationalists also ponder the performance of the UN in the very locales of crisis. Some investigate whether and to what extent long successful instruments such as UN-peacekeeping are all of a sudden decried as outbursts of hypocrisy[38]. Others seek to uncover new trends in dealing with such crisis so as to identify moves that lend themselves to being subsumed under new referential terms[39]. Many internationalists seem persuaded that the instruments of the UN and other organisations are still 'better', and in any case more sufficient, than measures taken by individual states[40]. The same goes for the presumed sufficiency of efforts on the part of the EU, the IMF, and the G8 to coordinate the increase of participation in the world economy, or to orchestrate assistance policies in the name of economic and social progress[41]. Combining analysis with recommendations, many internationalists derive policy-oriented proposals from their inquiry of the performance of international organisations, say the IMF, for what they deem (more) adequate operative steps[42].

An issue that has recently gained a particular salience among internationalists is the ability of international organisations to meet new challenges in what is depicted as an efficient, effective, and legitimate manner[43]. This has led many internationalists to shift their attention to the ability of international organisations to effectuate improvements in their own organs and mechanisms. In the case of the UN, for instance, internationalists have been interested in the extent to which the organisation is actually able to fulfil functions necessary for the maintenance of peace and security in the new millennium. They thus ask for instruments that the UN may avail itself of to ameliorate its implementation functions[44]. As regards the EU, internationalists have queried not only the kind of reforms the EU should undertake and whether they suffice to attain greater

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Politics of Global Governance: International Organizations in an Interdependent World (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2001), pp. 9-43, at p. 18.

[37] Cf. Alexander Thompson, "Coercion through IOs: The Security Council and the Logic of Information Transmission", *International Organization*, Vol. 60 (2006), pp. 1-34, emphasising the 'neutrality' of IOs as a crucial enabling condition for their serving as informative agents of the international community at p. 7.

[38] Cf. Michael Lipson, "Peacekeeping: Organized Hypocrisy?", *European Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 13 (2007), pp. 5-34.

[39] Cf. Michael Barnett, Hunjoon Kim, Madalene O'Donnell & Laura Sitea, "Peacebuilding: What Is in a Name?", *Global Governance*, Vol. 13 (2007), pp. 35-58.

[40] Cf. Greg Mills, "Better with the UN? Searching for Peace and Governance in Iraq", *Global Governance*, Vol. 10 (2004), 281-288.

[41] Cf. Aaron Segal, "Managing the World Economy", *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 11 (1990), pp. 361-369, at p. 366.

[42] Cf. David Dode & John Murray, "The Evolving International Monetary Order and the Need for an Evolving IMF", *Global Governance*, Vol. 12 (2006), pp. 361-372, pointing at p. 365 on 'new' suitable strategies of "[…]surveillance, lending, representation, and governance."

[43] Cf. Karns & Mingst, op. cit., at pp. 514-520.

[44] Cf. C.S.R. Murthy, "New Phase in UN Reforms: Establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and Human Rights Council", *International Studies*, Vol. 44 (2007), pp. 39-56.

effectiveness, transparency, and accountability, they have also asked for the impetus lying underneath the reform proposals concerning the EU's organs[45] and procedures[46]. With respect to the WTO, internationalists ask whether the envisaged reform measures succeed to streamline the organisation's decision-making procedures so that its primary purposes of social and economic progress may further be enhanced through procedures that combine considerations of democratic legitimacy with those of operative efficiency[47]. Internationalists championing a more analytic and explanatory research interest seek to find out why international organisations decide to undergo protracted reform processes to begin with; the prevailing opinion, namely that the states who founded these organisations are typically the main driving forces behind these reforms as they exert pressure from outside, is more and more faced with a rival hypothesis that stresses endogenous forces[48].

Taken together, internationalists entertain a variety of classificatory moves to represent the performance of international organisations in a fashion that coheres with their understanding of international organisations as agents realising normative ends. The writings of internationalists suggest that international organisations engage in activities that may not always be entirely sufficient for the establishment of pace, progress, and social justice. Yet they seem nevertheless agreed that they are designed to serve the overarching goal to bring order to a world that is deficient in this precise regard. The point here is that these and some other focal points, concepts, and figurative understandings impose constraints upon the meaning-making activities of student internationalists in that they frame their imagination of what issues are to be judged interesting and relevant for the purposes of theorising and research. This can be grasped with a view to what said focal points, concepts, and figurative understandings rule out systematically.

