Unstable Mediation

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Regarding the United Nations as a Visual Entity

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DECLARATION

I declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own.

Signed, _____

(Mafalda Dâmaso)

Dedicated to my grandmother Madalena.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

This project constitutes the first multifaceted exploration of the modes of visual self-presentation of the UN, which I see as operating partially independently from the organisation's communication strategy. I am particularly interested in reflecting on the use of images as rhetorical devices and in contributing to strengthening the overlap between visual culture, rhetoric and UN studies.

The thesis aims to respond to the question 'What are the central characteristics of the modes of visual presentation of the UN?' and, secondarily, 'What do these modes of visual presentation reveal with regard to the spectatorship of the UN?' To answer the first question, I analyse the UN flag and emblem, the publicness of the meetings of the General Assembly and the Security Council and, finally, the figure of the Goodwill Ambassador. However, my analysis considers not only these individual images but also the visual network that they originate. Of particular concern is the position of this network vis-à-vis the organisation's internal conflicts and the UN's aim of public support for its mission, which is in tension with the limited modes of engagement that are available to its viewers.

I address the second question in the final chapter, which brings into play two artistic interventions: Pedro Reyes, *The People's United Nations* (2013-2014) and Goshka Macuga, *Bloomberg Commission: The Nature of the Beast* (2009-2010). I regard them as foregrounding possible modes of activated viewership that are vital within a contemporary image world in which the UN's modes of presentation constitute one of several rhetorical networks to be negotiated.

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The preceding images are among the material that I will be discussing throughout this thesis, whose main contribution to knowledge resides in its analysis of the modes of visual self-presentation of the United Nations (hereafter, the UN) by means of an engagement with key thinkers in visual culture and rhetoric. The UN will be understood as a complex visual and organisational entity, and its modes of self-presentation will be seen as operating independently (even if only partially) from the organisation's official communication strategy. Crucially, these differences (between its communication strategy and its modes of visual presentation as well as between individual images and the visual entity that they constitute) have not hitherto been analysed in the literature that focuses on the UN nor on any other international political organisation.

As I will discuss in more detail below, most scholarly literature that engages with the UN focuses on the disjunction between the values of the organisation and their enactment. The first aim of this project, then, is to address the absence of studies of the ways in which the organisation presents itself visually, what it implies when it does so, and to what effect, foregrounding these as the subject of the analysis and hence contributing to the field of UN studies. However, the project also has a second, broader aim: to contribute to strengthening the continuity between ongoing discussions in the fields of rhetoric, visual culture and visual rhetoric – which, despite their common goals, have remained mostly separate. I do so with contributions from image studies and from continuing debates in political studies. That is, and more broadly, I contribute to these debates by positioning myself at the intersection of the disciplines of visual cultures, political theory, international relations and media studies and by attempting to activate the insights that may be obtained in this way.

In order to make clear the relevance of my approach, it is important to stress the difference between an organisation's communication strategy and its modes of self-presentation (the term that I will be using throughout this thesis, often shortened to 'presentation' in the interest of intelligibility). The former is a communication plan designed to communicate a specific message to a set of target audiences (organised according to, among other categories, their age,

gender, education and income levels, regions) by investing in a combination of media (print, digital, TV and others) in order to achieve a specific goal, such as increased sales or brand recognition levels. Communication strategies are developed and applied either solely by the marketing department of a company or organisation or in collaboration with the strategic planning department of an external advertising agency with whom said company or organisation collaborates. To be specific, if one were to analyse the communication strategy of the UN, one would discuss and evaluate it in view of the ongoing strategic plan, marketing goals and fundraising targets of the organisation. This would require an analysis of changes and trends regarding the wider goals, target audiences and messages of said plans, and hence a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis. While this would undoubtedly be an interesting exercise, doing so is *not* the goal of this thesis.

Rather, my project affirms the importance of paying attention to the modes of self-presentation of the UN alongside its official claims about itself. By doing so, the thesis partly reflects a distinction that has led to the recent emergence of semiotics and cultural analysis brand agencies such as Creative Semiotics (for which I have occasionally worked as a freelancer), Sign Salad or Flamingo in the United Kingdom. Contrary to traditional advertising agencies, these agencies: (i) analyse in detail, using a combination of methods such as semiotics but also – and this is key – ethnography and cultural analysis, all the material that is produced as part of a brand and/or a specific communication strategy, (ii) compare this material with the explicit and implicit values as well as wider cultural trends that such imagery is supposed to reflect and, finally, (iii) based on the previous findings, make strategic recommendations on how a communication strategy or a brand can be strengthened. The goal of this work is, for example, to identify discrepancies that might be making the brand irrelevant given changes between its original cultural context and recent trends. Additionally, these agencies are commissioned either by the marketing department of a brand or by the advertising agencies that are responsible for its communication strategy. For a text by semiotics practitioners that discusses the value of this method, see Chris Arning and Alex Gordon's 'Sonic Semiotics: The role of music in marketing communications' (2006), which discusses the cultural and emotional associations with a set of music tracks and argues that more attention should be given to their potential strategic use in advertising. Crucially, they make clear that they understand commercial semiotics 'not [as] a

way of measuring consumer response […] but a method for investigating how meaning is made […] and how this influences consumer response' (2006, p. 2).

However, and surprisingly, scholarly analyses of such exploratory work are rare. Scholarly discussions of official communication imagery mostly tend to see visual analysis as a deductive method that uncovers underlying power relations (for an example, see Danesi, *The Quest for Meaning: A Guide to Semiotic Theory and Practice*, 2007) rather than as an inductive approach, which would mirror the way how I and those commercial semioticians apply it. This said, there are some exceptions in the academic literature specialised on branding that do recognise the inductive potential of visual analysis. For example, Douglas Holt and Douglas Cameron's *Cultural Strategy: Using Innovative Ideologies to Build Breakthrough Brands* (2012) and Laura Oswald's *Marketing Semiotics: Signs, Strategies and Brand Value* (2010) give several examples of how cultural and visual analysis can be used to strengthen brands. This said, as I will discuss below, the productive role of *images* in sustaining political branding narratives is yet to be recognised in either visual culture or rhetoric studies. For example, Judith Williamson's *Decoding Advertisements: Ideology and Meaning in Advertising* (1978) focuses on how advertising sustains an economic ideology – not a political narrative.

My reference to the term self-presentation not only foregrounds this change in perspective but also points to a broader influence of my work, which I extend to the analysis of the UN: constructionism, which is partly evident in the key role that performativity plays in my analysis. Indeed, in the work of the sociologist Erving Goffman in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), self-presentation emerges as a form of embodied subjectivity that is manifested through conscious and unconscious strategies of appearance management (i.e. performances that occur in daily face-to-face interactions, which Goffman analyses as theatrical).[1] In my own work, self-presentation emerges as the continuous manifestation of the UN, a complex international organisation, through the images that it reveals to its viewers.

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[1] This said, I should note my disagreement with Goffman's idea that the private sphere (where individuals are described as able to letting go of their societal roles) is more authentic – and, more importantly, with such a binary distinction. Rather, as will be evident in my discussion of the idea of surface, I see the public aspect of an organisation as crucial to its identity.

The shift of attention from the communication strategy of the UN to its modes of presentation as a visual entity also highlights another fundamental issue: that of the unintended consequences of the visual devices used by the UN. The literature on aesthetics and the politics of representation most often discusses the difficulty of representing violence and horror; rather, my material demonstrates that the attempt to represent ideas such as peace, universality and inclusivity also remains unrealised. This is one of the reasons why my analysis considers not only individual images but also the visual networks that they originate: the network of crisscrossing visual references allows the UN to navigate the communicative shortcomings of the individual images with respect to such elusive ideas. Furthermore, considering the UN as a complex, networked visual entity takes into account the ongoing or recurrent nature of the UN's self-presentation – namely, the fact that it appears to its viewers throughout their lives, in multiple temporal as well as spatial settings.

Given these complexities, in order to analyse and illuminate the material as effectively as possible, my research is organised around two central concerns. First, and most importantly, I analyse the visual rhetoric of the UN. In a context of global competition for visibility (which often supports the fundraising efforts of international organisations), the UN must communicate its values, mission and work in a way that is persuasive. However, the research also considers the nature of the imputed spectatorship that is sustained by the network that is created by those images (i.e. whose visual rhetoric I analyse in the first place). This issue is particularly important in light of the absence of mechanisms of democratic legitimacy and accountability (such as elections) through which the viewers could – at least partially – shape the institutional and programmatic direction of the UN.

b) Motivation: Branding as Critique

Before moving on to discuss the relevance of the United Nations as a case study, it is important to make explicit the motivation, i.e. the questions and disagreements that led me to this project. The thesis also emerges from my academic background in sociology and political science and subsequent work experience in the fields of advertising and marketing at a contemporary art institution (Casco – Office for Art, Design and Theory) in 2009. During this

period, I collaborated with the Dutch graphic design studio Metahaven (Daniel van der Velden and Vinca Kruk) as a researcher and co-producer of 'Stadtstaat – A Scenario for Merging Cities', an exhibition that took place in 2009 and 2010 in Stuttgart (Germany) and Utrecht (The Netherlands). The exhibition imagined the administrative merging of both cities, and the graphic elements that would be produced as a result of it, as a way to engage critically with regional and city branding.

The crucial influence of Metahaven's work in providing inspiration to this thesis justifies a close engagement with some of their artworks. Metahaven use branding as a form of speculative critique, hence distinguishing themselves from traditional approaches to branding – a method that has informed my own approach to thinking about the UN as a brand, even if the UN itself tends not to do so (as I will discuss later). Metahaven's research also emphasises the increasing use of marketing and branding by nations. In 2008, for instance, they were invited by the Estonian government to reconsider the country's brand (Metahaven, 2008), following the country's accession to the European Union in 2004. With their graphic design research projects, the studio challenges the interpretation of nation branding, and other such forms of branding, as simple illustrations of 'soft power' at work (Metahaven, 2008 and 2010). The term was defined by the American political theorist Joseph Nye in *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (2004) as the ability of foreign leaders and national brands to attract the diplomatic support of other nation states without using force, thereby accompanying 'hard power', i.e. the use of military and economic power by nations as a form of coercion. However, and despite the extensive number of publications that engage with these terms, as the cultural policy scholar Melissa Nisbett demonstrates in 'Who Holds the Power in Soft Power?' (2016), they remain highly ambiguous.

Instead, Metahaven argue in 'Brand States: Postmodern Power, Democratic Pluralism and Design' that the surge in such forms of branding also has to be understood as resulting from 'network power' (2008). In other words, they argue that the very similar branding strategies employed by nations and other organisations (from the European Union to WikiLeaks, with whom the studio collaborated between 2010 and 2013), demonstrate the existence of a form of structural coercion that influences the types of images that are disseminated by traditional media

circuits, i.e. a systemic tendency within the contemporary image world (see figures 9, 10 and 11). Unlike 'hard power', 'network power' stresses that their competition for visibility is what motivates nations and organisations to brand themselves. In this view, the need for countries or organisations to do so is seen as more significant than the ways in which they do it. Specifically, in their book *Uncorporate Identity* (2010), Metahaven argue that 'network power' operates as a structural force that standardises visual identities and visibility and thus limits the alternatives that are available to individual actors.
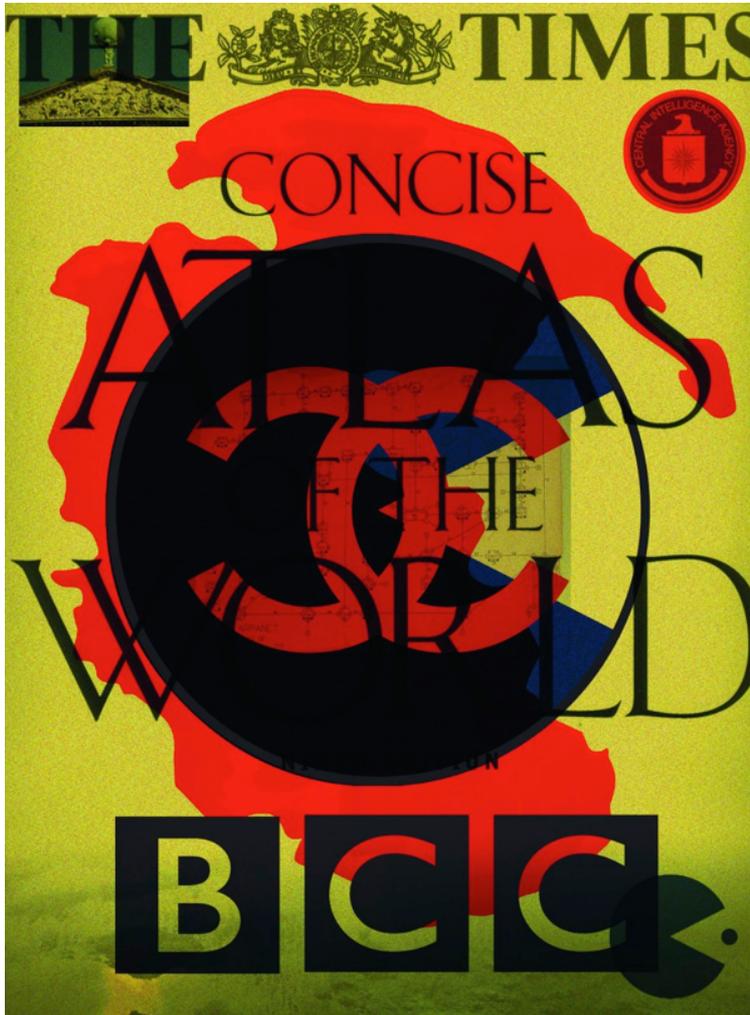
Figure 8 – Metahaven, *CC/BCC* (2006).

Figure 9 – Metahaven, *Affiche frontière* [Europe that protects from what?] (2008).

The work *CC/BCC* (figure 8) is composed of a combination of easily recognisable logos and images, whose references range from the BCC, Chanel, the CIA, a detail of the Dutch Royal Palace and a map referring to ARPANET, an operational network that was a progenitor to what would later become the Internet. It was included in the newspaper *The Creativity*, produced by Sandberg Institute, the Institute of Network Cultures (Hogeschool van Amsterdam) and the Centre for Media Research (University of Ulster) and published in 2006. Several theorists, graphic designers and artists were asked to contribute to the publication with alternative 'mapping documents' of the creative industries. As the media theorist Ned Rossiter explains in his general introduction to the issue,

> There's another factor motivating these designs […], a curiosity with the way the imposed presence of a common design element – in this case, the sign of 'creative industries' – renders a variation of 'the political' in the design process (Rossiter, 2006, p. 1).

The sign that Rossiter refers to here is that of the copyright symbol, which Metahaven transformed in order to reference Chanel's logo. The association of seemingly different references by Metahaven points to the studio's interest in brands, be it commercial or political, as illustrating a tendency toward increasing global uniformisation – which demonstrates network power at work.

Metahaven's interest in uniformisation was continued, albeit in a slightly modified way, in *Affiche frontière*, 2008 [Europe [that] protects from what?] (figure 9). The distribution of the poster suggests an inexorable centripetal force. Additionally, it is a particularly layered, and hence difficult visual object. The poster was one of several produced for an exhibition with the same title at the CACP Museum of Contemporary Art in Bordeaux (France) in 2008. Interestingly, the studio decided to use billboard posters as their medium. The ten posters were placed around the periphery of the city centre and resulted from the appropriation of symbols and colours used in previous CACP communication strategies, creating a visual language characterised by the tension between simplicity and incomprehensibility. With this project,

Metahaven's aim was to reflect upon the power relations between European centres and their peripheries.

Although I am still fascinated by Metahaven's work, I gradually started questioning the studio's position. In particular, I began to find their proposal (that is, that a combination of co-optation and coercion fully explains the way in which the visual devices used in contemporary organisational branding work) to be insufficient for understanding the success of such images. My broader argument regarding visual rhetoric posits that, rather than illustrating forms of power that are exterior to them (which would point to an understanding of the visual as a surface covering underlying relations of power, as illustrated by the three artworks above), the ways in which images *articulate* or *sustain* power is a subject worthy of analysis per se. This idea is central to the main concern of this research project: the visual rhetoric at play in the modes of self-presentation of the UN. Additionally, I believe that the strength of the images is also dependent on the viewers' enactment of their agency – an idea that the studio is yet to systematically address.

The idea of considering the modes of visual self-presentation of an international political organisation as a possible topic for the dissertation followed from a discovery that I made while writing my research proposal: although international corporations and supranational institutions such as the UN share similar forms of presence in the daily lives of media consumers (both being global entities, ubiquitous and yet elusive), the particular rhetorical consequences of the use of images by such organisations have not yet been systematically addressed. Additionally, the choice of the UN as a case study follows from the complexity of the visual material that constitutes its visual self-presentation, reflecting, among other issues, its elaborate organisational and legal background. Indeed, contrary to the visual modes of self-presentation of other international political and economic organisations (such as the European Union and the League of Arab States), that of the UN is characterised by a discourse of universal representation – the very value that is used to justify the organisation's centrality as an actor in the field of international law. However, although the UN was created as a supposedly universal forum for the equal negotiation of international disputes, it is widely recognised that the

narrative with which it justifies its existence does not always correspond to the reality of its practices.

For example, among the fifteen members that constitute the Security Council (the organ whose responsibilities include the establishment of peacekeeping operations and international sanctions as well as the authorisation of military actions), the five permanent members (all of whom hold the power to veto the resolutions presented by the other ten members that compose it) are the People's Republic of China, France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States, which correspond roughly to what were the most important geopolitical forces at the end of the Second World War. This said, despite some recent events in its history which have been strongly criticised (such as the Security Council's inability to achieve consensus about military action and the resulting failure to prevent the 1994 Rwandan genocide from taking place), the UN remains a highly respected political organisation among global citizens – as is demonstrated by a global survey conducted in early 2013 by the Pew Research Center in 39 countries. Among the 37,653 respondents, a median of 58% expressed a favourable view of the UN (Pew Research Center, 2013).[2] This tension – between indictment and respect – establishes the UN as an interesting focus for a study of the reproduction of political narratives that are perceived as relevant despite their limited or problematic enactment.

c) The United Nations: Making Itself Public – Or The Rhetorical Context

It is necessary at this point, and first, to give some background regarding the origins of the UN in order to shed light on the rationale and values that continue to underpin the organisation. Second, I discuss the communication challenges that emerge out of the complexity of the UN and briefly discuss their wider institutional relevance. Third and finally, I briefly discuss the relation between the modes of presentation of the UN and the notion of the brand. Altogether, this analysis should be understood as providing the *rhetorical context* of the modes of presentation that I discuss in Part Two.

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[2]   See 'UN Retains Strong Global Image. Robust Support in America, Especially among Democrats. Survey Report', Pew Research Center, 2013.

<u>c.1. The Origins of the UN</u>

Before discussing the changes to the UN that have led to its current version, it is important to briefly summarise the historical events surrounding its creation. The United Nations is an international organisation. It replaced the League of Nations, established in 1919 under the Treaty of Versailles, whose failure to achieve peace led to the ceasing of its activities on 18 April 1946. On 12 June 1941, the Inter-Allied declaration was signed in London stating the aim of the signatories 'to work together, with other free peoples, both in war and in peace' (UN, no date, b).

This document was followed by the signing of the Atlantic Charter on 14 August 1941, when President Franklin Roosevelt of the United States and Prime Minister Winston Churchill of the United Kingdom defined a set of principles for international collaboration in maintaining peace. On 1 January 1942, representatives of 26 allied nations fighting against the axis powers signed the 'Declaration by United Nations'[3], affirming their support for the Atlantic Charter. On 30 October 1943, the governments of the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, the United States and China signed in Moscow a declaration demanding the establishment of an international organisation that would maintain peace and security internationally – a goal reaffirmed in a meeting of the leaders of the United States, the USSR and the United Kingdom in Teheran on 1 December 1943.