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[45] In this regard, cf. Michelle Cini, Reforming the European Commission: Discourse, Culture and Planned Change, in: M.O. Hosli, A. van Deemen & M. Widgren, *Institutional Challenges in the European Union* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 1-21, placing much weight upon the gradual evolution of a 'new governance discourse' within the EU at large;

[46] Annick Laruelle, "The EU Decision-Making Procedures: Some Insight from Non-Cooperative Game Theory", in: ibid., pp. 89-112, emphasising the importance of how decision-making procedures within the EU are designed and whether the Council of Ministers and/or the European Parliament may thus avail themselves of the possibility to perform as veto-players.

[47] See generally Andreas R. Ziegler & Yves Bonzon, "How to Reform WTO Decision-making? An Analysis of the Current Functioning of the Organization from the Perspectives of Efficiency and Legitimacy", *NCCR Trade Working Paper*, No. 2007/23 (2007).

[48] Unpersuaded by principal-agent theories that point at control measures that states apply to organisations, Catherine Weaver & Ralf J. Leiteritz, "Our Poverty is a World Full of Dreams: Reforming the World Bank", *Global Governance*, Vol. 11 (2005), pp. 369-388, explain reforms in the World Bank with reference to its 'organizational culture' and path-dependent effects; in a similar vein, Sylvia Ostry, "The World Trading System: In the Fog of Uncertainty", *Review of International Organizations*, Vol. 1 (2006), 139-152, emphasises that and how unintended consequences which made themselves felt during the Uruguay Round changed the system in such a fashion that governments had to ponder questions as to how the weak executive and legislative functions of the WTO could be strengthened.

The Conceptual Void

Ponder the conjecture that there is *actually* not much to be enthusiastic about international relations and organisation. Let us take official rhetoric as just that. Let us then say that there has of late been no path-breaking achievement, no noteworthy success, no reliable solution which can be attributed to international organisations as agents. Let us assert that the goings on within 'the' UN, 'the' EU, 'the' WTO, 'the' WB, 'the' IMF and so on reveal enormous difficulties that these international organisations naturally have in resolving issues they are often expected to successfully deal with. Let us further maintain that 'the' UN has 'normally' been sidestepped by the great powers in situations that they considered vital to them; that 'the' EU has at no point in history been rooted in a loyal European constituency, but that it has instead been confronted with growing popular dissatisfaction about its exaggerated emphasis upon the liberalisation of the common market, the democratic deficit of its decision-making procedures, and the premature promotion of a constitutional project that nobody wants and understands; and that negotiations in 'the' WTO have not been smoothly operating catalysts of economic progress and social justice, but that they have increasingly been deadlocked because they have intensified the scale of deprivation in the so-called 'South'. These organisations, plus 'the' WB and 'the' IMF, have actually had enormous difficulties to act on their own behalf, to evolve procedures and push agendas in the name of peace, progress, and social justice, to effectuate the very outcomes for which they had originally been instituted. Liberal internationalists, students and academics alike, have been silent on these more deeply rooted issues. Their faithful and pragmatic stance vis-à-vis international organisations has led them to deny fundamental defects and how they have become manifest in systematic failures of organisations. At the very same time when journalists and free-lancers made names for themselves with shocking stories about the involvement of international organisations in the aggravation of crises[49], internationalists have preferred to view international organisations in a more positive light[50].

This claim may seem somewhat exaggerated. It may be countered that, however well the conceptual void describes the meaning-making activities of *some* internationalists, it is not applicable to the great majority of internationalists. The latter, it could be maintained, differ in outlook and argumentative style. Compared

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[49] Weaving her accounts of how international organisations failed to prevent mass killings at various occasions in a story of US-Foreign Policy, cf. Susan Power, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); reconstructing the prehistory that eventually culminated in the Rwanda genocide by shedding a particular light on activities of 'the' WB, 'the' IMF and 'the' UN and some its special organisations, cf. Linda Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder: The Rwandan Genocide* (London: Verso, 2004); and cf. Adam Lebor, *Complicity with Evil: United Nations in the Age of Modern Genocide* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

[50] As a typical example, cf. Dirk Forman & Dirk Segaer, "New Coalitions for Global Governance: The Changing Dynamics of Multilateralism", *Global Governance*, Vol. 12 (2006), pp. 205-225.

with the overtly principled and dogmatic internationalism of some, it may be argued, the great bulk of liberal internationalism has overall been more reasonable, more reflective, more serious, and more balanced. The majority usually recognise a disjunction between the ideal and the real, which comes to the fore whenever they point at shortcomings of international organisations. Internationalists, it may be further stressed, are actually relentlessly critical of their study objects in that they lament deficiencies in agency, purpose, and performance of international organisations. Admittedly, there are internationalists who recognise said disjunction, openly or tacitly. A fair number of internationalists have overall been sensitive to imperfections as regards autonomy, efficiency, effectiveness and/or legitimacy on the side of international organisations[51]. So in a sense, the aforementioned objection is on target. There are liberal internationalists who are reasonable, reflective, serious, and balanced in their estimations. And some are even critical. However, the objection fails to reckon with the fact that criticism of international organisations is generally modest as it is usually tailored to, and put in the service of, loyal support for these very same international organisations[52]. This is so in two interrelated respects.

Criticism is usually annexed to some larger scholastic project, say rational or sociological institutionalism, for instance. If academics tackle normative questions at all, they are more often than not aimed at the maintenance, perfection, or reform of international organisations, conceived as entities in their own right.

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[51] Interrogating legitimacy and effectiveness of the UN in the area of administration, cf. David Harlan, "Legitimacy and Effectiveness in International Administration", *Global Governance*, Vol. 10 (2004), 15-19; criticising the effectiveness of UN-peacemaking in post-Cold War conflict situations, cf. Christopher Clapham, "Rwanda: The Perils of Peacemaking", *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 35 (1998), pp. 193-210, and Mats Berdal, "The United Nations, Peacebuilding, and the Genocide in Rwanda", *Global Governance*, Vol. 11 (2005), pp. 115-130; criticising the record of the UN in providing humanitarian assistance, cf. Nicholas J. Stockton, "The Failure of International Humanitarian Action in Afghanistan", *Global Governance*, Vol. 8 (2002), pp. 265-271; pointing at rather severe setbacks in the WTO's trade negotiations, cf. Rorden Wilkinson, "Crisis in Cancún", *Global Governance*, Vol. 10 (2004), pp. 149-155; pointing at the consequences for countries in the 'South', cf. Erfried Adam, "The WTO and the Crisis of Multilateralism: A Look at the Present Situation", *FES Briefing Paper* (October 2004) and, by the same author, "Suspension of the World Trade Round – Multilateralism, Global Governance, and Development Policy in Crisis", *FES Briefing Paper* (October 2006), either paper can be found at http://www.fes-geneva.org/publicationsFrame.htm. Interrogating the effectiveness of international organisations more generally, cf. Barnett & Finnemore, "The Politics, Power, and Pathologies of International Organizations", op. cit.; pondering legitimacy, cf. Jean-Marc Coicaud, "Reflections on International Organisations and International Legitimacy: Constraints, Pathologies, and Possibilities", *International Social Science Journal*, Vol. 53, No. 170 (2001), pp. 523-536.

[52] For two examples that affirm the rule, cf. Edward Newman, *A Crisis of Global Institutions? Multilateralism and International Security* (London: Routledge, 2007), and cf. Geoff Simons, *UN Malaise: Power, Problems and Realpolitik* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1995). Both authors conclude their at times relentlessly critical, fascinating and highly perceptive treatises with well-meaning suggestions for reform. For an exception that confirms the rule, see Hartwick & Peet, op. cit., who conclude their article on the WTO, at p. 210, with the call for 'radical political action' that combines two types of counterforce: "[…] the thousands of protestors willing to face systematic violence by the police and military protecting the existing global order and the hundreds of research institutions [sic!] and nongovernmental organizations dedicated to uncovering the sophisticated lies that global governance organizations persist in telling us."