These are now referred to as the Moscow and Teheran Conferences, and were followed by a conference with two phases of meetings (running from 21 August to 7 October 1944 at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington) at which the United States, the United Kingdom, China and the USSR agreed on the goals and modus operandi of the organisation. These meetings were followed by the Yalta Conference, which took place on 11 February 1945 during which

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[3]   'The original twenty-six signatories were: the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, China, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Poland, Union of South Africa and Yugoslavia. Subsequent adherents to the Declaration [i.e. and not to to the Charter that established the United Nations, which was only signed in 1945] were (in order of signature): Mexico, Philippines, Ethiopia, Iraq, Brazil, Bolivia, Iran, Colombia, Liberia, France, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, Paraguay, Venezuela, Uruguay, Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Lebanon' (UN, no date c).

President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill and Premier Joseph Stalin affirmed publicly their intention to establish an organisation that would maintain peace and security (UN, no date c).[4]

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[4]   To be clear about my citation method, this refers to one of several official online UN references that aren't dated.

Date/Period	Organisation/Declaration/Conference
10 January 1920 – 18 April 1946	League of Nations
12 June 1941	Inter-Allied Declaration
14 August 1941	Atlantic Charter
1 January 1942	The Declaration by United Nations
30 October 1943	Moscow Declaration
21 August – 7 October 1944	Dumbarton Oaks Conference
11 February 1945	Yalta Conference
25 April – 26 June 1945	United Nations Conference on International Organization
16 October 1945	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
4 November 1946	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
4 April 1947	International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
6 March 1948	International Maritime Organization (IMO)
7 April 1948	World Health Organization (WHO)
14 July 1967	World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)
13 June 1976	International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

Figure 10 – Simplified Chronology of the History of the UN (UN, no date a).[5]

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[5] Due to space constraints, this table only includes some of the better-known specialised agencies established after the creation of the UN. Its purpose is to demonstrate my argument regarding the increasing organisational complexity of the UN. In light of this, I should also mention that the UN has six principal bodies. Apart from the General Assembly (its deliberative assembly) and the Security Council (which focuses on issues pertaining to peace and security), it also includes the Economic and Social Council (which promotes economic and social development internationally), the Secretariat (which, broadly speaking, manages the UN), the International Court of Justice (its judicial organ), and the Trusteeship Council (which suspending its operations in 1994).

The term United Nations was, as described in the UN's website,

> coined by United States President Franklin D. Roosevelt [and] first used in the Declaration by United Nations of 1 January 1942, during the Second World War, when representatives of 26 nations pledged their Governments to continue fighting together against the Axis Powers[6]. […] In 1899, the International Peace Conference was held in The Hague to elaborate instruments for settling crises peacefully, preventing wars and codifying rules of warfare. […] The forerunner of the United Nations was the League of Nations, an organization conceived in similar circumstances during the first [sic] World War, and established in 1919 under the Treaty of Versailles "to promote international cooperation and to achieve peace and security." […] The League of Nations ceased its activities after failing to prevent the Second World War (UN, no date b).

Particularly with regard to the creation of the UN, which took place a few years later, it is affirmed that

> In 1945, representatives of 50 countries met in San Francisco at the United Nations Conference on International Organization to draw up the United Nations Charter. Those delegates deliberated on the basis of proposals worked out by the representatives of China, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom and the United States at Dumbarton Oaks, United States in August–October 1944. The Charter was signed on 26 June 1945 by the representatives of the 50 countries. Poland, which was not represented at the Conference, signed it later and became one of the original 51 Member States. The United Nations officially came into existence on 24 October 1945, when the Charter had been ratified by China, France, the Soviet

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[6] This expression refers to Germany, Japan and Italy, which were supported by a small group of other states.

Union, the United Kingdom, the United States and by a majority of other signatories (UN, no date b).[7]

These excerpts introduce the geopolitical context that surrounded the creation of the UN. As noted in the first quote, the failure of the League of Nations (which had been conceived in similar circumstances during World War I) to prevent the Second World War and the vast human damage that the latter caused led to the necessity of founding a new international organisation focused on both the maintenance of international peace and the promotion of international cooperation regarding economic, social and humanitarian issues whose resolution is beyond the limits of the nation-state. These goals are reflected in the first article of its founding Charter (signed on 26 June 1945[8]), which further defines the four purposes of the UN:

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[7]   The Charter was preceded by several documents, beginning with the Declaration of St. James' Palace (also known as the Inter-Allied Declaration) signed in London on 12 June 1941 by 'representatives of Great Britain, Canada, Australia, new Zealand and the Union of South Africa as well as the exiled governments of Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Yugoslavia and of General de Gaulle in France' (UN, no date d) regarding a unified Anglo-American war strategy against Germany and Japan and the postwar future.

This declaration was followed by the Atlantic Charter, signed on 14 August 1941 between President Franklin Delano Roosevelt of the United States and Prime Minister Winston Churchill of the United Kingdom. This joint declaration identified several principles for international collaboration aimed at the maintenance of global security and peace (UN, no date c).

The Declaration by the United Nations signed on 1 January 1942 followed Pearl Harbor's attack on 7 December 1941. It was signed in Washington by representatives of 26 states (and, on the next day, by the governments of 22 additional nations). This was also the first document where the phrase 'United Nations' was used. This term was coined by president Roosevelt and aimed to reflect the unity of the signatory nations. The original twenty-six signatories represented the United States of America, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, China, Australia, Belgium, Canada, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Luxembourg, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Poland, Union of South Africa and Yugoslavia (UN, no date e).

This declaration was followed by the Moscow Declaration signed on 30 October 1943, signed by the American, British and Soviet foreign ministers as well as an ambassador from China, which recognised 'the necessity of establishing at the earliest practicable date a general international organization based on the principle of sovereign equality of all peace-loving States, and open to membership by all such States, large and small, for the maintenance of international peace and security' (UN, no page f).

This declaration was then followed by the Dumbarton Oaks Conference, as mentioned earlier. Finally, the Yalta Conference took place in February 1945 and was attended by Prime Minister Churchill, President Roosevelt, and Marshal Stalin.

[8]   By the original 50 members, Poland signing later: Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Liberia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippine Republic, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of South Africa, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia.

1. To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace […];

2. To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples […];

3. To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms […]; and

4. To be a centre for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends (UN, 1945).

The United States not only had an especially important role in the establishment of the UN but also retains a more important role than other nations in its functioning (not least by sitting on the Security Council, which I will discuss in detail in Chapter 3, 'The Publicness of the General Assembly and the Security Council – Performing Inclusion'). This dominance of the USA introduces a clear hierarchy in what should be a flat power structure with the exception of the veto power of the permanent Security Council members, hence directly opposing some of the central notions that structure the UN charter: equal rights and self-determination (or sovereignty) (point 2) and international cooperation (points 3 and 4). These ideas reflect the political assumptions and historical models behind the modus operandi of the organisation, whose main principles will be discussed in Chapters 2 ('The UN Emblem/Flag – Performing the Space and the Time of the UN') and 3).

The existence of an informal hierarchy within an international organisation that was founded on the basis of formal equality among the former is one of the many reasons that explain the repeated demands for institutional reform of the UN. Among the many specialists who participate in this discussion, two are particularly well known: Richard Gowan, associate fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations and Simon Adams, executive director of the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect. Both experts have proposed reforming the Security Council by limiting the use of the veto by the permanent members if there its evidence to suggest an ongoing mass atrocity (Gowan and Gordon, 2014; Adams, 2016); both also stress,

in different ways, to quote Adams, the need to 'achieve an equilibrium shift away from crisis response and towards conflict prevention' (2016, p. 331). Additionally, outside specialist circles, the UN is repeatedly criticised as too expensive and as providing insufficient results, particularly by conservatives. This includes Nikki Haley, chosen by President Donald Trump to become the new American ambassador to the UN (Alexander, 2017). Such a criticism is particularly important considering the disproportionate weight of the United States in the UN's budget.[9] In this context, the UN is under increased pressure to justify its existence. I will argue throughout the thesis that the organisation's modes of visual presentation make the case that the organisation is necessary and worthy of support.

Before continuing, I should also clarify the position of the UN in relation to the distinction between international and supranational organisations. Where the former agreements are established between two or more nations, the latter refers to dimensions or organisations whose power or complexity transcend the level of national governments or boundaries. That is, international organisations are those with an international membership or scope (such as the International Committee of the Red Cross or the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development), while supranational organisations are a specific form of international organisations or unions in which power has been delegated to a common authority by the governments of its member states, as in the case of the European Union. Crucially, the UN has elements of both: while its organs can make decisions that are binding on all of its members, their enactment is often dependent on the compliance of the state in question – a key tension, as we will see in Part Two.

c.2. Communication Challenges and Institutional Relevance

Although I should reiterate that I am interested in the modes of self-presentation of the organisation rather than in its communication strategy, I do acknowledge that the latter necessarily influences the former. To give one example of this, the figure of the Goodwill

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[9]   In 2013, the top contributors to the UN budget were: United States, 22.000% of the UN budget; Japan, 10.833%: Germany, 7.141%; France, 5.593%; United Kingdom, 5.179%; China, 5.148% and Italy, 4.448%. All the other members contributed to less than 3% of the budget of the UN. See UN General Assembly (2013).

Ambassador, which my data gathering revealed to be a key mode of presentation of the UN (see Chapter 4 'The Goodwill Ambassador as a Complex Mediator – Performing Proximity'), was partly created in order to solve a communication problem, i.e. to increase the visibility of the work of the UN on the ground.

This and other similar communication challenges reflect the organisational complexity of the UN – which, as Figure 10 demonstrates, has increased dramatically since its inception in 1945. This has led to a set of overlapping organisational and communication challenges, by which I am here referring to the difficulty of: managing the increase of information that was created by the expansion of the UN; managing the emergence of the occasionally competing interests of the new agencies and other organs within it (including for the attention of the viewers); developing new messages (associated with each new agency, for example, while also being compatible with the general mission of the UN).

The UN has attempted to respond to both challenges. On the one hand, several discussions have taken place within the UN regarding the need for management reform, particularly since the end of the 1990s.[10] Additionally, the acknowledgement of the necessity of institutional reform led to the establishment of the United Nations Development Group, a consortium created by the Secretary-General in 1997 and uniting 32 UN funds, programmes, agencies, departments and offices that aimed at improving the effectiveness of its development activities (concerned with health, education and others) at the national level. Furthermore, the report resulting from the 2006 High Level Panel on System-Wide Coherence organised by the UN Secretary-General highlighted 'that the UN system is not currently equipped to respond to the challenge posed by the Millennium Development Goals, due to fragmentation, duplication, high overhead costs, and lack of focus' (UN, 2006).

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[10]   Soon after taking office in 1997, Kofi Annan (the former Secretary-General of the United Nations, 1997–2006) released two reports on management reform. The report 'Management and Organisational Measures' (A/51/829) was released in March 1997 and suggested new management mechanisms as well as the grouping the UN's activities around four core axes (UN, 1997a). A second report was released in July 1997, 'Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform' (A/51/950) and proposed, among other things, the introduction of strategic management that increased unity of purpose, the consolidation of the UN at the national level and a strengthening of the relations between the UN, civil society and the private sector (UN, 1997b). Since then, the reform of the UN has been regularly discussed among the members of the organisation.

On the other hand – and this interests me particularly – the new Office of Information and Communications Technology (OICT) was established in 2009 with the aim of consolidating the organisation's information and communication technology infrastructure for increased effectiveness and efficiency. The OICT's strategy included a shift of focus from print to the online distribution of UN documents and publications.[11] This change was framed by the establishment of the United Nations Information and Communication Technologies Task Force by Kofi Annan, which met regularly from November 2001 to November 2005 and aimed to provide policy advice to governments, foundations, the private sector and other regarding the ways in which information technology might foster peace and development. This led to the publication of several texts proposing the redefinition of the existing resources for information and communication technologies, and arguing for an increased focus on the digital.[12] However, despite the establishment of the OICT (and, more broadly, of the existence of the Department of Public Information, henceforth referred to as DPI), the UN nonetheless still lacks a systematic communications strategy.

The problem has recently been reiterated by two scholarly analyses of the communication strategy of the UN, published in two different editions of *The Global Public Relations Handbook: Theory, Research and Practice* (2003 and 2009): one by Vincent Defourny, communications scholar and current director of UNESCO in Brazil[13] and another by Seth Center, an historian in the American Department of State. Defourny discusses the particular case of the public information strategy of UNESCO in 'Public Information in the UNESCO: Toward a Strategic Role' (2003) and notes that the initial adoption of an official emblem was followed by an increasingly bureaucratic structure associated with the UN's growth in the 1950s and

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[11]   The OICT is an independent office of the Secretariat that reports directly to the UN Secretary-General. It is headed by a Chief Information Technology Officer and supported by two units: staff functions, which plan and coordinate activities that affect all ICT units in the Secretariat, and line-function units, which perform developmental and operational ICT activities. The Information Technology Services Division was fully integrated into this Office in February 2009 (UNTERM, 2013).

[12]   See, for example, UN Women Watch (2002), 'Gender Issues in ICT Policy in Developing Countries: An Overview'.

[13]   The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, founded in 1945.

1960s.[14] More recently, a series of consultations led to the approval in 2001 of a plan aimed at organising UNESCO's communication strategy into several strands, including publishing, monthly periodicals, and Internet. Nonetheless, Defourny proposes a wider reorganisation of the communication strategy of UNESCO according to

> three organisational driving forces: (1) the strategic axis with the guiding principle of UNESCO's mandate (peace in the minds of men); (2) the action-oriented axis leading to the fulfilment of all the expected results of its program […]; and (3) the relationship axis looking to the achievement of international solidity (the real United Nations) (Defourny, 2003, p. 883).

Interestingly, one could argue that these principles are at work in the modes of self-presentation of the UN. As we will see, the flag reminds the viewer that international peace is the guiding principle of UN (first axis – Chapter 2); the figure of the Goodwill Ambassador communicates the action of the UN on the ground (second axis – Chapter 4); finally, the publicness of the Security Council and the General Assembly contributes to transforming the individual viewers of the UN into a global public (third axis – Chapter 3).

This said, and to add to the international division and complexity that characterises the UN and that will become increasingly evident throughout the thesis, in 'The United Nations Department of Public Information: Intractable Dilemmas and Fundamental Contradictions' (2009), Center analyses what he views as the contradictory aims served by the DPI, which must respect the UN's impartiality vis-à-vis its member states while also advocating the UN's mission (building and sustaining international peace).

> While the UN General Assembly is infamous as a forum for member states' propaganda, the United Nations bureaucracy maintains, at least in principle, an

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[14]   Indeed, following Stalin's death in 1953 and the diminishing tension between the two Blocs, the working conditions at the UN improved. In 1955, 16 new member states joined. It was also in the mid-1950s that the UN developed the instrument referred to as Peacekeeping Missions (first deployed during the Suez Crisis in 1956), which is not present in its founding Charter. Finally, as a result of the process of decolonisation, 50 new members joined between 1955 and 1962.

ethos of impartiality in global affairs, a culture of deference to its member states, and an adherence to the principle of state sovereignty. This situation has produced intractable dilemmas in the formulation and execution of UN information policy (2009, pp. 886-887).

However, Centre acknowledges that the DPI was recently reorganised and suggests that this was related to such a tension.

Beginning in 2002, [it was] designed to ensure the successful transition away from passive information to a "more strategic approach" to communications that focused on establishing clear goals, identifying target audiences, and providing better guidance for other UN agencies and redesseminators (2009, p. 888).

However, Center proposes that despite the recent attempted reorganisation of the public relations of the UN, its mission and institutional nature make it impossible to design a fully unified communications strategy – hence opposing Defourny's comments. He illustrates this argument with a close analysis of the history of the DPI. In particular, he argues that, during the Cold War[15], and with regard to controversial issues such as assigning responsibility for the Korean War,

too much "objective" information was sure to alienate one of the two superpowers and lead to charges of partiality […]. The DPI consistently strove to avoid singling out individual states for approbation in its treatment of global issues because of the implicit challenge to state sovereignty and the exigency of impartiality (2009, p. 891).

This said – and this is even more relevant for my own analyses to follow – Center argues that this has led to

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[15]   It is worth reiterating here that both the USA and the Soviet Union were founding members of the UN.

an uneasy détente in the historical conflict over the means and ends of UN information policy. The DPI and wider UN information efforts embrace activism in the conduct of information policy, but abjure politicization in the content (2009, p. 896).

The author is here referring, for example, to the DPI's openness to public relations (which includes celebrity ambassadors) and to the distribution of documents (such as independent reports) that support the UN as an international organisation. Additionally, Centre notes that

the DPFs [sic] thematic priorities have moved away from irresolvable and divisive political issues and toward an emphasis on issues like climate change, poverty, crime, and gender equality that enjoy widespread support in the industrialised and developing worlds alike (2009, p. 898).

I fundamentally disagree with Center's understanding of the political, which the author reduces to the possibility that the UN may take the side of a nation state against another. Rather, I will argue that the modes of presentation of the UN make an argument regarding the relevance of the UN – which is also political. This argument is strongly aligned with the analysis of Abiodun Williams, former director of the Strategic Planning Unit (SPU) in the Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General from 2001 to 2007. In 'Strategic Planning in the Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General', Williams discusses the role of strategic planning in the UN system and the challenging framework in which it takes place. The SPU, he writes,

is a formal means by which the organization communicates its goals, priorities, and mission to external stakeholders; and it informs the decisions and actions that shape an institution […]. One of the SPU's goals was to ensure that the Secretary-General's speeches and other communications, wherever appropriate, served as instruments of policy development and articulation (Williams, 2010, p. 435-437).

The SPU was also key in UN reform, one of the main results of Annan's tenure, playing an important role in policy-making, lobbying and dealmaking with heads of state and government

and, finally, in their implementation. However, and in what is important to my argument, the SPU also developed a series of colloquia and public lectures for the staff of the UN and NGOs affiliated with it, which Annan believed 'would contribute to the ongoing effort within the UN to create a common framework of understanding […] to ameliorate the cultural and political differences that can make dialogue and mutual understanding difficult' (Williams, 2010, p. 443). The need for these lectures is symptomatic of what Williams identifies as the internal division of the UN, which makes its different units often unable to work according to common long-term priorities:

> the tendency of the various components of the system to promote their own agendas made it difficult to develop a coherent organization-wide approach to strategic planning (Williams, 2010, p. 447).

I will argue that the modes of presentation of the UN help it navigate, albeit unwittingly, the organisation's internal divisions.

c.3. Brand UN?

Today, for the most part, the department responsible for the dissemination of information about the United Nations is the DPI. Established in 1946 by Resolution 13 (1) from the General Assembly, its aim is to communicate the work of the UN and to engage multiple audiences. Its website lists among its responsibilities 'the coordination and management of […] the global UN Secretariat intranet'; the development of 'website and knowledge solutions'; and the provision of 'visual branding for UN global communication campaigns' (UN Department of Public Information, no date). To these ends, the department is composed of three divisions: Strategic Communications (which manages more than 60 Information Centres throughout the world); the News and Media division (which produces and publishes information); and an Outreach division (which develops dialogue with non-political partners in civil society, academia and the entertainment industry).