And those internationalists who eventually acknowledge that international organisations may not exactly fit the ideal representations they give of themselves usually arrive at a rehabilitative view. They eventually put reason, reflection, seriousness, and differentiation in the service of rehabilitation. Most importantly, their criticism is beholden to a project of rehabilitation for the existing architecture of international organisation. Liberal internationalists admit some disjunction between the self-image of international organisations on the one hand, and what they are and actually do on the other. They nevertheless point out that, in a foreseeable time, the international organisation of their choosing can be perfected and used to legitimately regulate, efficiently organise, and effectively administrate the realm of international relations out there. By this, internationalists play down the various patterns of impairment, subversion, blackmail, coercion, wheedling and other 'political' activities that are integral to the practice of international organisation[53], and that critical observers have every reason to be sceptical about[54]. Yet their faithful rehabilitative stance leaves no other choice. Too frank an admission that institutional mechanisms of international organisations are deeply involved in generating problems all over would relegate them to the margins of the field. They thus prefer to add another analytic and formal piece that adumbrates agency, mission, and/or performance of international organisations as entities. So what many liberal internationalists habitually choose to do, for career-oriented considerations, is to deny the very possibility that the procedures and mechanisms of international organisations as entities are not essentially different from the very milieu that they are supposed to regulate and administrate. In their view, a scheduled, transparent, and procedurally fine-tuned multilateralism as it is tied to rational-legal bureaucracy is, in principle, there to order and regulate a power-driven, egotistic, and arbitrary unilateralism of unfettered predatory. To downplay, disguise, or categorically rule out that the political has actually full control over the institutional architecture of international organisations is one way in which liberal criticism is in the service of international organisations.

The other sort of criticism is usually rooted in an affirmative stance of the existing setup. Internationalists who admit that existing international organisations may not (yet) be perfectly suited to order and regulate the predatory world out there are nevertheless convinced that the machinery of international organisations may be trusted to effectuate peace, progress, and social justice, if not for this, then maybe for the next generation. It is in any case worthwhile to sustain faith in its

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[53] Cf. *The Road to Europe* (2003), a movie sponsored and made possible by Fogh Rasmussen, Danish Prime Minister and then President of the European Council. The pictures show negotiations between Rasmussen and officials acting in the name of the EU Presidency, heads of state of EU members, and government representatives of Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary. What can above all else be grasped with a view at the negotiations in very exclusive settings is a great deal of cynicism on all sides that is impossible to be perceived as having anything to do with peace, progress, and social justice.

[54] Cf. Brian Urquhart in a conversation with Harry Kreisler titled: "The United Nations After 9/11", at October 4th, 2004, to be found at: http://www.uctv.tv/search-details.asp?showID=8870.

eventual operation[55]. Faithful academic internationalists endorse the actual operation of existing international organisations, precisely because it is not perfect yet. Their move is as much denial as it is affirmation. What is perhaps most crucial in this context, this affirmation of what liberal internationalists recognise as international organisation amounts to a stance that is not only immune to criticism, but that is downright conservative. Liberal internationalists champion at times a very pressing and urgent tone. They search for initiatives with the potential to make for another resolution or directive. They are vigilant about what goes on in the conference settings of existing international organisations. But this urgency only masks the solipsism and conservatism of their activist and argumentative enterprise.

Consider the many lamentations, championed by representatives of underdeveloped countries in Latin America and Africa for decades, about the performance of 'the' UN as a system that constantly reproduces, and intensifies, the stratification of the globe[56]; consider the death of half a million Iraqi children as a 'sorry but necessary' by-product of the UN-supervised sanctions of Iraq[57]; consider the use of depleted uranium weapons by NATO forces during the hotly contested war in Kosovo[58]; consider the 'cash for access'-agreements, negotiated between the European Commission and various West African coastal states, that favour above all else the interests of the European fisheries lobby and are detrimental for people and environment in the West African coastal region[59]; or consider the collapse of numerous large economies, such as the ones in Mexico and Argentina, after attempts by 'the' WB and 'the' IMF to structurally adjust and remodel them in the fashion of the crisis-ridden stagnant economies in the Western/ised world. The discourse of liberal internationalism is unable to open conceptual space by which it would become possible to actually understand phenomena and recognise the structural link between pervasive political and socioeconomic disasters on the one hand and the existing architecture of international organisations on the other. If viewed from the perspective of liberal internationalists, it always seems urgent, inevitable, sometimes even appealing, when they declare that occasional disruptions are necessary steps on the way to

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[55] Cf. Oran Young, *International Governance: Protecting the Environment in a Stateless Society* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1994), concluding his chapter on global environmental governance through international organisations, at p. 182, with the statement that "[…] there is room for cautious optimism among students of international environmental affairs."