The UN is responsible for its main communication (such as its website, the publicness of the Security Council and the General Assembly and the presentation of the work of the Goodwill Ambassadors). However, the UN commissions a significant part of its secondary communication to external providers.[16] In particular, it outsources the creation of both specific communication elements and the general creativity associated with particular events. Although I could not find any UN generated literature that addresses this specific issue directly, the evidence allows me to deduce that the decision to commission such work is recent – a trend that might be explained by an increasing competition for visibility in the international media, which has led to the multiplication of public events. For example, the Danish brand and design agency Kontrapunkt (which has worked for Microsoft, Carlsberg and Coca-Cola) displays in its portfolio the branding of the tenth anniversary of the UN Global Compact (2000), a platform that attempts to bring together the UN agencies, companies and civil society in order to drive sustainability and good corporate citizenship (for other examples, see Shared Purpose, 2011; United Nations Department of Public Image, no date and The Complex, 2012).

In this context, I should reiterate that the budget of the UN is dependent on the funding of a specific set of countries (mostly the United States) and on the contributions of individuals around the world for specific campaigns, such as emergency relief work. As a result of this, a tension emerges between, on the one hand, the intention to represent and to address all global viewers as equal and as part of a global community and, on the other hand, the creation of media events and campaigns which are very often directed at the wealthiest populations who may contribute to such fundraising campaigns – as is the case of the examples that I mentioned above. As will come clear in Part Two, this tension is also reflected in the modes of self-presentation of the UN.

Interestingly, despite the existence of such internal and commissioned work, the UN officially rejects the alignment of its communication strategy with the concepts and modalities of a brand – indeed, the few references to a UN brand appear in contexts not directly or reflexively concerned with the organisation's communications strategy. For example, on the careers website

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[16] I should note, however, that the Graphic Design Unit of the United Nations New York offices (integrated in the Department of Public Information) is occasionally responsible for the creation of specific elements of said secondary communication.

of the UN, an agency staff member discusses her experience of working at the UN and comments that 'the United Nations "brand" carries trust and credibility, and with that comes a lot of responsibility in your own career to serve a better cause' (UN Careers, no date). This conclusion, regarding the occasional use of branding, is vindicated by a keyword search for 'brand' on the UN website. Of the 1740 results achieved in a search in June 2012 there were almost no references to the UN's own brand. Among several references to global trade, however, was one important exception: a page titled 'Guidelines for Creating Websites at the UN', which lists the guidelines of 'the UN website branding', redesigned in 2008, and includes a reference to the 'use of the UN logo: The UN logo is the United Nations official branding and should appear in all web site banners' (UN, no date j).

This said, the UN's rejection of the term doesn't mean that there is no such thing as a brand UN. Rather, I believe that the rejection of this terminology is strategic. Indeed, this eschewing of the vocabulary of branding is by no means the norm in non-governmental and not-for-profit organisations outside of the UN: most charities, universities, political parties and non-commercial art spaces explicitly use the language of brands and branding in their internal and external communications – think of Goldsmiths, Oxfam, and the Labour Party as examples. This fact makes the absence of an overt reference to the term by the UN relevant in itself: as I have just suggested, the refusal of this vocabulary is most likely strategic, i.e. it aims to avoid the negative associations that are connoted with brands, such as the manipulation of individual desire and global asymmetrical relations (see Naomi Klein's *No Logo: No Space, No Choice, No Jobs*, 2000, for example). In fact, such a refusal is consistent with what Arning and Gordon (2006) refer to as increase in 'advertising avoidance' (p. 17) from the part of the viewers.

Additionally, most communication campaigns of the multiple UN agencies share some common visual elements (in most cases, parts of the UN emblem and its colour scheme – see Shared Purpose, 2011 and The Complex, 2012). Although the result does not always amount to a visually unified identity with graphic declinations of the same visual principles (the traditional definition of a brand), it is evidence that the UN can nonetheless be interpreted as similar to a family/umbrella brand (in which an overarching brand is used across multiple related products,

facilitating the introduction of new products or services through the evocation of a familiar brand[17]).

In the following chapter, I will also argue that some of the most recent branding scholarship (within which I identify Celia Lury and Liz Moor as key thinkers) provides an important framework for the analysis of my material. In particular, it reveals the gradual transformation and expansion of the brand from its original function: to highlight the origin of a product and hence guarantee quality. This joins the point made by the semiotician Laura Oswald (mentioned earlier), according to whom, today, 'brands are semiotic assets that contribute to profitability by distinguishing brands from simple commodities, differentiating them from competitors, and engaging consumers in the brand world' (2015, p. 2). Indeed, as Moor writes in *The Rise of Brands* (2007), their role has expanded particularly since the 1990s.

> Facilitated in part by highly standardized production practices […], brands became recognised as assets […], offering familiarity to consumers […]. This cultivation of more or less abstract values around brands relates to a second new function of branding […]. Brands now try to make use of consumers' emotional or affective associations with goods as ways of building brand equity (Moor, 2007, pp. 37–38).

This statement also joins Arning and Gordon's view – expressed in the aforementioned paper on the semiotics of sound (2006) – that, in a time when individuals increasingly attempt to avoid advertisements, branding content 'must be delivered through media channels signed to appeal to low level processing' (p. 17). This changing understanding of brands is one of the reasons why, as I will show in Part Two, if one wants to understand the modes of presentation of the UN, it is crucial to pay attention to their affective dimension and to the familiar tropes that they contain. That is, and before advancing, I want to clearly stress that I am proposing to expand the analysis of the brand UN so that it also includes its modes of presentation (i.e. the ways how it is

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[17]   'Under this approach, a corporate or umbrella brand name may be combined with more specific product-based names. For example, Toyota markets Corolla, Prius, and RAV4, among others each targeted to a different segment of consumers and each having unique associations, but all sharing an affiliation with Toyota to varying degrees. Many family brands begin as product brands, with the company then leveraging the equity in the product brand through line extensions. A good example is Coca-Cola, with extensions such as Coca-Cola Light, Classic, and Zero' (Tybout, A. and Calder, B. 2010, 138).

received by the viewers) – an approach that reflects the work of commercial semiotics and cultural analysis agencies. This is a principle that could be potentially applied to the analysis of the brands of other organisations.

That said, there are a set of fundamental differences that should be clear between commercial and non-commercial brands on the one hand, and national and supranational brands on the other. Although both commercial and non-commercial brands have as their main aim to identify a set of goods or services and to differentiate them from others with whom they compete, the values and beliefs of non-commercial brands are what lies at the core of the latter. National and supranational brands are also distinct: while national brands tend to reflect the geographical and cultural specificities of the country in question, supranational brands place an increased emphasis on their values and mission. In the case of the UN, as already noted, its mission is particularly challenging: to represent ideas as elusive as universality and international stability, among others. Additionally, the UN is unable to draw on national branding tropes, which traditionally refer to particular foci of interest of the expected viewers (geographical, cultural, historic…). This presents several difficulties to the UN – as I will demonstrate in Part Two.

d) Previous Research

Before continuing, it is important to reiterate part of the argument that I will be developing: the modes of visual self-presentation of the UN operate partially independently from the organisation's overt communication intentions. However, the relevance of this position can only be discerned with regard to the current state of play of the critical investigations of the UN on the one hand, and, on the other, the gaps that my research fills. This section focuses on these two issues. I will begin by mentioning the central and inter-related issues around which ongoing discussions of the UN as an entity tend to converge – namely, issues regarding sovereignty, international community and peace/international stability. I will then provide an overview of the central limitations that my research addresses.

The first central issue within ongoing discussions of the UN concerns the idea of state sovereignty (its authority to govern itself – but also, when joining a supranational organisation,

to relinquish part of its power to do so), particularly in view of the potentially naturalising consequences of the UN's identification of formal equality between states whose political, social and economic conditions differ radically. The values of the UN (such as universality, peace and deliberation among equals) are, as several critics have observed, highly problematic when related to the values asserted in the Charter. In particular, the concept of sovereignty continues to be hotly debated throughout the field of international law, and the terminology thus takes on a highly political character. For example, the International Relations scholar Robert Jackson argued in *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World* (1990) that Third World nations can be described as 'quasi-states' that are upheld by the formal acceptance of the international community rather than by their internal post-colonial characteristics. In this realpolitik framework, Jackson proposes to contrast such a 'negative sovereignty' (states unable to protect human rights or provide economic and social welfare) with the 'positive sovereignty' that emerged in Europe at the same time as the modern state. Although I must acknowledge that this thesis is problematic (in that the terminology of 'third-world' and 'quasi-state' potentially reifies the unequal power relations that it attempts to portray), it nonetheless allows me to stress the potentially naturalising consequences of the UN's identification of formal equality between its member states.

Nonetheless, this idea has been central in discussions of the UN since its origins. Indeed, by definition the UN's institutions must negotiate the tension between the sovereignty of the member states and the mandate of the UN (as discussed, for example, by David P. Forsythe, in *The UN Security Council and Human Rights: State Sovereignty and Human Dignity*, 2012). Among some, the UN Charter is even seen as aiming to enact 'the Kantian ideal of peace through law' (Koskenniemi, 2011, p 20). For example, the UN is discussed by Michael Doyle in 'Dialectics of a global constitution: The struggle over the UN Charter' (2012) as creating "a reservoir of 'political capital' for centralised legality and legitimacy-granting purposes" (2012, p. 617) that can be used when there is the political desire to move in that direction in specific domains. However, the notion of sovereignty is also central within discussions of the machinery of the organisation (to use the term employed in Sam Daws' and Natalie Samarasinghe's *Major Work on the United Nations,* 2014).

More interestingly, other discussions see the UN as redefining and potentially expanding state sovereignty. Indeed, foreign policy analyst Ann-Marie Slaughter states in 'Reform: Security, Solidarity, and Sovereignty: The Grand Themes of UN Reform' (2005), which analyses the report of the United Nations secretary-general's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change from the same year (entitled 'A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility') that the panel's conclusions lead to a different version of sovereignty than the one associated with the idea of 'responsibility to protect'. Rather, the report

> asserts that all signatories of the UN Charter accept a responsibility both to protect their own citizens and to meet their international obligations to their fellow nations. Failure to fulfil these responsibilities can legitimately subject them to sanction. In a word, membership in the United Nations is no longer a validation of sovereign status and a shield against unwanted meddling in a state's domestic jurisdiction. It is rather the right and capacity to participate in the United Nations itself (2005, p. 622).

In this changed understanding of UN membership, when a state decides to sign the UN Charter, its sovereignty is transformed in that it begins to also include 'the responsibility to respect the sovereignty of other states' (2005, p. 628). As the author herself acknowledges, this analysis is inspired by the view of conditional sovereignty proposed by Kal Raustiala (2003) as a response to changes in international trade and state relations. These are evident not only in the increasing attention towards issues of human rights (see 'The Question of Domestic Jurisdiction and the Evolution of United Nations Law of Human Rights', Abdulrahim P. Bijapur, 2010) but also regarding climate change, which requires the implementation of international agreements (see *Implementing Rio +20: ECOSOC's New Role and its Old Culture*, Harris Gleckman, 2013). I will continue this discussion in Part Two, where I will also discuss how the modes of visual self-presentation of the UN are positioned in relation to these transformations (particularly, in Chapters 2 and 3).

The second central discussion within the literature relates to the term international community. As is clear from Linklater's argument, there is a close relationship in international law

scholarship between the issue of sovereignty and the notion of international community.[18] For example, Bardo Fassbender (who specialises in the United Nations and the European Union) evaluates in *UN Security Council and the Right of Veto: A Constitutional Perspective* (1998) different proposals made by governments, NGOs and individuals scholars regarding institutional reform of the UN. Fassbender argues that whilst the UN Charter has a *de facto* constitutional quality, a constitutional reform is needed if the Charter is to be established as the *de jure* constitution of the international community. One proposal, addressing one of the most problematic aspects of the modus operandi of the UN, suggests a restructuring of the right to veto held by the permanent members of the Security Council (Fassbender, 1998, 177-191). Similar discussions have been developed within the UN since the early 1990s, particularly with regard to the increased use of international peacekeeping (UN, no date o). Although this is an original aim of the UN, the organisation faced a set of expectations in the mid-1990s which were beyond its capacity to deliver. Today, peacekeeping is increasingly deployed into 'uncertain operating environments and into volatile political contexts' (UN, no date m; UN, no date o).

The notion of international community is also associated with analyses of the functioning of the International Court of Justice (see, for example, Rosalyn Higgins, 2010, Departing Thoughts on the International Court of Justice; Richard J. Goldstone and Adam M. Smith, 2009, *International Judicial Institutions)*, of the role of the UN in defining and protecting human rights (see, for example, Juan Somavía, 1997, 'The Humanitarian Responsibilities of the United Nations Security Council: Ensuring the Security of the People'; Abdulrahim P. Vijapur, 2010, 'The Question of Domestic Jurisdiction and the Evolution of United Nations Law of Human Rights, UN Treaty Bodies and the Human Rights Council'), of the UN's role in diminishing poverty and fostering sustainable development (Margaret Anstee, 2012, 'Millennium Development Goals: Milestones on a Long Road; Sakiko Fukuda-Parr and David Hulme, 2011, 'International Norm Dynamics and the "End of Poverty": Understanding the Millennium Development Goals'), and of the legal framework and the relevance (or not) of the notion of "Responsibility to Protect" (also known as R2P) (see Gareth Evans, 2008, 'The Responsibility

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[18]   This field assumes the distinction between the current international legal order and classical international law, i.e. between a complex global order and the previous bilateral/inter-state system.

to Protect: An Idea Whose Time Has Come ... and Gone?' and Louise Arbour, 'The Relationship Between the ICC and the UN Security Council', 2014). The centrality of the notion of international community in UN discussions and studies is also evident in the fact that, in 'Human Protection and the 21st Century United Nations' (2011), Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon proposed to see the idea of an international community as underlying the ideas of the UN itself:

> The founders of the United Nations understood that sovereignty confers responsibility, a responsibility to ensure protection of human beings from want, from war, and from repression. When that responsibility is not discharged, the international community is morally obliged to consider its duty to act in the service of human protection (2011, no page).

However, some thinkers (particularly, realists) stress that the international community is merely an ideal that guides international relations and will never become a reality – an argument made, for example, by Hubert Védrine, former diplomatic adviser of French President Mitterrand (see *Le Monde Au Défi*, translatable to *Challenge to the World*, 2016), who also argues, paradoxically, that the centrality of state-centered concerns in international relations is one of the main challenges facing the world. In a similar direction, others discuss it as a western-centric principle that is insufficient to respond to emerging human rights challenges (Onkal, 2013).

One can find a middle ground between these competing views (that is, between those that see the international community as either a legal given that has emerged gradually or as a political ideal) in the idea of global governance, discussed by Thomas Weiss and Ramesh Thakur (2010) in *Global Governance and the UN: An Unfinished Journey* – an important work that allows us to see the UN as contributing to the global organisation of international security, development and human rights. Specifically, rather than analysing the UN as a system dedicated to the competition for particular interests (politics), they see it as one in which public goods are produced (governance). However, the authors also identify five key 'limits of global governance without global government' (xii) in terms of knowledge, norms, policy, institutions and

compliance. I will return to this discussion in Chapter 2 – 'The UN Flag – Performing the Space and the Time of the UN'.

The third central issue that is discussed at length within the literature is the idea of peace/ international stability. In the report 'An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-keeping', written by former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in 1992, the UN Secretary-General   affirms that while 'the concept of peace is easy to grasp; that of international security is more complex' (1992, no page). To understand and strengthen the latter, Boutros-Ghali argues that there is a clear relation between preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping, and what he refers to as post-conflict peace-building.

However, as with the case of the idea of an international community, Peace (and its absence) is often criticised as either insufficiently defined by the Charter or as a crucial failure of the UN. For example, the international law scholar Michael J. Glennon, in the article 'The Fog of Law: Self-defense, inherence, and incoherence in article 51[19] of the United Nations Charter', published in 2002 in the *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*, reminds the reader of the hundreds of conflicts fought between 1945 and 1999 by the members of the United Nations. This is why he concludes that

> the international system has come to subsist in a parallel universe of two systems, one de jure, the other de facto. The de jure system consists of illusory rules that would govern the use of force among states in a platonic world of forms, a world that does not exist. The de facto system consists of actual state practice in the real world, a world in which states weigh costs against benefits in regular disregard of the rules solemnly proclaimed in the all-but-ignored de jure system (2002, p. 540).

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[19]   The article states 'nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a Member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken measures necessary to maintain international peace and security. Measures taken by Members in the exercise of this right of self-defence shall be immediately reported to the Security Council and shall not in any way affect the authority and responsibility of the Security Council under the present Charter to take at any time such action as it deems necessary in order to maintain or restore international peace and security' (UN, 1945).

The success of the modes of presentation of the UN (combined with its internal divisions) must be seen in light of this conceptual instability and its legal consequences, both of which are behind most of the criticisms that are directed at the UN. However, I must note that the literature also makes clear that these challenges aren't exclusive to this organisation. For example, the scholar Norman Scott argues in 'Ambiguity versus Precision: the Changing Role of Terminology in Conference Diplomacy', published in *Language and Diplomacy* (2001), and based on an analysis of the multilateral trade negotiations that led to the establishment of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in 1994, that 'as conference diplomacy has steadily gained in importance, the terminology that it employs has evolved, sometimes reflecting the simultaneous pursuit of both precision and ambiguity' (2001, p. 153). That is, ambiguity is here seen not as something to be corrected, but as an aspect that is actively used by political actors. Highlighting the geopolitical framework of such a lack of conceptual clarity, Scott makes the argument that it is only 'on issues where developed countries are *demandeurs* (i.e. the petitioners) […] [that] they strive […] to extract precise concessions from vaguely or ambiguously formulated provisions' (2001, p. 159 [original emphasis]). However, the author also mentions the specific (and opposing) case of peacekeeping, 'with the significant difference that here ambiguity is seldom sought, since it could have serious operational consequences' (2001, p. 159).

Finally, it is important to mention the pervasiveness of the idea of peace and international stability in scholarly discussions of the UN. One finds it in discussions suggesting that profound diplomatic and system changes are required to maintain international peace (see, for example, Marrack Goulding, 'The Evolving Role of the United Nations in International Peace and Security', 1992; Charlotte Ku, 'When Can Nations Go to War? Politics and Change in the UN Security System', 2003) and in analyses of the relationship between peacekeeping and nation building (see, for example, James Dobbins, Seth G. Jones, Keith Crane, Andrew Rathmell, Brett Steele, Richard Teltschik and Anga Timilsina, 'The UN's Role in Nation-Building: From the Congo to Iraq', 2008; Kyle Beardsley, 'The UN at the Peacemaking-Peacebuilding Nexus', 2013).

This said, the term is rarely defined in a clear manner – even by scholars. This is evident, for example, in the recent *The Question of Peace in Modern Political Thought* (2015), edited by

Toivo Koivukoski and David Edward Tabachnick, which confirms that the theorisation of peace is mostly subsumed within that of war. The exception lies in Immanuel Kant, as Leah Bradshaw's essay 'Kant, Cosmopolitan Right, and the Prospects for Global Peace'' (2015) demonstrates. The author highlights the opposing set of assumptions present in, on the one hand, the Kantian belief in the equality of human beings and, on the other hand, Kant's exclusion of women and children from citizenship. As I will show in Part Two, the visual rhetoric of the modes of presentation of the UN not only reflects these tensions but also navigates them.

Before advancing, I should mention a relevant idea that also emerges in these discussion: that of the UN as a mediator between different parties (see Thant Myint-U, 'The UN as Conflict Mediator: First amongst Equals or the Last Resort?', 2016), which places the organisation in a different position from that of a mere representative of its member states. This view stresses the inherently political character of the role of the UN, as is noted by Courtney Smith in 'Building Peace through the Political Processes' (2004). The international relations scholar argues that the mechanisms and procedures of the UN (in which she includes the effects of participating in the UN's fora on the behaviour of its delegates) contribute to sustaining international peace. This argument is analogous to that made by the Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda in a op-ed piece for the NYTimes: although the International Criminal Court is an independent institution from the UN, it nonetheless

> can have a positive impact on peace and security: this is what the U.N. secretary general [sic], Ban Ki-moon, calls the "shadow of the Court" — its preventative role, and its capacity to diffuse potentially tense situations that could lead to violence by setting a clear line of accountability (2013, no page).

Part Two will reveal that focusing on the organisation's modes of self-presentation will reveal that such images are testament to the contradictions that I have identified in this section and, at the same time, highlight their role in negotiating these tensions.

<u>e) Gaps that my Research Fills</u>

Let us now consider the two central gaps filled by my research. The first pertains to the lack of scholarship focused on the visual forms of self-presentation of the UN or of organisations comparable to it.

I see three recent books as exemplary of most scholarly work dedicated to supranational or international organisations (in this case, regarding the European Union) in that they do not address issues of self-presentation but rather focus on its public communication. First, *Public Communication in the European Union: History, Perspectives and Challenges* (2010), edited by the communication and political scholars, respectively, Chiara Valentini and Giorgia Nesti is a collection of inquiries into the information and communication of the European Union, at the levels of policy and practice, that critically evaluates the communication of the EU in light of the theory of the public sphere). Second, *The Making of a European Public Sphere: Media Discourse and Political Contention* (2010), written by the politics and migration scholars Ruud Koopmans and Paul Statham considers the debate regarding European integration, taking place in the mass media, as an explanatory variable of the European Union's legitimacy problems. Finally, *Mapping the European Public Sphere: Institutions, Media and Civil Society* (2013), edited by the political scholars Cristiano Bee and Emanuela Bozzini, which examines three issues: the role of media in shaping the European debate, the promotion of institutional activities by public communication and the implications of processes of inclusion to and exclusion from the public sphere.

With regard to the UN, there are few analyses that could be seen as overlapping directly with my focus of enquiry, and those that do so (as I will discuss in the next pages), also fail to address the issue of self-presentation. In fact, most literature on the UN tends to (i) focus on its legal and institutional framework, (ii) consider its role in maintaining international stability and (iii) discuss the role of the UN in supporting (or not) competing models of development. The aforementioned *Major Work on the United Nations* (Daws and Samarasinghe, 2014) (a eight-volume set compiling what its editors see as the best international and cross-disciplinary articles on the UN) confirms this analysis. The selection includes essays and analyses on: the origins and evolution of the UN, its machinery, the roles and relationships that characterise it, proposals

for a UN for the current century, analyses of its role in times of conflict and crisis, the UN's history and current framework with regard to rights (human, cultural and others) and justice, the UN's action regarding the relationship between poverty and development, finally, its history and ongoing issues regarding the UN's role protecting the environment and sustainability. None of these texts refer to the role played by images in the communication of the UN.

This said, although there are no systematic studies of the modes of self-presentation of the UN, there are studies that mention some of the visual elements employed by the UN. For example, François Debrix argues in *Re-Envisioning Peacekeeping: The United Nations and the Mobilization of Ideology* (1999) that the representation of peacekeeping in the global media during the 1990s was mobilised to influence positively its global perception perception – a strategy that the author sees as contributing to an emerging form of global governance and to the global implementation of neoliberal policies, and hence as making virtually no difference to international affairs. Additionally, Reinhard Wesel analyses in *Symbolische Politik der Vereinten Nationen: Die "Weltkonferenzen" als Rituale* [*Symbolic Politics of the United Nations: The International "Conference" as a Ritual*] (2004) the international conferences that are regularly organised by the UN as having several political benefits, such as integrating both the participants and the viewers of such events into a symbolic community. I will return to Wesel's work in Chapter 3 ('The Publicness of the General Assembly and the Security Council – Performing Inclusion'). This said, there is a clear need for a broader analysis of how the visual modes of presentation of the UN relate to its self-positioning as a global political actor.

I propose to fill this gap by focusing on visual rhetoric. Rhetoric, a subfield of political science whose classic corpus includes, namely, the writings of Plato (see Cooper, J., 1997) and Aristotle (350 B.C.), is defined in the Merriam-Webster dictionary as, among others, 'the study of writing or speaking as a means of communication or persuasion' (no date). However, my thesis focuses on the persuasive consequences of images. And, indeed, one can find several studies of forms of visual rhetoric that have been published since the 1990s, particularly in association with advertising – see, for example, the article 'Images in Advertising: The Need for a Theory of Visual Rhetoric', written by Linda M. Scott and published in *The Journal of Consumer Research* in 1994, in which she argues that the images used in advertising should be understood

to be framed by cultural, emotional and cognitive processes, and not as automatically processed by the viewer. This approach leads Scott to differentiate herself from representationalist theories (which evaluate images vis-à-vis their semblance to real objects), an approach that she finds limiting:

> Critics frequently chastise advertising images for distorting or misrepresenting things as they are. […] Pictures, like words, are often being used in ads to pose arguments, raise questions, create fictions […] and are not intended (or read) as faithful copies of reality in the first place. In those instances, the very purpose of the genre, which is not to represent but to persuade, is pushed aside (1994, p. 260).

My argument, which views the modes of self-presentation of the UN as performative, also sees these two functions (representation and persuasion) not as opposed but as overlapped (see Chapter 2, for example). To be clear, while this analysis is compatible with most understandings of visual rhetoric, what distinguishes my work is the central role that the performative plays in my argument. To give an example, the rhetorician Cara Finnegan has recently started studying visual forms of political presentation. In this context, her study of the official photographs used by the White House to represent the work of President Obama argues that such images demythologise Obama, pointing instead to the president's human side (see the essay 'Picturing Presidents: Visual Politics Inside the Obama White House', 2014). However, Finnegan doesn't consider the active role that is paid by the photographs in sustaining the legitimacy of Obama as the American president – an argument that, I believe, could also be made.

The semiotician Laura Oswald, whom I mentioned earlier, also mentions the performative in her work (2010, 2015). However, our understandings of the term differ significantly. Oswald proposes to analyse logos as 'micro-sign systems they represent the brand identity, the corporate mission, and the target culture' (2015, p. 131) according to five dimensions, including the performative, which she defines as the way how

> marketing sign systems engage consumer/spectators in a communication event by means of codes inscribing subject positions for I and you in representation. This

dimension is crucial for building brand relationship and for calling the consumer to action, i.e. making a brand choice' (2015, p. 131).

That is, Oswald understands the performative as that which allows brands to place viewers in a specific position – not, as I am proposing, as the active role that brands play in supporting a political (or social, or economic) institutional arrangement or form of organisation. This said, we are both interested in the behaviour of the consumer or the viewer that is inspired by the brand.

I should also mention that, as Michael Charlton writes in his PhD dissertation titled *Visual Rhetoric: Definitions, Debates and Disciplinarity* (2008), there isn't a canonical definition of visual rhetoric, even if recent publications have attempted to clarify its scope. An important example is *Defining Visual Rhetorics* (2004), edited by Charles Hill and Marguerite Helmers. Although the authors do not propose a definition of the term (hence the plural 'rhetorics'), asking instead the contributors 'to discuss the definitional assumptions behind their own work, and to exemplify these assumptions by sharing their own rhetorical analysis of visual phenomena' (Hill and Helmers, 2004, p. x), the concluding chapter by the rhetorician Sonja Foss provides a summary of such contributions, which is worth quoting at length. Foss writes that

> The chapters in this book suggest that the term, *visual rhetoric*, has two meanings […]. It is used to mean both a visual object or artefact and a perspective on the study of visual data. In the first sense, visual rhetoric is a product individuals create as they use visual symbols for the purpose of communication. In the second, it is a perspective scholars apply that focuses on the symbolic processes by which visual artefacts perform communication (2004, p. 304 [original emphasis]).

In the first sense, i.e.

> as a communicative artifact, *visual rhetoric* is the actual image or object rhetors generate when they use visual symbols for the purpose of communicating. […].

> *Visual rhetoric* as artifact, then, is the purposive production or arrangement of colors, forms, and other elements to communicate with an audience (2004, p. 304 [original emphasis]).

That is, rhetoric is here understood as something that can be identified as being at work within images themselves. I should note, however, my disagreement with the author regarding what she sees as its intentionality, which is evident in the use of the word 'purposive'. This is particularly puzzling since an exclusive focus on the communicative intentions associated with the production of visual rhetoric artefacts is at odds with the two methods that are identified by Foss later in this chapter: a 'deductive application of rhetorical theory to the visual' and an 'inductive exploration of the visual to generate the rhetorical' (Foss, pp. 311-312). My approach, as it should become clear in the methodological chapter, joins the latter understanding.

In the second sense,

> *visual rhetoric* constitutes a theoretical perspective that involves the analysis of the symbolic or communicative aspects of visual artifacts. It is a critical-analytical tool or a way of approaching and analysing visual data that highlights the communicative dimensions of images or objects (2004, pp. 305-306 [original emphasis].

This said, Foss adds that the two senses are most often combined in scholarly analyses of visual rhetoric – as mine will do in its analysis of the rhetoric of a set of images. Indeed, my thesis proposes to contribute to this emerging field of inquiry by expanding the understanding of visual rhetoric to include the points of convergence of key visual cultures thinkers (particularly, W. J. T. Mitchell, 1994, 2005, 2011 and Georges Didi-Huberman, 2002, 2003, who influence my engagement with the visual material), rhetoric studies (such as James Martin, 2014, 2015b, and Alan Finlayson, 2007) and political theory (such as Judith Butler, 2009 and Jacques Derrida, 1972, 1976, who frame my understanding of the performative). My aim is to build an approach that may contribute to the expansion of this field of inquiry.

The second shortcoming in the existing literature which my research will address is the lack of studies of visual rhetoric from the point of view of spectatorship, which would allow me to answer directly my second question. This said, I should reiterate that this is a secondary focus of concern in the thesis that follows from my contribution to the scholarship on the UN – in that an attention to its modes of visual self-presentation demands attention both to the rhetoric at play and to its imputed modes of spectatorship. This is particularly important since the UN justifies its own existence according to a vocabulary of inclusion that is derived from the model of participative democracy. At the same time, however, it refuses to open its main organs to regular forms of participation or to mechanisms of accountability. My goal is to consider the role that the modes of presentation of the UN play with regard to the position of its viewers.

Scholarly discussions of the ways how the viewers are persuaded to think and/or behave in a specific way within the fields of philosophy and visual culture – as opposed to that of (visual) rhetoric – are mostly influenced by Marxism. Among ongoing contemporary discussions that engage with the multiple relations between visuality and power, Nicholas Mirzoeff and Jacques Rancière (who is an important source for Mirzoeff) are two fundamental references. In *Watching Babylon: The War in Iraq and Global Visual Culture* (2004), Mirzoeff adds his voice to those who propose that images function as war weapons, such as Paul Virilio (1989). In the more recent *The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality* (2011), Mirzoeff addresses the relation between visuality (which he defines as that which 'sutures authority to power and renders this association 'natural'', 2009, p. 6) and countervisuality (or the 'right to look', which continuously resists the violent effects of visuality) at play in three main structures: the plantation complex (1660-1860), the imperial complex (1860-1945) and the military-industrial complex (1945-present). His aim is to develop a genealogy of visuality that is critical of its colonial origins – the practice of Napoleonic visualisation of the battlefield –, hence contributing to an emancipatory understanding of the field of visual cultures.

With regard to Jacques Rancière, and his *The Emancipated Spectator* (2009), to mention one of his best-known works, the philosopher reviews the oppositions that structure Marxist and postmodern critiques of spectatorship, such as activity versus passivity and ignorance versus

knowledge. Rather, arguing that such oppositions reify inequality and domination, Rancière insists upon the creativity of the spectator and on the active character of viewing. He is here drawing on ideas developed earlier in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation* (1987). Like 'the ignorant schoolmaster', the artist 'does not teach his pupils his knowledge, but orders them to venture into the forest of things and signs, to say what they have seen and what they think of what they have seen, to verify it and have it verified' (1991, p. 11). Both authors share an understanding of viewing as potentially emancipatory, either by considering the possibility of resistance through countervisuality (Mirzoeff) or by focusing on spectatorship itself (Rancière). However, neither Mirzoeff nor Rancière foreground the entanglement between complicity and distance that is often also at play, as I will argue, in the spectatorship of the UN.

I propose to fill this gap by discussing to what extent the visual modes of presentation of the UN play a role with regards to this tension – placing the viewer in a limbo of visibility and attention without the possibility of sustained institutional engagement. My interest in this question is framed by the evolution of citizenship itself. As has been noted by the rhetorician James Martin in *Politics and Rhetoric: A Critical Introduction* (2014),

> in the classic conception of citizenship […] to speak was to participate actively in an environment focused greatly on citizenship […]. Citizenship – although limited to a select number, all of them men – was functional to the community's survival (Martin, 2014, p. 35).

Today, he argues, modern notions of rhetoric reflect a liberal notion of citizenship introduced by the French revolution, which is inclusive and focuses on the rights of citizens rather then on their duties (2014, p. 36). In this model, and in what brings me back to the position of the UN viewer,

> formal citizenship in modern society […] demands little of citizens as political participants […], The sense of a tight-knit community gives way to the more

complex times and spaces of capitalism and the nation-state […]. Direct participation in public life generally is not expected (Martin, 2014, p. 37).

In this context, the function of rhetoric has necessarily changed – which justifies my engagement both with the visual rhetoric of the UN and with its spectatorship. Indeed,

the loss of a transcendent principle of society and justification for authority is at the heart of the modern idea of citizenship […]. Citizens [are now] part of an incomplete society whose unit is permanently in question […]. Rhetoric now functions […] as a means to represent society in its quest for an elusive social unity (Martin, 2014, p. 39).

It is precisely in the context of such a search for (in the case of my material, global) unity that I understand the broad rhetorical effect of the self-presentation of the UN. As I will demonstrate in Part Two, such images allow the UN to negotiate – and, to a certain extent, to overcome – its inner tensions and divisions. This conclusion also goes in the direction of what Martin identifies as the two main aspects of modern rhetoric: on the one hand, the distinction between the universal and the particular; on the other hand, what he refers to as 'aesthetic representation' (strongly inspired by Ankersmit, 1996). The former relates to the community that is represented by rhetoric, i.e. the growing multiplication of different groups who demand their recognition as full citizens, hence 'mobilizing or redefining universal ideals that promote varying degrees and terms of inclusion and exclusion' (p. 40); the latter concerns the relation of politics and politicians to society.

Politics, continues Ankersmit, is a creative activity […]. Representatives are not 'delegates' of their constituents but substitutes for them. Their success relies on their ability to creatively style themselves according to the states and feelings of their voters (Martin, 2014, pp. 31-32).

It is in light of this discussion that I see the UN's performative (i.e. creative, to use Martin's term) claims as key in sustaining its perceived legitimacy. In making this statement, I am also

joining, for example, Shirin Rai and Janelle Reinelt, editors of *The Grammar of Politics and Performance* (2015) who stress the key role of performance in reinforcing democratic representation, influenced by Michael Saward (2010): 'performing claims to represent is not a marginal curiosity – rather, it creates and reinforces representation itself' (Rai and Reinelt, 2015, pp. 12-13). Although the UN is not an elected organisation, it repeatedly claims to represent the global citizen (and hence the viewer), as we shall see.

f) Main focus and research questions

As will be apparent by now, my research engages with several disciplines. I take a special interest in the intersection of visual culture studies, rhetoric and political theory, which is particularly well-suited to reflect on the power and effects of images as rhetorical devices.

To summarise, then, my research project is guided by the following two questions:

1. What are the central characteristics of the modes of visual presentation of the UN?

2. Secondarily, what do these modes of visual presentation reveal with regard to the spectatorship of the UN?

g) Structure

In order to answer my two research questions, I have organised the thesis in three parts: Part One is titled 'Theories of the Image'; Part Two, 'The United Nations as a Visual Entity'; and, finally, Part Three, 'Art Practices and the UN'. The thesis also includes three annexes, including a short glossary. After the present Introduction, Part One includes a theoretical chapter explaining my approach. Part Two is divided into three chapters that correspond to the three means that I have identified as the central strategies through which the UN presents itself and its work to its viewers (a choice that I discuss in more detail later in this chapter): its emblem/flag, which I understand as a form of signification that presents the institution visually; the modus operandi and publicness of the meetings of the Security Council and the General Assembly, which I discuss as providing institutional visual expressions of how the UN works as an

organisation; and, finally, the figure of the Goodwill Ambassador, which I analyse as a visual disseminator of how the UN works on the ground. The focus on these three forms of communication of the UN with its viewers not only serves the purpose of examining the individual modes of address but also pays attention to the visual network that results from their interrelations. My aim is to understand how the chosen visual material negotiates these key challenges.

This discussion will be enriched in Part Three by an analysis of the ways in which two contemporary artists (Pedro Reyes and Goshka Macuga) have engaged with some of the modes of visual-presentation of the UN, and how their artworks constitute a means of critically examining the narratives conveyed by those images. Engaging with these visual practices allows me to identify the ways how the modes of functioning of the original material is influenced by being repositioned or reconfigured.

I should stress once again that my analysis combines a close engagement with individual images and, at the same time, an attention to the ways in which such images relate to each other. In Part Two I argue that such an analysis opens up the complexity of these seemingly straightforward images, and thereby brings them to reveal the complexity of the organisation. Part Three reveals that the viewer may be similarly affected by an artistic engagement with the complexity of the UN's rhetoric, which is related with the viewing position that is demanded by the organisation (asking to be recognised and supported by the viewers while, at the same time, not affording them the possibility of regular forms of institutional participation).

That said, one should not conclude from my decision to develop my answer to the first research question in Part Two and to the second question in Part Three that these two questions are independent. Rather, they overlap in practice and are merely organised in this manner for the sake of clarity. My methodology aims precisely to recognise the agency of images, while also recognising that such power emerges and is constrained within the specific historic and cultural contexts in which images circulate and are looked at.

Before advancing, it is important to elucidate how I carried out my research. My method was iterative, i.e. I developed my empirical and theoretical research in a closely related manner. First, given the priority that I attribute to the visual material, I began collecting images that the UN puts into the public realm via its various hard copy and online platforms (such as its website and its Facebook and Instagram channels), advertisements and campaigns and in the media (focusing on a set of western news outlets, such as *The Guardian*, the *Daily Mail* and the *BBC*, but also *The New York Times*, *CNN*, *ABC News*, *Le Monde* and *El País*).

At this moment, I must reiterate once again that my goal is *not* to analyse the communication strategy of the UN. That would have not only led to a completely different thesis and analysis; it would have also required a different set of scholarly sources and demanded a different methodological approach. Additionally, a focus on the communication strategy of the UN would have demanded a different collection of the material, organised according to its creation date and goals, target groups and dissemination channels. Rather, my interest in the modes of presentation of the UN led me to select my material according to the ways in which such images tend to appear in international media: i.e. to their relevance in coming to represent the UN. As I discuss in the next chapter, my approach was strongly inspired by W. J. Mitchell's method of image tracking, which follows images as they circulate. This led me to identify a set of images or tropes that tend to be repeatedly used to refer to the UN, and hence come to represent it visually.

Third, I observed that the material with which the UN comes to present itself (as a result of its own choice of images combined with the filtering that is provided by the international media) can best be assembled into three main groupings: (i) images of, with or referring to the emblem and flag; (ii) images of the UN headquarters, the Security Council and the General Assembly as well as of the work that takes place within the UN; (iii) materials relating to the work of the UN's Goodwill Ambassadors. Part Two of the thesis examines these groupings in turn.