[56] Cf. Joao Augusto de Araujo Castro, "The United Nations and the Freezing of the International Power Structure", *International Organization*, Vol. 26 (1972), pp. 158-168.

[57] Cf. *Paying the Price: Killing the Children of Iraq* (2000), a documentary filmed by John Pilger that aims at illustrating that and how the sanctions on Iraq, imposed by 'the' UN and enforced by the forces of the US and Great Britain, have devastated millions of people, mostly civilians, and especially children.

[58] The former Finnish environment minister, Pekka Haaivisto, allegedly declared in his capacity as head of a UN-sponsored mission to Kosovo that "[…] NATO disclosed having used 31000 rounds of depleted uranium ammunition during some 100 missions throughout Kosovo by U.S. A-10 aircraft." To be found at www.planetark.org/avantgo/dailynewsstory.cfm?newsid=6078.

[59] Cf. Milan Ilnyckyj, "The Legality and Sustainability of European Union Fisheries Policy in West Africa", *MIT International Review*, Vol. 1 (2007), 32-41.

peace, progress, and social justice. Yet the very things liberal internationalists perceive as urgent, inevitable, and even appealing seem utterly implausible, conservative, and ultimately dangerous from a critical perspective that is sympathetic with those who actually bear the consequences.

The thing is, of course, that the project of liberal international organisation does not aspire to be appealing to those who actually suffer deprivation. Liberal internationalists are interested primarily, if not exclusively, in that their project finds approval by those who preside over the existing setup. Liberal internationalists try to see the world from the same perspective as those who run the institutions. This has the effect that their internationalism reproduces itself as the very discourse in and through which the architects of international organisation represent themselves as benevolent guardians of world order. Liberal internationalism is itself a performative enterprise as it aspires to be the very idiom in and through which official functionaries represent the operation, performance, reproduction, and proliferation of their bureaucratic practices. There is thus no point at lamenting about some mismatch between those instances of the real world that its adherents do not perceive and the world orders that they actually write and talk into existence. Liberal internationalism is the theory and practice of international organisation, a discourse that provides the vocabulary by which the powers-that-be normalise and aestheticise their distributing life and death. It is in this capacity that the discursive paradigm of liberal internationalism functions as the dominant meaning-making mechanism that fabricates the cognitive frames in and through which students make sense of international relations and organisation.

The last section is devoted to bear out some enabling conditions that I think are responsible for the fact that internationalists approach international relations and organisation in the fashion that I have just sketched. My focus is directed at the formative context of internationalism, a setting over which their worldview assumes them to be in full control – even though it is exactly the other way round.

A Critique of Liberal Internationalism

Liberal internationalism and its project of international organisation is a culturally specific phenomenon that has to be understood as such. The decisive question concerns the elements that make for the culture under which liberal internationalists represent the architecture of international organisation(s) in the way they do. The first point of relevance in this regard is that the great majority of nowadays internationalists were born in upper and upper-middle class segments of Western/ised countries. They have witnessed a relatively peaceful period of enormous wealth creation and have enjoyed access to numerous economic, symbolic, and intellectual resources. Having otherwise proceeded through a series of very similar stations, from infancy to primary school and the institutions of secondary and postsecondary education, nowadays internationalists are convinced that the world they are confronted with is replete with opportunities, and that there

is no reason to be fundamentally opposed to anything[60]. This is coupled with a can-do belief among the average internationalist that every problem can be solved by recourse to expert knowledge and coordinated specialised activities. By virtue of their similar familial and class backgrounds, liberal internationalists take the institutional setting for granted, share some predilection for personal achievement, and come to place much value in the liberal arts and professionally relevant knowledge as it is provided by disciplines such as law, political science, journalism, economics, or management. Being relatively privileged members of what they have known as peaceful and progressive societies that have undergone secularisation and 'scientization'[61], internationalists see themselves as rational beings that have grown out of religious superstitions, and that are free to realise themselves in societies in which there are equal opportunities. Their similar class backgrounds infuse them from an early stage with distinct ideas, norms, values, and principles that amount to a cultural code that is embodied in the conventional convictions prevailing in those institutions to which they turn as a matter of course.