Fourth, I began an analysis of these groups of images. At this moment I also made a set of inter-related initial observations, which subsequently guided my research.

1. A careful exploration of these materials often yielded much more complex paradoxical outcomes than at first expected.

2. I also noted that the images function as a network – they reference each other directly or indirectly.

3. Finally, I decided to focus not only on the modes of presentation of the UN but also on how the viewer is addressed by them.

Fifth, having made the above initial observations, I wanted to find out whether questions of visual rhetoric were ones that the organisation or scholars had made a point of examining. In order to find this information I consulted the UN website as well as academic publications and journals. At this moment, I made two discoveries: first, there are no studies of the visual rhetoric of the UN; second, most studies that do engage with the UN are critical of its history, modus operandi and work.

Sixth, this made me especially interested in observing what these images and grouping were presenting. I discovered that the groupings that I had previously identified, and which are discussed separately for analytic purposes, facilitate three overlapping rhetorical presentations of the UN (*identification, institutional functioning, dissemination*) through which, I will argue, its existence is legitimised:

(a) the first grouping *identifies* and reminds the viewer of the values and the mission of the UN (building and sustaining not only international peace but also the international community) – i.e. it focuses on the UN's values and mission and hence on what distinguishes it from other organisations;

(b) the second grouping expresses the *institutional functioning* of the UN as an organisation – i.e. it focuses on its modus operandi, which it reveals as inclusive;

(c) the third and final grouping functions as a visual *disseminator* of the work of the UN on the ground – i.e. it stresses the manifold roles of the UN (humanitarian, technical expertise, development support, political…).

Seventh, in order to further develop my thinking and sharpen my analysis, I examined scholarship in the following areas looking for key areas of debate as well as gaps in the literature: UN studies; literature engaged with rhetoric, visual rhetoric and issues around spectatorship; other scholarship, for example, on international relations and political theory.

I then applied these sources to my analysis according to their empirical relevance. To give some examples, the first empirical chapter (Chapter 2, 'The UN Flag – Performing the Space and the Time of the UN') discusses the emblem/flag as a form of visual identification of the UN. In this analysis, ongoing debates around signification and representation are key. In the following empirical chapter (Chapter 3: 'The Publicness of the General Assembly and the Security Council – Performing Inclusion'), I consider a set of images of the UN headquarters, the Security Council and the General Assembly, but also the process of the dissemination of the inner work of these fora – which I define as the publicness of the UN. I see them as institutional expressions of the processes that guide the work of the UN as an organisation. I develop this analysis in conversation with ongoing discussions in media and communications studies. Finally, Chapter 4 discusses the figure of the Goodwill Ambassador through an engagement with images representing the work of Angelina Jolie ('The Goodwill Ambassador as a Complex Mediator – Performing Proximity'). I propose to analyse this figure as a a mediator between the organisation, its viewers and those that it supports (in this case, refugees), which functions as a visual disseminator of the work of the UN on the ground. In this discussion, debates around celebrity diplomacy, humanitarianism and human rights are crucial.

Eighth and finally, I also turned to artists who have produced work that focuses on the UN. The projects that I selected (according to criteria discussed in the beginning of the chapter) were:

1. Pedro Reyes' *The people's United Nations* (2013–2014);
2. Goshka Macuga's *Bloomberg Commission: The Nature of the Beast* (2009–2010).

That is, in Part Three I am concerned with the extent to which artistic practices harbour the potential for the emergence of different forms of responsiveness vis-à-vis the material discussed in Part Two. This discussion is aligned with my interest in how the modes of presentation of the UN appear to their western viewers and in how the latter are called upon to respond to the former. My analysis reveals that, despite stressing the need for increased individual engagement with the UN, the projects highlight the impotence of the viewers to enact changes within the organisation – unless, that is, they change their position.

Pursuing the stated intentions of the thesis demands a particular epistemological position – one that considers the multiple modes of presentation of the organisation and the modes of engagement that they demand. This is why my analysis follows the material and uses different fields and theories to understand its particularities. The work of the cultural analysis scholar Mieke Bal provides an important key to understanding the relevance of this approach. In the book *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities: A Rough Guide* (2002), Bal discusses the idea of 'traveling concepts' and their relation with interdisciplinarity. Her argument is that instead of speaking of 'transdisciplinary' work, which presupposes the rigidity of different fields, or of 'multidisciplinary' work, which would subject different fields to a common conceptual tool, what is required in the humanities (where she includes visual cultures studies) is a constant negotiation, a conceptual 'traveling' between fields and objects that also allows for the transformation of such concepts as demanded by the material.

Implicit in the previous paragraphs is the fact that my epistemological position is characterised by a combination of distance and proximity. Seeing one's engagement with images, institutions and political narratives as a localised rather than a universal form of being in the world – and, hence, of analysing it – necessarily places the writer in a position toward her own history and conditions that amounts to what the visual scholar Irit Rogoff describes with the notion of 'criticality', that is, a 'double occupation in which we are both fully armed with the knowledges of critique, able to analyse and unveil while at the same time sharing and living out the very conditions which we are able to see through' (Rogoff, 2003). As a western viewer myself using mostly western sources, this awareness is the reason why I propose that some of my specific discoveries only apply with certainty in the western world (understood in a broad sense). This

said, my argument regarding the tension between the intended universality of the UN and its geopolitical specificity is also valid in other contexts.

i) Main Argument and Broader Outcomes

My main argument can be summarised in three points.

1. The images with which the UN presents itself are complex, which reflects the nature of the UN (but also of the political and of the visual);
2. Those images function as an active network that is sustained in time, which allows them to partly navigate such complexity and, hence, to contribute to the political argument according to which the UN is relevant and legitimate;
3. **The artistic engagement with such images highlights the tension between, on the one hand, the demand for attention and support of the UN that those images convey and, on the other hand, the absence of regular forms of institutional engagement by the viewers with it.**

These results are explicit in the title of the thesis, *Unstable Mediation – Regarding the United Nations as a Visual Entity*. By visual entity I am here referring to the network established from the myriad visual ways with which the UN presents itself, ranging from its logo and the photographs communicating its action on the ground to its decision to allow part of the work of the Security Council and of the General Assembly to be publicly available, and others. However, I must stress that I do not see the visual and the textual as independent from each other – as we will see, the visual devices may not only reinforce but also contradict the official narratives of the UN. I should stress that this is particularly critical in view of the association of the organisation with highly contradictory imagery: on the one hand, with images related to the important role that the UN plays in ameliorating the living conditions of millions of individuals who live in underprivileged countries (such as those discussed in Chapter 4); and, on the other hand, images associated with the validation of controversial UN actions, such as military interventions by the security council (such as those discussed in Chapter 3). The material that I will analyse operates within this complex, elusive network of often contradictory meanings.

It is in the context of such potentially disparate yet simultaneous messages that I refer to the notion of 'regarding' – stressing the importance of the spectator in activating the narratives that are communicated by the UN. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, 'regarding' originates from the Anglo-French '*regarder*', which means 'to look back' and is composed of '*re-*' and '*garder*' (to guard). Today, this notion has several related meanings that reflect this origin. The first refers to the recognition of 'the worth of a person or a thing', thereby pointing to an absence of neutrality. Finally, 'to regard' is also associated with the look and the gaze. My decision to use it acknowledges the non-cognitive, affective dimension that is present in the act of looking and that also characterises my epistemological position – a researcher who is simultaneously a viewer of the images whose rhetoric she analyses. This position echoes the work of Steven Bender and David Wellbery, who coined the term 'rhetoricality' (1990) to recognise the influence of post-structuralism in rhetorical analysis. In light of the discovery that language is unstable, they propose that 'rhetoric is no longer the title of a doctrine and a practice, nor a form of cultural memory; it becomes instead something like the condition of our existence' (Bender and Wellbery, 1990, p. 25).

This approach is reinforced by the terms 'Unstable Mediation', by which I am referring to the active role of the visual material in sustaining not only the international space of the UN and its values but also specific forms of viewership. I understand mediation in a similar way to François Debrix and Cynthia Weber, who define it in *Rituals Of Mediation: International Politics And Social Meaning*, which they edited in 2003, 'as a site of representation, transformation, and pluralization where cultural and international rituals are performed. These rituals, in turn, perform what are taken to be culturals and internationals' (2003, p. vii). Incidentally, contrary to what this quote suggests, performativity isn't a central concern of the book.

This leads me to the main outcome of my research: it confirms the relevance of work that strengthens the relations between rhetoric and visual rhetoric studies and uncovers the relevance of paying attention to issues of performance in this context. To give one example, this joins the recent work of the scholar Shirin Rai (whom I mentioned earlier), who analyses the behaviour

of British Members of Parliament through the notion of ceremony and a Durkheimian understanding of ritual. Specifically, she sees 'the performance of ceremony and ritual […] as operative frames of power in public life' (2015, p. 148) and argues that 'the micro-practices of power observed in the performance of ceremony and ritual in parliament form the substance of […] authority as well as challenges to it' (Rai, 2015, p. 160) – in what aligns well with my analysis of artists that appropriate such material to reflect on the limitations of the UN in Part Three. However, as most scholars, Rai fails to analyse the role of the visual in this context.

In particular, while a close analysis demonstrates that the modes of presentation of the UN reflect its inability to fulfil its mission (i.e. they reveal the aporetic character of the political project of the organisation), I argue that such images can also be seen as performative in their modes of functioning. This performative dimension includes, for example, the continuous reinterpretation of the historical context of the organisation's genesis, pointing to a temporality that connects the projected future with continuous reevaluations of the past (see Chapter 2). This analysis is broadly influenced by scholars such as Terry Eagleton – who, in response to post-structuralism, argued that as long as one understands meaning-making (or, more specifically in the case of Eagleton, language) as forms of 'power and performance' (1983, p. 205), rhetoric continues to be a relevant field of analysis.

Additionally, with regard to the existing UN scholarship, my research makes evident the need for a scholarly and political consideration of the unintended consequences of the material that the organisation uses in its communication and that emerge as its modes of presentation.

j) What the Thesis Is Not

It should also be clear that there are several issues that, albeit relatively close to the goals of this dissertation, are not among them. First, my research is not to be understood as a study of rhetoric in generis but as a study of visual rhetoric. Second, the thesis does not present its methodology as equivalent to a qualitative study (as used in the social sciences) of the forms of consumption of mediatised images; nor does its engagement share the goals of a strictly branding, communicational, sociological or even historical approach to the issue. Third, rather

than proposing an all-encompassing approach toward the modes of self-presentation of the UN, the thesis is concerned with the uses of *images* as rhetorical devices. Fourth and finally, the engagement with a selected artworks in the final part of the thesis should not be understood as an attempt to establish some sort of canonical itemisation of possible forms of artistic engagement with the UN; rather, it aims to make a meaningful contribution to the ongoing debates in the field of contemporary art regarding the politics of representation. Indeed, what scholars working in the fields mentioned above (the social sciences and the humanities) may consider as a shortcoming in my research (i.e. the decision to place images at the centre of my discussion) is precisely its main distinctive feature.

Part I. The Visual Rhetoric of the UN

Chapter 1: Visual Rhetoric as a Mode of Enquiry – Setting the Ground

This chapter elucidates the approach to the visual material that I will adopt in this thesis. The first section ('From Rhetoric to Visual Rhetoric') presents what I see as the central overlaps and hiatuses between rhetoric, visual rhetoric and visual culture studies. The following section ('Beyond Semiotics and Semiology: Looking with Mitchell and Didi-Huberman') argues that a visual rhetoric approach that is strongly inspired by either semiotics or semiology is insufficient to overcome the methodological problems that I identify in the first section, which leads me to the work of Mitchell and Didi-Huberman as the main influences in my methodological approach. The final section ('The Inter-Images, Mediation and Performativity') argues that there are continuities between discussions about the notion of the inter-image (introduced by the examination of Didi-Huberman's work, the idea of mediation and, finally, performativity, which I use as a key analytical tool in the subsequent three chapters). I apply the methodological approach that I develop in this chapter in Part Two ('The United Nations as a Visual Entity').

a) From Rhetoric to Visual Rhetoric

My argument will be structured in two parts: first, a discussion of the existing literature in rhetoric that I am influenced by and partly depart from; second, a summary of discussions of visual rhetoric that influence my approach and from which I also partially distance myself. My aim with this section is to explain the decision to choose and to contribute to an expanded understanding of visual rhetoric as a relevant framework to analyse my material.

To begin, it should be clear that the explorations of UN visual rhetoric that will drive this thesis will depart from classic rhetoric theory. The first reason why that is the case regards the duality of surface/depth, which fails to capture the ways how meaning is constructed and sustained and the role of the visual in this. As Umberto Eco (1992) explains, the traditional association between surface/depth and falsity/truth first appeared with the Gnostics and their various beliefs

in the possibility of direct forms of knowledge of the divine by means of self-exploration.[20] Though based on a very different understanding of reason to that of the Gnostics, the position that truth cannot be directly approached had also been argued by Plato (428/427 B.C.E. – 348/347 B.C.E, for example in his allegory of the Cave from *The Republic*). Eco identifies parallels between how the Gnostic and Plato approach texts and a more recent tradition that he calls symptomatic reading, whose foundations lie with Marx's discussion of ideology and Freud's analysis of the unconscious, which influenced, among others, and respectively, Paul Ricœur's work on symbolic language (1965) and Althusser's on ideology and state apparatus (1965). I could also add to this list philosophers and theoreticians from the Renaissance and the Enlightenment whose work reiterated in different ways the duality identified above. One of such thinkers is Thomas Hobbes, who argued that the figure of the orator (i.e. the speaker who is particularly focused on the form of her discourse) should be replaced by that of an unequivocal speaker who would only use evidence-based arguments in her speech (Skinner 1996, p. 282). That is, this dualism (between truth and falsity, the form of discourse and its content) – which I strongly oppose – has been central in the discipline of rhetoric for many centuries.[21] This point has been clearly made by Eco himself: meaning and its context are interdependent or, as he writes, 'the laws of signification are the laws of culture' (1979, p. 28).

The second reason why my approach departs from classic rhetoric theory is its continued dependence (to a significant extent) on Aristotle's division between rationality and emotion. Here, I am not thinking of his identification of methods used by speakers to establish proof (the example and the *enthymeme*, which refers to moments when the speaker implies a premise – an idea to which I will return in the next chapter) but on his distinction between three means of persuasion: *logos* (the rational argument made by the speaker); *ethos* (her character, including her trustworthiness) and *pathos* (the emotions that the speech arouses in the viewer) (Aristotle, 2004). This said, Jennifer Richards notes that

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[20]   Gnosticism, from *gnôsis*, the Greek word for 'knowledge' or 'insight', refers to a loosely organised movement, combining religious and philosophical elements, that developed mostly in the first and second centuries CE, lasting until the early fourth century CE. The Gnostics believed in a dichotomy between an unchanging, true Being and an ever-changing Becoming.

[21]   See Jennifer Richards' *Rhetoric*, 2008 for a summary of the history of rhetoric from the Greeks to recent times.

Aristotle not only makes *ethos* and *pathos* 'means of persuasion' or 'proofs' in their own right, and thus central to the whole speech rather than just a part of it, but he also understands that *ethos* can be rational (2008, p. 33 [original emphasis]).

Nonetheless, the repeated use of *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos* as distinctive analytical dimensions – even if not originally intended as such – makes it difficult to fully understand the rhetorical power of images, as I discuss in the next section of this chapter.

The work of Alan Finlayson and James Martin, two contemporary rhetoricians, is of interest precisely because it opposes these two canonical dualities. Although I will be returning to their work throughout the thesis, I want to explain in broad terms how my approach is both influenced by and departs from their thinking. In 'From Beliefs to Arguments: Interpretive Methodology and Rhetorical Political Analysis' (2007), Finlayson argues that methods of political analysis, which tend to focus on the ideas and beliefs that are conveyed by politicians, should be expanded to also include a focus on arguments (what he refers to as 'Rhetorical Political Analysis', henceforth referred to as RPA). To be more specific, the author argues that theories that assume rational choices from the citizens (resonating with Aristotle's views on deliberation) are limited and that the institutionalist approach (which contextualises such rational choices by paying attention to their social dimension) 'simply displace rational decisions from individuals to forms of collectivity' (2007, p. 546).

Rather, Finlayson argues that rhetoricians should combine the learnings from interpretive analysis (see Mark Bevir and Rod Rhodes, 2003 and 2006), with an understanding of 'the strategic and collective nature of political decision-making' (2007, p. 546). This is why RPA focuses on 'the intersubjective, dynamic, formation and reformation of arguments and the elements of which they are composed (2007, p. 560), which includes an attention to the affective aim of rhetoric. Crucially, however, this view also combines an understanding of arguments as both context-dependent and creative. As he writes, and in what demonstrates Finlayson's overcoming of the dualisms that I identified above, RPA

presumes that arguments are formulated and enacted on the basis of prior institutionalised systems of meaning that exert pressure on actors, yet it also draws attention to political action as a distinct kind of creative, intellectual and pragmatic activity. RPA broadens our horizons as to the 'rationalities' on which politics is based, extending them into areas that involve the affective (2007, p. 560).

That is, opposing a key assumption of interpretive rhetoric analysis, Finlayson disagrees with the idea that political actors first develop their beliefs and only then present them rhetorically. Rather, these two processes aren't separate: the employment of rhetoric also contributes to the establishment of the speaker's beliefs. It should be clear why RPA's framework is relevant to my approach: my aim to understand the central characteristics of the modes of visual presentation of the UN isn't blind to the organisation's continued perception as a relevant global organisation. This awareness forces me to consider the potential contribution of the visual material to sustaining the argument that the UN is necessary and worthy of support. Additionally, my interest in the performative (which I discuss later in this chapter) also joins Finlayson's understanding of rhetoric as overcoming theoretical frameworks that reiterate the classic action-structure opposition. Furthermore, I align myself with the author's view that the interrelation between rhetoric and belief formation involves an element of "'undecidability': an uncertainty that is structural and determinate" (2007, p. 551), which he relates to Austin's speech-act theory (2007, p. 552) but also echoes, as I see it, recent discussions of the image.

However, and crucially, Finlayson's argument doesn't mention the role of the visual in developing or sustaining political arguments.[22] This said, I read one essay by Finlayson as particularly close to ongoing debates in the field of visual culture. In 'Critique and Political Argumentation' (2013) the rhetorician discusses and criticises the principles behind the method of Political Discourse Analysis, which combines critical linguistics and critical discourse analysis with the Aristotelian conception of political deliberation. In what is particularly

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[22]   This said, some rhetoricians have indeed paid attention to the persuasive aspects of visual elements. An example of this is John Gaffney's, whose 'Imagined Relationships: Political Leadership in Contemporary Democracies' (2001) discusses the importance of image and style in conveying image of leadership, and which I mention in chapter 4.

relevant to my approach, the author discusses the work of Jacques Rancière, and in particular its emphasis on

> the productivity and excess of language […]. Rancière argues that we are 'political animals' not simply because we speak (as Aristotle thought) but because when we do so we 'put into circulation more words ,"useless" and unnecessary words, words that exceed the function of rigid designation' (Rancière and Panagia, 2000, p. 115, cit. in Finlayson, 2013, p. 313).

Although Finlayson's focus is on how Rancière's argument can expand an analysis of textual rhetoric, one can also extend this idea to consider images and their role in producing 'alternative representations, activating different elements of the *sensus communis'* (p. 320) – an hypothesis that I discuss in Parts Two and Three.