One element of said code is of foremost importance in this context. This is the value and epistemic principle of 'professionalism', which has come to operate as a fundamental orientation point and background condition in the meaning-making activities of liberal internationalists. Also important, though somewhat less so, are values such as success, property, wealth, and production[62]. What renders the value and epistemic principle of professionalism so influential among members of the more privileged strata in Western/ised societies is its strong foothold in the schools and academic institutions to which its members turn for self-realisation. For this principle precludes that teachers and students define themselves and what they want in a manner that is not ipso facto influenced by all sorts of professional considerations[63]. Once they have entered the stage of secondary and post-secondary

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[60] Cf. David Brooks, "The Organization Kid", *The Atlantic Monthly* (April 2001), pp. 40-54.

[61] According to Drori & Meyer, op. cit., at p. 60, 'scientization' means that professional practices and everyday life are penetrated by "[…] principles of universal order (universality, scripts) and proaction (constituted actorhood). Scientization, through these cultural features, acts to restate authority in terms of rationalization and empowered actorhood. Scientized authority is anchored in institutionalized myths of scientific knowledge and in the stature of experts who create and possess this knowledge. Thus, scientized authority is more expansive than most traditional forms of political and economic control. Science has many properties in common with religion, and can easily be seen as a rationalistic form of religion in the age of (modern) globalisation."

[62] Cf. Frank Fischer, *Technocracy and the Politics of Expertise* (Newbury Park: Sage, 1990), at p. 104.

[63] The most important question under a professional episteme is, of course: 'for what career-relevant purpose should this or that sort of thing be engaged and appropriated intellectually?'. The underlying assumption here is that curricula, once permeated by specific focal or reference points that may be associated with 'professionalism', function to delimit the range of possibilities for students to develop identities and to imagine desirable and realisable states of affairs. In a very similar vein, cf. Gero Lenhardt, *Schule und bürokratische Rationalität* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1984), at p. 170. My claim here is that 'professionalism' has not only become a central epistemic and ordering principle with regard to academic administration in a procedural sense, though I fully agree on this with William L. Waugh, "Issues in University Governance: More 'Professional' and Less Academic", *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, No. 585 (2003), pp. 84-96, especially pp. 89-94. It has become the foremost principle as far as academic administration is

education, students appropriate assumptions that are particularly vital with respect to the internationalist project: the supremacy of what goes as 'empirical' and at times even technical knowledge, comprised of shortcuts and formal concepts; and the association of functional expertise with the readiness to assume responsibility in the sense of exercising leadership and (paternalistic) policy-making. Precisely because it enjoys such a strong foothold in institutions of higher education to which access is restricted, the value and epistemic principle of professionalism engenders an attitude among those who do get access that they are supposed to exercise leadership and to entertain specific performances. This sense is often buttressed by mechanisms of gratification that reinforce not only their sense of excellence and leadership[64], but that translate into an affirmative attitude vis-à-vis existing institutions and governance processes that are usually predicated on rationalist epistemologies[65]. Inasmuch as professionalism spurs the self-identification among students as practical problem-solvers who are to assume responsibility as functionaries within the existing setup, it supplies a pivotal formative impulse on the meaning-making activities of coming internationalists.

The overarching importance of professionalism as a cultural force can be grasped with a view to the mechanisms behind its sedimentation. Consider the fact that institutions of postsecondary education have been firmly tied to other influential arenas of socio-cultural hemisphere of the Western/ised world, namely the big corporations on the one hand, and the various bureaucratic agencies of the state on the other[66]. As guardians of a specific socioeconomic fabric, corporate and state institutions work towards the maintenance of the status quo. They have elaborated a unique system of interrelated spaces that are all geared to the contours of a society that presumably thrives on technical skill-based production processes that are rationally designed and competently managed. Members of the more privileged and educated strata come to staff the places in which professional functionaries either preside over, or actively partake in, high-level processes of administration and/or management. These processes are themselves embedded in functional spaces that comprise the urban city as the site where vital economic and administrative functions are coordinated[67]; a more or less visible system of social stratification with a large enough force of white- and blue-collar workers; a private sphere sustained by civil rights; a system of general and higher education that

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concerned in a substantive sense, i.e. with regard to what is being taught and discussed in class: empirical knowledge that is seemingly relevant and applicable for circumscribed job profiles within existing institutions.