While Finlayson influences my approach towards the broad role of rhetoric in establishing or sustaining political arguments, I draw inspiration from James Martin's framework, which divides rhetoric into rhetorical context, argument and effects, to structure my engagement with the visual material in the next three chapters.[23] In 'Situating Speech: A Rhetorical Approach to Political Strategy' (2015b) Martin suggests this tripartite structure to facilitate an analysis of political ideas as dynamic and in flux. It is worth quoting Martin at length. The political theorist (inspired by the writing of Scott Consigny, 1974), writes that

> a rhetorical approach […] understands ideas as akin to projectiles […] purposefully displacing the context around them. Thus 'modernization' in Blair's rhetoric framed his narrative of Labour's project but it also weakened his opponents' accusations that the party sought to revive discredited policies […]. Rhetorical analysis explores the 'agency' dimension of that dialectic by identifying the argumentative moves employed by speakers to position their audiences (p. 26).

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[23]   Interestingly, the authors co-wrote 'It Ain't What you Say…'': British Political Studies and the Analysis of Speech and Rhetoric' (2008) together, where they argue that rhetorical analysis should be better integrated within British political studies. To make their case, they analyse a conference speech by Tony Blair and argue that British politics scholars should focus analyse political speeches more systematically.

That is, and in a manner that is analogous to Finlayson's work, this approach pays attention to issues of both agency and structure in order to grasp rhetoric as a process that is involved in social change (Martin, 2014, p. 97). Although Martin also fails to mention the realm of the visual, his framework is useful to structure my analysis of the extent to which the modes of presentation of the UN 'unsettle, transform or simply reaffirm established narratives' (2014, op. 28) regarding the legitimacy and the relevance of the UN. Specifically, this method proposes to consider the rhetorical context of an idea, i.e. 'the immediate conditions giving rise to a speech occasion' such as its time and place (2014, p. 34), the rhetorical argument that it makes, i.e. 'the situation configured in the language of the speech itself' (2014, p. 35) and, finally, its rhetorical effects, i.e. the 'alteration to the situation after the intervention' (2014, p. 35; this distinction is further discussed in Martin, 2014, pp. 88-106). Part Two focuses on the last two categories (rhetorical argument and effects); the discussion of the context surrounding the modes of presentation of the UN took place in the Introduction (see 'The UN: Making Itself Public – or The Rhetorical Context').

Crucially, like Finlayson's, Martin's understanding of rhetoric goes beyond language – it also pays attention to the role of 'emotion, personal authority, bodily gestures and audible voice to make an argument work' (p. 29), and hence can be used as a key reference in my attempt to contribute to strengthening the overlap between rhetoric, visual rhetoric and visual culture studies. Specifically, Martin considers the role of emotions in rhetoric in a chapter of *Politics and Rhetoric: A Critical Introduction*, in which he argues that the findings of neuroscience and psychoanalysis stress that one should see 'cognitive judgement (or reason) as one moment in a wider, *affective* process (2014, p. 108 [original emphasis]).

However, my approach also differs from Martin's. Specifically, I disagree with his rhetorical reading of the work of Jacques Derrida, which strongly influences my approach. Derrida develops two types of research: on the one hand, in his earlier work, analyses of the history of a concept or theme (for example in *Of Grammatology* [1967] with regards to the concept of writing); on the other hand, in his later work, examinations of ahistorical aporias, for example in 'Force of Law' (1990) regarding the complex relation between law (which is founded on

violence) and justice (which he associates with the 'ghost of the undecidable'; p. 24). The negotiation of such paradoxes and hauntings lies, I will argue, at the core of the UN's mode of presentation (1990, pp. 24–25).

Indeed, the most important idea that I take from Derrida regards the aporia – a key concept that underlies my understanding of both the political and of the temporality of international resolutions (see Chapter 2). This is one of the reasons why I believe that Derrida's work can have tremendous consequences for visual rhetoric studies that go beyond the conclusions that most rhetoricians have taken from said work. For example, and to return to Martin, the author affirms in *Politics and Rhetoric: A Critical Introduction* (2014) that Derrida's denial of language as a transparent medium of communication has limited implications for rhetorical studies. He writes:

> with their criticism of humanist accounts of subjectivity […] poststructuralist philosophers appear to undermine the classical rhetorical focus on the persuasive speaker. Moreover, they imply that modern politics can never fully resolve clashes between citizens, since no universal reason or stable moral principle can genuinely be established (2014, p. 49).

Additionally, and in what contradicts this point, while Martin reads Derrida's work as expanding the sphere of the rhetorical from an exclusively focus on the speaker, he also believes that a post-modern politics is limited in its consequences. This interpretation of Derrida's work, which is oblivious to the ethical turn in his late work (see Critchley, 2014), is mistaken. Rather, an analysis of rhetorical discourse that pays attention to the aporetic can, I believe, contribute to identifying and elucidating the gap between the mission and the values that legitimise political institutions and their work and results, hence potentially strengthening their accountability.

It is also important to summarise current discussions in visual rhetoric – the second central point of this section – in order to make clear how my approach is positioned in relation to them. A key author in the field, as I mentioned earlier, is Sonja Foss, who writes that 'as rhetorical theory opens up to visual rhetoric, it opens up to possibilities for more relevant, inclusive, and holistic

views of contemporary symbol use' (Foss, 2004, p. 313). My work demonstrates my full agreement with the need for such comprehensive approaches. Additionally, in what is particularly interesting, and as I mentioned in the Introduction, Foss also argues that visual rhetoric tends to be defined as either a communicative artefact and/or as a perspective. In the latter case, she adds that

> rhetorical scholars tend to study visual objects with a focus on one of three areas – nature, function, or evaluation […]. *Nature* deals with the components, qualities and characteristics of visual artifacts; *function* concerns the communicative effects of visual rhetoric on audiences; and *evaluatio*n is the process of assessing visual artefacts (p. 307 [original emphasis]).

My decision to organise my material according to Martin's separation between <u>context</u>, <u>argument</u> and <u>effects</u> overlaps with Foss' framework (which distinguishes between the <u>nature</u>, the <u>function</u> and the <u>evaluation</u> of the artifact, as this quote makes clear). To be specific, Part Two starts by describing the history of each visual element; this is followed by an analysis of the rhetorical <u>argument</u> that is made by the imagery, which integrates a description of their presented and suggested elements, i.e. the nature of the image (defined by Foss as the study of its 'distinguishing features', which include those two categories, 2004, p. 307).

Finally, my analysis of the <u>effects</u> of the modes of visual presentation allows me to focus both on the <u>function</u> of the images (i.e. that which the images serve for an audience, 2004, pp. 308-309) and to <u>evaluate</u> their consequences (i.e. whether it achieves its goals; I also identify its broad implications, 2004, pp. 309-310). By the latter, as Foss describes, I am referring to 'the action it [the artifact] communicates' (Foss, 2004, p. 308). Crucially, however, and in what confirms yet again my decision to concentrate on the modes of presentation of the UN rather than on its communication strategy, Foss affirms that

> function is not synonymous with purpose, which involves an effect that is intended or desired by the creator of the image or object. Scholars who adopt a rhetorical

perspective on visual artefacts do not see the creator's intentions as determining the correct interpretation of a work (2004, p. 308).

Finally, my evaluation of the success of the artefacts, to keep using Foss's terminology, combines the two broad ways in which visual rhetoricians evaluate their material. That is, I am interested in evaluating the images based not only on the function that they are supposed to achieve (in this case, presenting the UN, that is, its values, mission and work) but also, and particularly, in 'scrutinising the functions themselves that are performed by the symbols' (p. 309). I develop this approach in my analysis of the performative element of the imagery.

In doing so, I am also close to the understanding of visual rhetoric that is proposed by Laurie Gries (*Still Life with Rhetoric: A New Materialist Approach for Visual Rhetorics,* 2015, which I will discuss in more detail later in this chapter): that is, not as something that is produced by the triangulation of preexisting entities (the sender, the receiver and text) but, rather, as

> an emergent process distributed across a complex web of physical, social, psychological, spatial, and temporal dimensions (Edbauer Rice 2005, 12-13; Syveson 1999, 23) – a contingent process that becomes even more complicated in a viral economy made possible by the Internet (Gries, 2015, p. 15).

This view of rhetoric requires, the author states, new models of analysis – a principle with which I fully agree. However, while Gries develops an ecological and neo-materialist model, I focus rather on the overlap of rhetoric, visual rhetoric and visual culture studies to build my own approach.

Before advancing, I should also stress that I align my work with Barbara Biesecker's position within a central debate in twentieth century rhetoric studies: that regarding the focus of the analysis as being on the rhetorical situation (Lloyd Bitzer, 1968), the rhetor (Richard Vatz, 1973) or on their interrelation (Biesecker, 1989). In 'The Rhetorical Situation' (1968) Bitzer argues that rhetorical discourse responds to a situation (in which one can identify a political problem, i.e. a crisis, for example). He refers to it as 'an actual or potential exigence which can

be completely or partially removed if discourse […] can so constrain human decision or action' (Bitzer, 1968, p. 220).

Additionally, the author argues that rhetorical discourse can only fully address such an 'imperfection' (i.e. the political problem or crisis) if it also influences the audience – who is constrained by values and facts, among other elements. To summarise, Bitzer defines rhetoric as what happens when a speaker responds to a disruptive exigence by publicly addressing an audience with a fitting response that may lead the audience to subsequently respond to such an urgency in the way intended by the speaker. However, the latter is seen as having limited agency vis-à-vis the situation, which constrains her.

In response to Bitzer, Vatz wrote 'The Myth of the Rhetorical Situation' (1973), which argues precisely the opposite: that rhetors (speakers) are able to shape reality (i.e. to create exigencies) and define the situation with their creative use of rhetoric. As he writes, 'exigences are not the product of objective events, but rather are a matter of perception an interpretation' (Vatz, 1973, p. 214). In this view, the rhetor chooses the facts or events that she wants to communicate to the audience and, in this process, constructs rhetorical meaning. That is, in this view situations don't exist externally to their rhetorical interpretation by the rhetor (1973, p. 226); rather, it is through the rhetor's creative interpretive process that a situation is imbued with salience and meaning (1973, p. 228).

Biesecker's work (1989) aims to overcome this deadlock. She states that meaning is neither fully discovered in situations (as argued by Bitzer) nor fully created by the individual rhetor (as argued by Vatz). Rather, she argues that both elements must be considered – and she proposes to do so through *différance*, hence the title of her article "Rethinking the Rhetorical Situation From Within the Thematic of 'Différance'". Specifically, the author argues that one should investigate the relation between rhetorical discourse and the influence of the latter on the identities of both rhetor and audience – which is made possible if one understands concepts as being chained by 'a systematic play of differences' (Derrida, 1981, p. 27 cit. in Biesecker, 1989, p. 116). This theoretical framework explains her redefinition of the audience as not a 'sovereign, rational subject' with a predefined identity (Biesecker, 1989, p. 123); rather, as I mentioned earlier, the

rhetorical situation also co-creates the event and the audience. That is, rhetoric is here understood as 'a complex interactive process whereby persons and collectivities articulate their shifting identities to each other within changing historical circumstances' (Biesecker, 1989, p. 126).

As I will attempt to demonstrate in Part Two, this Derridean-inspired approach is useful to understand the success of the modes of presentation of the UN. Indeed, and to give an example, I consider that it is insufficient to analyse the visual rhetoric of the emblem/flag as a response to a particular rhetorical situation (as Bitzer argues – in this case, the need to represent the UN), without also taking into consideration the stylistic choices of those who designed it and the meanings that the image acquire in its different uses. That is, I one must examine the rhetorical context and the images (the rhetors) as being interrelated and fluid. I see Finlayson's interest in the creative dimension of rhetoric (2007, p. 560) and of Martin's attention to rhetoric as action and structure (2014, p. 97), both mentioned earlier, as compatible with this framework.

To conclude, despite the similarity in goals of the disciplines of rhetoric and visual rhetoric, their overlaps are underdeveloped. My analysis in Part Two aims to contribute to filling this gap by focusing on a specific form of political address: that of (or in the name of) the UN, combining rhetorical theory and key references in visual culture. In particular, my work aims to demonstrate the relevance of a form of visual rhetoric analysis that considers the role of the visual in making or supporting political arguments, and that does so by paying attention to the networked ways in which images function. The rest of the chapter will explain how my approach to the imagery proposes to fulfil this task.

b) Beyond Semiotics and Semiology: Looking with Mitchell and Didi-Huberman

This section will begin by explaining why it is that semiotics and semiology are insufficient to overcome the methodological problems identified in the previous section, which leads me to the work of Mitchell and Didi-Huberman as the main influences in my approach to the material. It is organised into three sections: first, I present the limits of semiotics and semiology to respond to the problems that I identified above, as well as the key ideas that I take from them in spite of

their limitations; second, I discuss recent discussions on branding and position my work within them; third, I explain my decision to use Mitchell's work on the image as one of my main methodological influences, whose work I read as providing a useful contribution to recent discussions in visual rhetoric; fourth and finally, I explain how the work of Didi-Huberman allows me to pay attention to the visual network that is created by the images.

Semiotics and semiology are classic methods in visual rhetoric studies (see Hill and Helmers, 2004, p.x). However, they are limited in their ability to grasp the specific role that is played by the visual modes of presentation of the UN. As is well known, semiotics is associated with the work of the American Charles Sanders Peirce (1931-1958), while semiology is associated with the work of the Swiss Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), and both share an interest in signs and in how they come to stand for something else. Specifically, Peirce sees them as tripartite compositions composed of an object, the sign (the *representamen*) and the effect of this sign in the one who interprets it (the *interpretant*). In this model, representation is understood as a stand-for relation of ideas that preexist language. Rather, Saussure's bipartite model sees the sign as divided between the signifier and the signified (or the *sign-vehicle* and *meaning*), i.e. within an existing language.[24] As Part Two will make clear, the complexity of the UN and the elusiveness of the ideas that it aims to represent (which requires the criss-crossing of multiple images) make these typologies insufficient.

A key reference in these discussions is Roland Barthes, who added a Marxist understanding to the Saussurian model, stressing the influence of context (or ideology) in the relationship between sign and signifier – an approach that has since become central in visual culture (see Walker and Chaplin, 1997 and Howells and Negreiros, 2012, for example). This is evident in the seminal discussion of the nature of images made in 'Rhetoric of the Image', which originally appeared in *Image/Music/Text* (1977). Barthes asks whether images can ever be said to constitute a language and, if they can, what the modalities of their meaning-making are. The visual elements within an image that are employed as signifiers are 'connotators', and the sum of these is what he refers to as the 'rhetoric of the image', a naturalising process through which

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[24] Russell Daylight provides a more detailed comparison of the two models in 'The difference between Semiotics and Semiology' (2012).

'the discontinuous world of symbol plunges into the story of the denoted scene as through into a lustral bath of innocence' (1977, p. 162). In their common paper, Arning and Gordon (2006) propose to analyse the semiotics of music using Barthes's concepts. On the one hand, '*anchorage* […] orientates the reader towards certain privileged signifies and shuts down the play of meaning, denying alternative interpretations (2006, p. 7 [original emphasis]). On the other hand, 'relay enables an extension of the associations with the musical text beyond the confines of the particular *mise en scène*, and insists on an engagement with the broader cultural environment' (2006, pp. 7-8 [original emphasis]).

Although my interest in the modes of presentation of the UN is connected with my agreement with the expanded understanding of branding that is shared by commercial semioticians such as Arning and Gordon (as I discussed in the Introduction), I reject the Barthesian model due to a central line of criticism. Specifically, I object to the dualistic separation of connotation and denotation, anchorage and relay for the same reason as I oppose Barthes' position as a scholar, which switched intermittently between suspicion and enchantment. As Mitchell puts it in *What Do Pictures Want?: The Lives and Loves of Images* (2005), in 'The Rhetoric of the Image' Barthes

> believed that semiotics, the "science of signs," would conquer the image's "resistance to meaning" […]. Later […] he began to waver in his belief that critique could overcome the magic of the image […]. The *punctum*, or wound, left by a photograph always trumps its *studium*, the message or semiotic content that it discloses (2005, pp. 8-9).

Mitchell is here referring to Barthes' *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (1980), whose focus is outside of the focus of this thesis. This said, the move away from the traditional understanding of the relation between images and meaning that I advocate resembles in some ways Mitchell's reformulation of the expression 'rhetoric of the image'. Although the term is still inscribed, for Mitchell, within the discussions initiated by Barthes, the former proposes that it might also refer to the combination of, on the one hand, a structured analysis of images with, on the other hand, an attempt to pay attention to what they come to mean as they are seen – an

aim that characterises the essays collected in *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (1986). The broad influence of Mitchell's stance in my work is evident in my decision to analyse the modes of visual presentation of the UN (not to mention in my specific approach of the material, as I will discuss later in this chapter).

However, and before advancing, it is important to stress that semiotics and semiology are interpreted by some scholars as leading to a differential understanding of language, and hence of meaning – which is where there is some agreement between my approach and Saussure's and Peirce's. To return to Saussure's model, and as the English scholar Russell Daylight makes clear when he discusses the former's distinction between meaning and value, linguistic value can be read as differential in the work of the Swiss scholar.

> For Saussure, "meaning" is like the exchange of a token; it is the bipartite correspondence between the signifier and the signified. "Value," however, recognises that these are not positive terms, but differential and mutually determining units of language (2012, pp. 45-46).

Although I will occasionally use the terms 'meaning' and 'representation' for the sake of clarity, my position is aligned with this analysis, which sees the sign not as something that should be evaluated based on its successful (or not) translation of preexisting entities but, rather, as an element that is active within the multiple dimensions of meaning-making – what Daylight describes as the difference between an interest in articulation (Saussure) and in representation (Pierce) (2012, p. 48).

Additionally, Pierce's theory of perception has been analysed in an analogous manner by art historian Aud Sissel Hoel, who argues that it is precisely the pluralism that emerges from his diagrammatic method (combining determination and abstraction) that allows for Peirce's

> dynamic and differential approach: *dynamic*, since it conceives meaning and knowledge in terms of open-ended processes of articulation […], and *differential*, since it emphasizes the transformative powers of mediating apparatuses and the

way that they […] institute new divisions […] provoking phenomena to grow […] beyond themselves (2012, p. 254 [original emphasis]).

That images are active intermediaries rather than passive elements in the process of meaning-making is a proposition that Hoel frequently defends throughout her work and with which I agree (as the rest of this chapter will confirm). Moreover, her assertions that images exist in a differential relation 'provoking phenomena to grow […] *beyond themselves'* not only reflects my previous discussion of and interest in the rhetorical dimension of images but also explains my interest in the performative, as I will discuss later in the third section of this chapter. My focus on the network of images that is created by my visual material also aims to understand the ways in which such a process of articulation (to return to Daylight's terminology) takes place.

This brings me to the second point of this section, which regards recent discussions on branding. I would like to argue that such discussions resonate with the previous point, i.e. with the idea that a concern with articulation should replace that with representation. Indeed, there has been a move in recent branding scholarship away from the traditional definition of brands as providing the identification of a product (either within a specific market or as a guarantee of its quality). This is evident, for example, in Celia Lury's proposal that brands be understood not as identities but as assemblages (see 'Brands as assemblages: assembling culture', 2009). Despite the UN's eschewing of the terminology of branding (which I discussed in the Introduction) and my own lack of interest in the communicative intentions that originate the images that subsequently become the modes of presentation of the UN, I believe that the shift effected by scholars such as Lury demonstrate why branding studies is a relevant field when discussing the modes of self-presentation of the UN, which I propose to include in this expansion of the concept of the brand.