[64] Think only of the various foundations and institutions in nearly all Western/ised countries that offer coming 'leaders' financial support for internships and research projects, usually on the premise that they commit themselves to the philosophy of the lending institution.

[65] Cf. Fischer, op. cit., at p. 106.

[66] Cf. Klaus Türk, *Die Organisation der Welt: Herrschaft durch Organisation in der modernen Gesellschaft* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1994), at p. 222-223.

[67] According to Michel Foucault, „Lecture from January 11, 1978", in: M. Foucault, *Sicherheit, Territorium, Bevölkerung. Geschichte der Gouvernementalität Bd. I* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2006), pp. 13-51, at p. 36, the urban city gained importance as a locus at which to organise exchange relations between urban and rural areas as well as to plan and regulate economic growth.

serves to normalise and disseminate the values of the upper and upper-middle classes; and a web of institutions for scientific research and development whose primary aim is to yield findings that can be employed to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of the system as it stands. The great universities, which reside in the latter two spaces, are obviously of critical importance. They administrate not only the various institutions of post-secondary institutions, they also provide the infrastructure within which corporations and the state are able to run educational programs that make the value and principle of professionalism operative as an identity-shaping force across the board of established knowledge domains[68].

That is, corporations and state institutions have found ways to play on the universities so as to mould a practical, technological, and for that matter uncritical, mindset amongst students. Due to the influence that state institutions and business corporations increasingly exert on the great universities[69], higher education in the Western/ised world has come to be seen as preparation for the job[70], not only in physics and engineering, but also – and all the more so – in management and public administration. Academic researchers in whatever 'discipline' seek integration in groups, or networks, that dedicate themselves to the generation of findings in answer to concerns about efficiency, effectiveness, and legitimacy of the existing setup. "The home of science and the professional schools, the university is the source of technocracy's own reproduction. In recent years, moreover, universities have become top-heavy with technocratic training programs, particularly attributable to the growth of management education. Largely occurring at the expense of the nontechnocratic liberal arts, technocratically oriented programs have generated tensions that today run throughout university politics."[71] A technocratic outlook fuels the professional orientation of students and teachers. It thus operates as a psycho-cultural element that renders the concern about one's own career the most fundamental disposition.

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[68] Cf. Sheila Slaughter & Gary Rhoades, *Academic Capitalism and the New Economy: Markets, States, and Higher Education* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2004), at p. 2: "When students graduate, colleges and universities present them to employers as output/product, a contribution to the new economy, and simultaneously define students as alumni and potential donors. Student identities are flexible, defined and redefined by institutional market behaviours." Elaborating on this observation with regard to liberal arts education in the US, at p. 205: "Even within small, private, liberal arts colleges in the United States, there is evidence of a programmatic push toward the private marketplace, particularly in less prestigious colleges. In these institutions, which advertise an emphasis on liberal arts, the national pattern in the last two decades has been of growth in degree programs connected to employment in general and business in particular."

[69] To be sure, Stanley Aronowitz, *The Knowledge Factory: Dismantling the Corporate University and Creating True Higher Learning* (Boston: Beacon, 2000), has pointed out, at p. 16, that the "[…] university-corporate complex by 1900 […] was in full bloom." Yet, as Matthew Ruben, "Penn and Inc.: Incorporating the University of Pennsylvania", in: G.D. White & F.C. Hauck (eds.), *Campus Inc.* (Amherst: Prometheus, 2000), pp. 194-217, at p. 196, has elaborated, the new thing is that "[…] modern research universities are not simply becoming more influenced or 'tainted' by corporations [… they] are becoming for-profit corporations themselves."

[70] This break has aroused many sentiments in Germany, where the university has traditionally been considered as a place where intelligent young people were to be given the opportunity to actually study for maturation and character building.

[71] Fischer, op. cit., at p. 39.