Lury's argument concerning brands as assemblages (i.e. assembling different elements and dimensions) draws on her earlier, more sociological, work in which she described brands as having a multilevelled ontology (*Brands: The Logos of the Global Economy*, 2004). Her proposed notion stresses instead the ways in which brands assemble culture, and draws from Manuel De Landa's *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity*

(2006). Lury notes, for example, that while branding was originally intended to allow producers to address consumers, this function has been superseded by a subsequent process of 're-intermediation (the development of brand logos, identities or personalities to speak for the product)' (2009, p. 68) – an idea that resonates with the process of articulation identified above. This shift began with the emergence of marketing in the 1950s and 1960s, in which the relation between the producer and the consumer was transformed from one of mere stimulus-response to one of exchange (an idea that resonates with my interest in rhetoric as networked, following Rice, 2005 – to whose work I will return later in this chapter).

More recently, in the 1980s and 1990s, the development of consumer research accentuated the role of desirable imaginary lifestyles as frameworks for the marketing of individual products. This trend has led from individual product branding toward the development of clusters of products which all serve a common brand strategy and promote common brand values. An example mentioned by Lury is Nike's transition from a company that designed and manufactured products marketed as being of high quality to become, by the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, a company which places marketing, rather than the products, at the centre of its activity (2004, p. 50). These transformations lead Lury to argue that

> branding proceeds in different ways in different institutional contexts. It involves a range of forms of imaging, techniques and technologies, and makes use of different kinds of relationships for different strategic purposes. It embodies numerous additional functions and possibilities above and beyond its dual historical roles of reassuring consumers of quality and origin and differentiating otherwise similar (generic) products. It is thus – in a descriptive sense – clearly an assemblage (2009, p. 73).

Considering the rhetorical effects of my material will allow me to identify some of its functions, to use Lury's expression.

More recently, Lury worked with the media and communications scholar Liz Moor in research that stresses the self-evaluation and recursivity of brands (Lury and Moor, 2011) – an analysis

that expands the scope of her previous definition of brands as 'new media objects' (Lury, 2004). In the essay 'Making and Measuring Value: Comparison, singularity and agency in brand valuation practice' (2011), Lury and Moor explore three forms of valuation and measurement used by brands and branded organisations: financial brand valuation, brand equity measurement and internal social or environmental evaluations. The analysis stresses the close relations between changes in, on the one hand, the understanding of that which is of value and, on the other hand, of forms of its measurement, and so points to the ways in which a brand's modes of working now also include the affective relations that it creates with its consumers.

While Lury's recent work does maintain an understanding of brands as complex conglomerates of dynamic relations between objects that are developed in time, her focus has changed from the brand as an active agglomerator (traversing and unifying multiple dimensions) to the role played by indeterminacy in allowing the brand to respond to different contexts and pursue multiple goals. In this context, and in view of the specificities of my material (images created to represent an international organisation, whose values are highly abstract and whose mission is extremely broad) it becomes clear that the notion of the brand can be highly relevant – not only to analyse the dynamic visual network that emerges from the co-existence of different modes of self-presentation of the UN but also to identify the role of their rhetoric in making the argument (here referring to Finlayson's understanding of the term, as I discussed earlier) that the UN is relevant in different and changing contexts.

This said, Lury is by no means the only author to propose the conceptual move toward brands as active complex entities. For example, the geographer Nick Lewis proposes in 'Packaging Political Projects in Geographical Imaginaries: The Rise of Nation Branding' understanding brands as 'metrologies': stressing the ways in which brands play a role in generating ('performing') the spaces in which they exist. In this understanding,

> brands are the products of the work of marketing agents and others […]. Second, brands have genealogies, geographies and architectures. Third, brands are performative rather than acting on pre-constitutive worlds. And, fourth, they are as a result constitutive – they have effects and affects (2011, p. 267).

These three authors agree, then, that brands are generative – be it of relations between objects (Lury, 2009); of the spaces and dimensions in which they reside (Lewis, 2011); or of their own modes of evaluation (Lury and Moor, 2011). Far from being the superficial visual devices criticised in older brand scholarship, brands emerge in these arguments as spatial and performative, and as playing a role in establishing social, economic and political relations. The old opposition between surface and content, which I mentioned earlier in this chapter, is confirmed as a false dualism cutting through mutually intricate relations. This is confirmed by Lury herself in her article 'Brands as Assemblages' (2009), which discusses her conceptualisation of brands as open and incomplete assemblages and explains how Kracauer, in *The Mass Ornament* (1963),

> describes the mass forms of his day […] as practices that 'display an elective affinity with the surface'. [Contrary to Kracauer,] the rationality that organizes the contemporary economy can no longer be characterized as a 'linear system' […]. It is the significance of this shift […] that is captured in the term assemblage (2009, p. 76).

Although I am closer to the ideas of mediation and circulation than I am to that of assemblage (for reasons that I discuss below), the need to understand images as complex entities is one of the reasons why I was led to the work of Mitchell as one of the main influences in my approach to the material. The author sees images as multilayered, unruly entities that must be analysed in a non-linear manner – a form of visual analysis that I see as providing a useful contribution to the expansion of visual rhetoric. Two characteristics of his method have directly influenced my approach: its combinatory nature and the role of image tracking within it.

Regarding the first point, in *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (1994, p. 1)[25], Mitchell writes that an engagement with the visual should focus not only on what it explicitly shows but also on what it may potentially reveal. That is, images are conceived in this

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[25]   Mitchell's pictorial turn was accompanied in the same year by Boehm's introduction to the anthology *Was ist ein Bild?* [*What is an image?*], another key reference that aims to move the conversation away from the paragone between text and image.

book (as well as in his subsequent work) as multilayered and as harbouring an excess, which requires employing a multitude of methods in their analysis. Specifically, *Picture Theory* inaugurates a method that Mitchell has been applying since then: a combination of elements of semiotics, phenomenology and psychoanalysis. The previously mentioned *What Do Pictures Want?* (2004), which expands the essay 'What do Pictures "Really" Want?' (1996), also confirms this process. Michael develops his combinatory approach in order to achieve a research position that sees the image as neither merely a representation, nor as something to be fully explained until its enchantment disappears. It is worth quoting him at length:

> the double consciousness about images is a deep and abiding feature of human responses to representation. It is not something that we "get over" when we […] acquire critical consciousness. […]. My hope here is to explore a third way […], a delicate critical practice that struck images with just enough force to make them resonate, but not so much as to smash them (Mitchell, 2004, p. 8-9).

Such a 'third way' considers that pictures are living images – a position that justifies the criticism to which Mitchell has often been subjected, and with which I agree, concerning his occasional tendency to anthropomorphise images[26] as well as the strong influence of identity critique in his work (see Andrews and O'Sullivan, 2013, p. 74). That said, I also believe that Mitchell's aim to combine multiple methodologies is precisely what is necessary if one wishes to understand the modes of functioning of images and to explain their success in specific contexts.

To be more specific, it is useful to consider Mitchell's deployment of visual analysis in *Cloning Terror: The War of Images, 9/11 to the Present* (2005). Here, he applies what he calls a '"triangulation" of media aesthetics, semiotics and psychology' (2015, p. 9): influenced by semiotics and the work of Barthes, he identifies the elements of each image; influenced by phenomenology, he considers the viewing experience of each image; finally, influenced by

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[26]   At play, for example, when the author writes that 'the very notion of vision as a *cultural* activity necessarily entails an investigation of its *non*-cultural dimensions, its pervasiveness as a sensory mechanism that operates in animal organisms all the way the form the flea to the elephant' (2005, p. 345 [original emphasis]).

psychoanalysis, he examines how their power in embedded in affective relations, which he relates to broader social and political patterns. Occasionally, his approach also includes principles from media theory (see Mitchell, Grønstad and Vågnes, 2006).

Part Two ('The United Nations as a Visual Entity') demonstrates the influence of Mitchell's methodological triangulation in my approach. Indeed, when I identify the presented and suggested elements of the material, following Foss (2004), I am influenced both by semiotics and, broadly, by phenomenology. When I mention the influence of semiotics I am thinking of the findings that I achieved by asking questions such as: what are the main elements of the image? What do they represent? What do they suggest? As to the influence of phenomenology in my analysis, I asked of my material questions such as: How am does the image address me as a viewer and a citizen? What does it demand of me?

Additionally, I believe that identifying the rhetorical arguments and effects of the images (Martin, 2013 and 2015b) requires paying attention to issues of affect and engaging, even if briefly, with psychoanalytic theory. In Part Two, affect emerges as key in my discussion of the rhetorical effects of the emblem/flag in Chapter 2, of the publicness of the UN in Chapter 3 and of the Goodwill Ambassador in Chapter 4. Regarding psychoanalysis, my engagement with it is evident in Chapters 2 and 5. Finally, albeit secondarily, and like Mitchell, I also engage with discussions in media studies, particularly in Chapter 3. Altogether, this combinatory method allows me to understand the contribution of my material to the political argument according to which the UN is relevant and worthy of support (using Finlayson's definition of argument, 2007 and Biesecker's Derridean understanding of rhetoric, 1989).

This said, as I mentioned earlier, there is another methodological principle in Mitchell's work that strongly influences my research: the idea of tracking images. He applies this idea in *Cloning Terror: The War of Images, 9/11 to the Present* (2011), mentioned earlier, in which he tracks images associated with the War on Terror, such as the well-known photograph of a Guantánamo Bay prisoner in a tracksuit, and discovers that they circulate within a network that also includes images of cloning. This discovery leads Mitchell to conclude that the metaphor of 'cloning terror' not only helped recruit Jihadi fighters but was also used to justify foreign

policies by the United States government to fight the former. A similar method has been used by Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites in *No Caption Needed* (2009), which follows nine iconic photographs and their transformation across several media.

An engagement with this method is, surprisingly, mostly absent in the field of visual rhetoric. However, the idea of iconographic tracking as a key principle in this field has been developed by Laurie Gries, whom I mentioned earlier, in *Still Life with Rhetoric* (2015, mentioned earlier), which tracks and examines the transformation of Shepard Fairey's *Obama Hope* image (2011). Gries' aim to understand the rhetoric power of an image overlaps with the goals of my thesis. However, Gries' focus on one single image, combined with the introduction of the digital method of iconographic tracking, allows her to develop an extremely detailed understanding of the gradual transformation of the image from an average photograph into a recognisable icon. Additionally, her methodology combines actor-network theory and circulation studies framed by Deleuze and Guattari's work on becoming and change, which results in an expansion of visual rhetoric to the field of object-oriented studies. That is, it should be clear that our goals are very different: first, I am interested in the rhetorical dimension of the modes of self-presentation of the UN as they appear to western viewers rather than in the detailed history of their emergence and circulation (an interesting topic that would be the subject of a different thesis); second, I am interested in the relation between such rhetoric and the viewing position that the images sustain. This explains the absence of references to object-oriented in my analysis. Before advancing, I should also note that I will return to the question of circulation later in this chapter.

This leads me to my fourth and final part of this section: an explanation of why I think that the work of Georges Didi-Huberman can also contribute to strengthening the relation between rhetoric and visual rhetoric – which then leads me to a discussion of the 'inter-images'. In *Confronting Images: Questioning the Ends of a Certain History of Art* (1990), Didi-Huberman argues that art history, influenced by iconology, often fails to pay attention to the contradictions and the limits harboured by images – calling instead for an approach akin to the Freudian notion of the 'dreamwork', which, he argues, would allow us to see representation as a mobile process. As he writes: 'we cannot ignore the fact that we encounter the image in the present. Regardless of the period in which it may have been created, it is necessarily alive in our own time' (2008, p.

134). This principle has consequences in my analysis of the visual material. Specifically, it allows me to stress the differences between the context in which those images were created and those in which they circulate, as well as the changing meanings of such images in those different times.

Although Didi-Huberman's work joins a long tradition of discussions regarding the foundations of meaning and the role of the visual within it, the method with which he approaches images is particular. Echoing Mitchell's combinatory approach towards the visual, his method incorporates elements from art history (including iconographers like Panofsky and Warburg), philosophy (particularly Nietzsche, Bataille, Barthes, Foucault and Deleuze) and psychoanalysis. Recently, however, Didi-Huberman has focused more singularly on Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne Atlas* (1925–29), proposing to return to the atlas as a method to investigate the ways how images work (see *Atlas: How to Carry the World on One's Back?* 2011). The original atlas was created by the German art historian in Hamburg and subsequently brought to London to protect it from the Nazis. It functioned as a mosaic, illustrating relations between seemingly disparate images, a technique that Didi-Huberman proposes using as a working method akin to the form of visual knowledge that he sees at play in, for example, the cinema of Sergei Eisenstein, Pier Paolo Pasolini and Jean-Luc Godard. The influence of this approach is evident in my decision to analyse partly overlapping modes of presentation as a form of inter-images in Part Two (an idea to which I return below) and combinatory art installations in Part Three.

Another methodological consequence that I take from Didi-Huberman's work regards his understanding of the nature of meaning, which is strongly inspired in Derrida. Several interesting comparisons emerge between Derrida's position and Didi-Huberman's: specifically the latter's thinking on the dialectical image which, following Benjamin, is characterised by its fragile, fragmentary nature; always in movement and intermittent. The authors also share a demand for other images and words if those under analysis are to be understood: for Didi-Huberman alterity is always immanent to the image (interpreted as 'a montage of heterogeneous times', 2011) while for Derrida words are influenced by writing, which supplements them and whose meaning is permanently deferred (1967). As Didi-Huberman explains,

the image is neither *nothing,* nor *one,* nor *all*, precisely because it offers multiple

singularities always susceptible to differences, or (to borrow Jacques Derrida's

coinage) to '*différances'* (2003, p. 121).

My interest in the visual network that is created by the three modes of presentation that I

identified and discuss in Part Two acknowledges the significant, yet often subtle changes that

occur in the transition between an individual image and the combination and articulation of

multiple images. Specifically, I stress that the relations between my material are an important

element to consider when analysing their effects.

I should note that, despite being strongly inspired by Didi-Huberman in this regard, my interest

in what I refer to as the inter-images also mirrors two of Gries' principles of iconographic

tracking, which the author justifies with the need to grasp the intensity of distributed rhetoric.

The are:

- embracing the virtual and following an image flow […] to see how it changes in

    form, media, genre, and function; [and]
- embracing uncertainty and maintaining a radical sense of openness […] in order

    to account for an image's […] rhetorical transformation (Gries, 2015, p. 108).

Before advancing, I would like to stress that this discussion is closely related to ongoing debates

in history of art and in rhetoric. It is worth explaining this point briefly. Specifically, since the

1980s, French cinema theorist Raymond Bellour has aimed at dismantling the dualism between

logos and pathos – as have Finlayson, Martin and other contemporary rhetoricians. He argues

that there has been a tendency to reduce the image to pathos alone which runs throughout

French thinkers as diverse as Lacan, Deleuze, Barthes and Foucault. Instead, Bellour views the

weaving of word and image as central to cinema and as analogous to the 'double helix' of signs

and sensations which, he says, characterise our time ('The Double Helix', 1996). More recently,

in *In Between-the-Images* (2011), the author introduced the term '*l'entre-images'* [the in-

between images] in his discussion of examples of film and visual art not fitting traditional

medium distinctions. As I suggested above, the idea of a criss-crossing between images (in a similar manner to Bellour's 'passages') will be key in my analysis of the effects of the visual material in the next three chapters – which resonates with the idea of distributed rhetoric that also underlies Gries' work.

The result of this short engagement with the work of Mitchell and Didi-Huberman is clear: I am proposing a paradigmatic change regarding the ways in which the image is understood in rhetoric and visual rhetoric discussions, derived from the points made previously concerning its nature as a complex, unruly entity. Simultaneously, however, the relations between images also emerge as important in their own right – which contributes to expanding the focus of visual rhetoric itself. This conclusion has consequences regarding my understanding of the ontology of the image – an issue that, albeit secondary to my concerns, must be briefly mentioned in the context of this discussion. This problem, of course, has a long history in art history. In her essay 'Lines of Sight, Peirce on Diagrammatic Abstraction' (2012), Hoel traces the problem back to Peirce's work on the iconic. Following Peirce's rejection of dualism (which I mentioned earlier), Hoel proposes to develop what she refers to as a dynamic and differential account of mediation – one which differs both from more recent, contextualist approaches to meaning and from traditional empiricist notions of abstraction (such as John Locke's). Instead, Hoel locates an important power in mediating apparatuses – resonating with Lury's understanding of the brand. Hoel's approach is hence similar to my own understanding of mediation, which I discuss in the next section of this chapter, albeit not as wide-ranging.

Hoel's critique of substance metaphysics is also important to clarify the ontological consequences of considering the inter-image as an important dimension in the analysis. In 'Thinking "Difference" Differently: Cassirer versus Derrida on Symbolic Mediation' (2011), Hoel opposes the understanding of the image in substance metaphysics, in which it 'is conceived as derivative, and its object is accorded ontological priority. Any creative or formative activity on the side of the image, any *difference* introduced as a result of *mediacy,* is considered a source of error […]. The image is a fiction; it is blind (2011, pp. 153–154). Rather, she proposes to see the mediacy that is introduced by images as equally valid (that is, in ontological terms) as, for example, objects (which some images attempt to reflect). This point

helps understand the role of the inter-image in effecting the change that occurs from the traditional conception of brand to Lury's framework and that is evident, as I will demonstrate, in the UN's modes of presentation; at the same time, it also echoes my view of rhetoric as a networked process (following Rice, 2005).

In particular, Hoel refers to several other authors, including Maurice Merleau-Ponty, in order to explain the significance of this approach to the image. It is worth quoting her at length here:

> In contrast to substance metaphysics, phenomenology accords ontological (or at least experiential) priority to relations over entities […]. Maurice Merleau-Ponty is right, I think, when he maintains that the simplest sense-given perception is not a sense impression but a figure on a background (1962, 4) […]. Seen against this framework, images appear not as things to be seen but as differential matrices that *make visible* (2011, p. 154 [original emphasis]).

Again, what interests me about the inter-image is precisely its ability to 'make visible' the values, mission, work and, as I will argue, the relevance of the UN. Specifically, pacing the inter-image as a key dimension in the analysis of the effects of each of the groups of imagery that I collated reflects this understanding of the material as making visible different dimensions of the UN. In collaboration with the information science scholar Frank Lindseth, Hoel applied this principle to the analysis of advanced imagining techniques and their uses in operating theatres. In 'Differential Interventions: Images as Operative Tools' (2014), they analyse the interaction of surgeons with various displays and neuronavigational techniques, which they discuss as augmenting reality in ways that go beyond representation. I see my analysis of the complex visual networks such as the one that I will analyse in Part Two as mirroring this approach.

c) The Inter-Images, Mediation and Performativity

My goal with this section, the last one in this chapter, is to better explain my decision to use performativity as a key tool in my approach of the visual material. As I will explain, this notion

allows me to connect several ideas that I have already mentioned: a Derridean-inspired understanding of rhetoric, my framework of visual rhetoric, key principles present in the work of Mitchell and Didi-Huberman and key discussions regarding mediation and political theory. The next three chapters will reveal how performativity also allows me to establish a connection between such discussions and ongoing debates in UN studies, such as those surrounding the tension between the sovereignty of the nation states and the international/supranational order of the UN. This section is organised into two parts: first, I explain my understanding of mediation and position it within ongoing debates of and around the term, such as those on circulation; second, I discuss the idea of performativity and relate it to discussions around the frame within political and visual theory.