The institutionally sanctioned reproduction of a widely shared professional mindset began after the end of World War II and gained more and more momentum. Influential segments in Western industrial societies lobbied successfully for elevating empirical and problem-oriented over more fundamental and theoretical knowledge. The epithet 'science' became widely seen as a label for applying rather than developing ideas, of knowing how, not asking why. Not enough, accompanying this shift from basic to applicable knowledge was the strategy of collectivising research. It was already evident in the 1950s that "[a]mong Americans there is today a widespread conviction that science has evolved to a point where the lone man engaged in fundamental inquiry is anachronistic, if not fundamental inquiry itself."[72] This conviction has solidified in the Western/ised world at large, spurring numerous initiatives to transform educational institutions at secondary and post-secondary level into professional schools that disseminate practical and job-relevant skills rather than fundamental theoretical knowledge[73]. Social scientific knowledge, in particular, has come to be seen as a reservoir of formal theorems and technical formulas that may be translated into methodically designed inquiries by networks of researchers in highly funded 'centres of excellence' that devote themselves to the solution of problems functionaries – and not necessarily researchers – define for them. As a result, what is deemed valuable and useful knowledge comes more and more from practitioners and officials who are trusted as experts that know what is topical in respective settings[74].

My point here is that internationalists have appropriated worldviews, images, figures, themes, argumentative styles, and concepts qua being interns to a discursive process that has been located in particular institutional spaces. The value and principle of professionalism has supplied them with basic assumptions and overall focal points. They have thus adopted the worldview of functional elites that there is an international and/or global system out there which is amenable to be moulded through institutions and to be brought into desirable states-of-affairs. The perception that the attainment of such goals is occasionally hampered by the recurrence of problems does not lead internationalists to ponder whether existing institutions are somehow involved in generating these problems to begin with. Identifying with the problem-orientation of functionaries that staff these institutions, internationalists are convinced that what is needed is more efficient and effective involvement of these very same institutions. This is hardly surprising

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[72] William H. Whyte, *The Organization Man* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002 [1956]), at p. 206.

[73] For an explication – and endorsement – of how this transformation is currently effectuated in Germany, cf. Reinhard Bader & Klaus Jenewein, „Professionalisierung für Berufsbildung sichern und erweitern", *Die Berufsbildende Schule*, Vol. 56 (2004), pp. 9-16.

[74] Cf. Hans-Jochen Brauns, *Private Hochschulen in Deutschland: Eine Bestandsaufnahme* (Berlin, 2003) who points out that alone in Germany, there has been a remarkable increase of private universities such as the Hertie School of Government, the International University Bremen, the Bucerius Law School in Hamburg, the International University in Bruchsal, or the Munich Business School, where practitioners endow students with specialised and highly functional administrative, management, and/or legal skills.

since they see no value in systematic and theoretical knowledge about the genealogy of international organisation writ large[75].

Conclusion

The great majority of internationalists, students and academics alike, end up simulating and representing a 'reality' that they have learned to celebrate because of their having been socialised in Western/ised settings and with the value and principle of professionalism. In my opinion, this value and principle makes for a dangerous focal point. I am thus deeply suspicious about claims who assert that and how simulation and analysis of functional performances of professionals bear out findings that international organisations are important pillars in global governance. This claim, together with the argument that international organisations are entities that are worth being felt and experienced in make-up settings of simulation conferences, makes sense only within the horizon of liberal internationalism. To be sure, what I find disquieting about the predominance and increasing popularity of liberal internationalism is not so much that it is so difficult to accept. My commitment to intellectual pluralism has so far worked effectively against the rejection of opinions for the reason that they are different from my own. It is rather the awful gnawing thought that meaning-making activities, which I think amount to denial, rehabilitation, affirmation, and celebration vis-à-vis the goings-on in the existing setup of international organisation, reveal a lack of serious ambition for the realization of peace, progress, and social justice. It is a pity that a rather shallow internationalist persuasion has become so widespread among students and academics alike. In my eyes, more and more student internationalists rush too early and uncritically into simulation. They are thus strongly enticed to pragmatically subordinate their ability to engage in substantive thought to the employment of artificial skills and niceties. They are led to abandon their curious stance as to how things actually operate and to endorse the aesthetics of an idealised image of international organisations and their activities, for the contours of which academic internationalists and their meaning-making activities bear the main responsibility. Given that truly worrisome activities performed from within international organisation/s are normalised and rationalised in this way, it is high time for everyone involved in nowadays internationalism to wonder what the social significance of simulating and celebrating the official rhetoric of professionals actually is.

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[75] Cf. Steward A. Clegg, *Modern Organizations: Organization Studies in the Postmodern World* (London: Sage, 1990), at p. 13, who perceives behind this image "[…] the assumption that most of us, most of the time, are engaged in action with a practical interest in what one may be tempted to term a postulate of pragmatic utilitarianism.".