My decision to consider the visual modes of the UN places me in dialogue with ongoing discussions regarding the concepts of mediatisation (developed by Stig Hjarvard, 2004 and Winfried Schulz, 2004) and mediation (Roger Silverstone, 2002 and 2005), both of which aim to clarify the modes of working of the media in a time characterised by the increasing circulation of content. Nick Couldry discusses the differences between these two terms in detail in a piece that focuses on digital storytelling (2008, including their histories and definitions by key authors, pp. 4-9; see also Couldry and Hepp, 2013). His argument is that mediatisation, in broad terms, refers to 'an essentially linear transformation from 'pre-media' […] to mediatized social states (2008, p. 3) whilst mediation refers to the "heterogeneity of the transformations to which media give rise across a complex and divided social space rather than a single 'media logic' that is simultaneously transforming the whole of social space at once" (2008, p. 3). Additionally, the term highlights the fact that the media are not neutral forms of intermediation. It should be clear that my research questions, goal and strategy are better aligned with the concerns of mediation – I am interested in understanding the consequences of a specific set of images in a world in which their circulation through different media makes them increasingly important in the daily lives of citizens.

This said, it is particularly important to mention Couldry's questioning of the assumption of symmetry that is present in Silverstone's definition. The latter describes it as concerning 'the fundamentally, but unevenly, dialectical process in which institutionalised media of

communication […], are involved in the general circulation of symbols in social life' (Silverstone, 2002, p. 762). However, Couldry finds Silverstone's definition 'too friendly' (2008, p. 8) and questions its empirical validity. Rather, the former identifies

> two possibilities only hinted at in Silverstone's definition of mediation: first, that what we might call 'the space of media' is structured in important ways, durably and partly beyond the intervention of particular agents; and second that, because of that structuring, certain interactions, or 'dialectics' – between particular sites or agents – are closed off, isolating some pockets of mediation from the wider flow (2008, p. 8).

An interest in the specific ways in which such a 'closing off' takes place in the modes of presentation of the UN underlies the understanding of mediation that is in operation in this thesis. The inter-images with which the UN presents itself isn't neutral – as we will see, it performs the values and the space (for example) of the organisation, which makes a political argument regarding its importance, and hence contributes to sustaining its power. However, Part This demonstrates that the dialectical process that is identified by Silverstone can be activated – namely, through artistic appropriation.

The understanding of mediation that I share also allows me to further clarify some of my previous comments. Although I do share with Hoel and Lindseth (2014), as I said before, the view that images introduce forms of difference that are productive of meaning (instead of being merely derivative), my focus lies on the rhetorical consequences of this network of images rather than on the technical, financial and other apparatus that make the transmission and viewership of such images possible – a position that distinguishes me from their understanding of mediating apparatuses. Additionally, my specific interest in mediation also clarifies my position vis-à-vis Gries' definition of circulation as the set of 'spatiotemporal glows, which unfold and fluctuate as things enter into diverse associations and materialise in abstract and concrete forms (Gries, 2015, p. 19). Before I explore this term, it is important to reiterate my distinction from Gries' approach. While her analysis of the emergence and circulation of the Obama Hope poster and subsequently inspired imagery aims to understand (by following its

emergence and transformations) the specific ways in which it was 'composed, produced, distributed and transformed as well as the ways they induce assemblage, spark collective action, and catalyse change that registers on affective and rhetorical dimensions' (Gries, 2015, p. 20), my focus lies on the ways how the images that have come to represent the UN articulate multiple rhetorical goals in a criss-crossing manner. This is why our theoretical frameworks differ so significantly, as I mentioned previously.

Nonetheless, the idea of circulation is crucial in our understanding of rhetoric. That is, both of us approach issues regarding the 'distributed ontology' (p. 201) of imagery, following the work of Jenny Edbauer Rice (2005, mentioned earlier) on rhetorical ecologies, which highlights the fluidity and the circulation of rhetoric in society. In this view, rhetoric is distributed within a network (or field) of forces, affects, and associations' (Gries, 2015, p. 27). However, Gries focuses on the rhetoric of a sole image (which she approaches as an event, p. 27), while I consider a political organisation as a visual entity. This is why, although we do share a set of references and concerns, they play different levels of importance in our approach. Additionally, my work attends to the particular issue of how the circulation of images contributes to sustaining political support without necessarily leading to political action – the opposite rhetorical effect of the Obama poster.

This said, although my work and that of Gries differ in their focus and goals, we share Cara Finnegan's interest in understanding images as they are produced, distributed and flow through different physical and digital systems – an issue that she examines, for example, in *Picturing Poverty: Print Culture and FSA Photographs*, 2003. This is because, and more importantly, the rhetorical and circulation approaches are interrelated. That is, the former is crucial to grasp the dynamics that underpin the latter's processes; at the same time, 'studies of circulation actually do have potential to disclose how rhetoric unfolds as a complex, distributed event' (Gries, 2015, p. 20). Indeed, the potential difficulties of attending to circulation (identified by authors such as Kevin Deluca and Joe Wilferth, whose argument Gries examines in detail in pp. 16-20 of her book, 2015) can be overcome as long as one avoids evaluating images as if they had been produced for and were consumed by a 'print gaze' (2009, p. 13); rather, one must highlight their dynamism.

To return explicitly to the idea of mediation, the term is no longer merely a concern of communication and media studies; rather, it has gradually become a concept that is also discussed in politics – an understanding that I share. This is evident in its use by scholars working beyond the field of media studies who are nonetheless interested in the ways in which power is enacted and sustained. For example, as I mentioned in the Introduction, François Debrix and Cynthia Weber define it in *Rituals Of Mediation* (2003) as 'a site of representation, transformation, and pluralization where […] international rituals are performed' (2003, p. vii), i.e. pointing not only to the fluidity of power but also, and crucially, to the overlap between the dimensions of representation and transformation. As it should be clear by now, the turn towards mediation also has consequences in the way how power (and not only that of images) is understood.[27] As the international relations scholar Debbie Lisle writes in the article 'Site specific: Medi(t)ations at the Airport' (2003), which looks at airports as foregrounding the emergence of new forms of mediated power, understood in a Foucauldian sense,

> mediated power is something that is articulated, disseminated, transformed, and rearticulated […]. By starting with the concept of mediation, we can begin to see that power only exists to the extent that we can identify its practices and witness its effects (2003, pp. 3-4).

This interest in understanding the specific ways how power is sustained in and through forms of mediation (specifically, that of the UN) demands that I consider the role that affect plays in this relation. Crucially, affect is acknowledged in discussions of brands both by Moor (2007) and by Lewis (2011), as I have mentioned. Additionally, the affective realm is also recognised as key in ongoing discussions of images – both in terms of their captivating power (as I will discuss later – Campbell, 2007) and as contributing to structuring not only the perception of the viewer but also her responses (Butler, 2009). This is why my analysis gains from briefly considering Sarah Ahmed's work (particularly *The Cultural Politics of Emotion,* 2004), which allows me to connect these different understandings of affect. Contrary to the traditional Freudian connotation of the terms, which refers originally to instincts, drives and emotions (Freud, 1915),

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[27] This reflects, namely, my critique of Metahaven's work in the Introduction.

Ahmed sees emotions (of attraction and repulsion) as a relational dimension that emerges as the result of repeated actions – echoing the relational understanding of meaning that is proposed by Hoel. Specifically, Ahmed sees emotions as referring to the register of the proximity of others, which includes human beings, objects and frames of reference. Part Two will discuss my visual material as both embodying multiple kinds of affect towards the UN and as a mediator of broader effective relations.

This leads me to the second point in this section. I am particularly interested in understanding the role of affect in supporting the UN's movement or crossing of a threshold from the national (with its sovereignty and jurisdiction) to the international and, hence, to navigating some of the central tensions that characterise the UN – as is identified by Anne-Marie Slaughter (2005), whose work I discuss in Chapter 2 ('The UN Flag – Performing the Space and the Time of the UN') and by Weiss and Thakur (2010). This demands a consideration of issues regarding the performative.

As is well known, the term goes back to J.L. Austin's discussion of performative utterances in *How to Do Things With Words* (1962). Such utterances, Austin proposes, are judged according to the success or the failure of their corresponding speech acts: 'When I say "I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth" I do not describe the christening ceremony, I actually perform the christening' (1962, p. 235). Several other authors have drawn from Austin and expanded the applicability of the performative. Among the best known are Jacques Derrida and Judith Butler. Although my thesis doesn't aim to expand these conversations, it acknowledges the importance of their contribution to an in-depth understanding of the visual material that I will discuss in the next chapters as well as the intensification of the overlap between rhetoric and visual rhetoric studies. Indeed, the performative articulates a set of concerns identified earlier regarding the instability of images as multidimensional, existing both *per se* and within a set of social and cultural relations. This tension is analogous to the central rhetorical distinction identified by the literary critic Paul de Man, following Austin, in the pioneering 'The Resistance to Theory' (1982), an essay dedicated to the rise of literary theory in America in the twentieth century and its consequences to the pedagogy of literary studies. In this essay, de Man argues that literature is constituted by two interrelated dimensions: on the one hand, the rhetorical or

tropological dimension (a form of indetermination that he sees as inherent to language) and, on the other hand, what he calls the grammatical (a logical side that can be decoded, hence fulfilling the role of offering knowledge about something). The idea that the tropological and the grammatical are never fully separable is influenced by the distinction between performative and constative utterances proposed by Austin (the former refers to the performative element of language while the latter concerns the descriptive dimension of language).

This said, my understanding of the performative is mostly influenced by Derrida, whose interest in the term derives from its foregrounding of the independence of language vis-à-vis the referent, as I mentioned earlier in this chapter. This interest also explains his disagreement with Austin. As the law scholar Elena Loizidou writes in *Judith Butler: Ethics, Law, Politics* (2007), which uses the work of Butler to understand the formation of the legal subject, while Austin suggests 'that any failure or infelicity is contextual […], Derrida insists locution (the style in which our utterances are conveyed) is also predicated upon the intentional subject' (2007, p. 33). The result is an understanding of the performative that stresses the authority or lack thereof of the subject who pronounces such a sentence. However, I also read this idea as allowing me to better grasp the importance of what Martin identifies as the dynamism of political ideas (2015b), which not only affirms a specific understanding of the world but also, by doing so, excludes others. Loizidou explains this idea rather succinctly:

> Derrida incisively points out that what makes the performative a performative is what it excludes, the non-serious or impure […]. It is at this point that Derrida provides us with a criticism of and a supplement to Austin's speech-act theory. For Derrida, performative utterances recite the infelicity (through its exclusion) (2007, pp. 33-34).

The increasing relevance of the performative is confirmed by recent work by the gender theorist and philosopher Judith Butler, who is interested in the 'non-explicit performative' (as described by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, 2002, p. 6). Particularly, Butler adapts speech-act theory into a theorisation of the formation of gendered subjects, in view of which she discusses language but mostly bodily practices and gestures (see *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*,

1993). However, she has recently expanded her understanding of the term. In the article 'Performative Agency' (2010a), for example, Butler argues that the notion **'**seeks to counter a certain kind of positivism according to which we might begin with already delimited understandings of what gender, the state, and the economy are' (p. 147), which points to the relevance of using the performative to investigate broader social dimensions and even, as I will demonstrate, political institutions.

Finally, the term performative also increasingly emerges in ongoing discussions regarding the use of images as documentary (such as in the work of the literary theorist Thomas Keenan, 2004 and 2006, which I mention in Chapter 4, 'The Goodwill Ambassador as a Complex Mediator – Performing Proximity') and regarding discussions on art and representation (as seen in the work of Barbara Bolt, 2004, which I mention in Part Three).

This said, performative images can only succeed in a specific context of spectatorship that is prone to it. This is why debates on the frame, which allow me to understand the type of viewing position that my visual material demands, must also be mentioned. As Michelle Wolf, Bryan Jones and Frank Baumgartner note in 'A Failure to Communicate: Agenda Setting in Media and Policy Studies' (2013), media studies rarely create 'linkages between the micro and macro level and between the media-as-cause and media-as-effect approaches' (p. 186). In making this statement, the authors suggest that media effects are often discussed in terms of their impact on either individual cognition (that is, on the perception of specific issues and its wider consequences, for example regarding voting patterns) or in terms of the system effects of media patterns (for example, raising the profile of a specific topic may subsequently lead to policy changes). Rather, the authors argue that an understanding of feedback cycles between these dimensions is urgently needed. Framing studies are one of the potential ways to fill this gap, they state (p. 184) – and I agree.

In *Frames of War – When is Life Grievable?* (2009), a philosophical response to processes of image production and dissemination in a context of perpetual war, Judith Butler argues that frames of interpretation manage affectively, visually and discursively collective responses to life in such a way as to produce distinctions between those individuals whose lives appear in danger

and those whose lives are not perceived as such at all. In this context, Butler's intention is to identify the possibilities for recognising such lives as precarious. This analysis can be extended to a more general understanding of the visual, which includes photographs not only of conflict but also the official modes of public address by political organisations or representatives.

Although Butler's inquiry regarding the frame aims to investigate the production of a generalised understanding of non-precarious lives (such as those affected by western military operations), the answer to the question 'As we watch video or see an image, what kind of solicitation is at work?' (Butler, 2010b, p. xvii) is one which is highly pertinent to the visual material under examination in this thesis. And yet it is important that Butler never reifies the visual in her discussion: rather, she sees it as one among several elements that, together, contribute to the production of a set of ethical positions and relations. Considering the network of images that is created by the modes of presentation of the UN as a form of frame allows me to connect two ideas in my analysis: on the one hand, the relevance of Couldry's reading of Silverstone's definition of mediation (2013), i.e. as an asymmetrical process and, on the other hand, Derrida's understanding of the performative as an exclusionary operation (1976, 1984).

Finally, as should be clear by now, my concern with the frame is also connected with my interest in issues of spectatorship – a topic with which I engage primarily through an analysis of two art installations in Part Three. My analysis considers to what extent they are able to expand the viewing experience of the UN and, in doing so, it is broadly influenced by the debates that I have just discussed.

Chapter 2: The UN Emblem/Flag – Performing the Space and the Time of the UN

Figure 11 – The UN flag in its current version (1947).

The main goal of this chapter is to discuss one of the central modes of self-presentation of the UN: its emblem/flag. Its aim is to make visible the values and goals of the organisation; as such, it is used across the globe to represent the UN in a wide variety of contexts. This explains why I refer to the rhetorical function of this mode of presentation as one of identification: as I will demonstrate, the flag/emblem reminds the viewer of the values and the mission of the organisation, and identifies the individuals, spaces and events that appear within the same images as the flag/emblem as being related to the UN. I should also stress that the emblem and flag function, in practical terms, in a similar manner. This is why I discuss their rhetorical arguments and effects in common – which explains the use of singular pronouns and verbs when I refer to the two images (with only some exceptions, such as when I present the history of each of them).

I organise my analysis of the visual rhetoric of the emblem/flag into two main parts. First, I start by analysing the rhetorical argument that it makes ('Argument: The UN Emblem/Flag – Attempting to Represent a United World'). In this context, I discuss the original aims and the early history of the emblem/flag, and present the different contexts and the main official protocols that govern its display and arrangement in relation to comparable national symbols (such as flags). Second, I conclude the chapter with a discussion of its main rhetorical effects ('Effects: Making Foundational Problems Visible'), which I identify as being, first, the appearance of sovereignty as an interrupted continuum and, second, the visual articulation of the aspiration for connectedness. I argue that, through these rhetorical effects, the emblem/flag performs the space and the time of the UN, respectively.

a) Argument: The UN Emblem/Flag – Attempting to Represent a United World

In this section, I will, first, briefly present the origins of the emblem/flag; second, I will discuss and analyse the current versions of the emblem/flag and their presented and suggested elements; third, I will present and analyse how the emblem/flag is used (and discuss, once again, the suggested elements that one can identify in those contexts).

<u>a.1. Origins</u>

To begin, three documents define the characteristics of the original emblem[28]: 'Official seal and emblem of the United Nations' (adopted by the General Assembly at its 50th plenary meeting at Lake Success, New York, 7 December 1946) (UN, 1946 b); 'Regulations for the control and limitation of documents' (issued by the Secretariat, 15 January 1979) (UN 1979); 'Use of the United Nations emblem on documents and publications' (an amendment to the 1979 regulations, published 23 January 2008) (UN 2008). These documents detail acceptable use of the UN emblem on UN documents and publications; use by UN bodies; use of emblems for UN conferences and designated international years; use of the UN emblem with the insignia of individual governments; use of the UN emblem in documents of bodies outside the UN system; and exceptions and guidelines for the selection of distinctive emblems for major UN conferences.

When understood as a flag – which was first proposed in 20 October 1947 – the emblem's use is regulated by the UN Flag Code and regulations (first effective from 11 November 1952 and amended in 1 January 1967) (UN, 1946h), which defines, among other things: the dimensions of the flag; the flag protocol (to be displayed alone or with one or more other flags, at the same level and approximate size, not to be subordinated to any other flag); reasons for display (including the demonstration of support of the UN, for example); the possible flag uses (both generally, on national and official holidays, on the UN day and during official events in honour of the organisation, etc.); prohibitions (regarding, for example, its use for commercial purposes); and its display in case of mourning.

Interestingly, although the UN has six official languages – English, French, Spanish, Arabic, Russian and Mandarin – protocols for the display of the flag as part of a full circle of flags of UN member states dictate that all national flags be organised alphabetically by country using the English language, and that the UN flag be always at the centre. The documents registering the first proposal, revisions and the official design are 'Official seal and emblem of the United Nations. Report of the Secretary-General', 15 Oct. 1946 (UN 1946b); 'Proposed revision of the

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[28] The files mentioned in this paragraph are available at UN, no date q.

United Nations emblem', 18 Nov. 1946 (UN, 1946e); 'Sixth Committee. Proposed United Nations emblem (2nd rev.)' (UN 1946f), 26 Nov. 1946 (UN 1946g); 'Official seal and emblem of the United Nations' Annex to Report of the Sixth Committee', 4 Dec. 1946 (UN, 1946c); 'Official seal and emblem of the United Nations: resolution' adopted, as mentioned above, by the General Assembly at its 50th plenary meeting, Lake Success, New York, 7 December 1946 (UN, 1946d).[29]

Regarding its presented elements, the current version of the emblem/flag (which I will discuss in detail later) derives from the original lapel pin created to identify the delegates of the 1945 United Nations Conference on International Organization (San Francisco, California, 25 April 1945) at which the UN Charter was drafted by delegates of 50 nations. The charter was adopted unanimously on 25 June 1945 (see Appendix II for a list of the documents regarding the original proposal, changes and final resolutions pertaining to the emblem and the flag; UN 2009). Following an idea attributed to the chairperson of the American delegation (Secretary of State Edward Stettinius, Jr.), a team led by the American architect and designer Oliver Lincoln Lundquist worked on several proposals, finally creating an emblem derived from an original design by Donal McLaughlin, which

> had a projection of the world centred on the United States as the host country, and omitted Argentina, which at the time was not a member of the United Nations. The idea was to display a globe that would symbolize one world, with the olive branches representing peace. Blue, considered to be the opposite of red – the colour of war – was selected and subsequently became the official colour for the United Nations (UN, no date r).

McLaughlin's narrative concerning the early design of the flag states that the original blue matched that used at the time by the U.S. Army. This, I would argue, points to one of the multiple institutional flaws of the UN: namely, the disproportionate degree of influence wielded by the United States – one of the reasons why it is often criticised, as I mentioned in the introduction. Although I could find no other references establishing this connection (and I

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[29] See Appendix II for a chronology providing an overview of these documents and the purposes that they serve.

should note that the shades of blue that are used in the UN army seal and in the UN flag are slightly different today), this point is nonetheless interesting. Indeed, and on the one hand, it can be found on the UN website (which demonstrates the institutional recognition of the story); on the other hand, it is in tension with the explicit choice of an emblem that was created to symbolise 'one world', represent peace, and hence embody the central goals of the organisation: the maintenance or the strengthening of international peace and security through international cooperation.

Figure 12 – Original UN lapel pin (1945).

Let us then consider the main presented elements of the pin (figure 12). Notice how the hemisphere is rotated in a way that gives predominance to the North American continent (which appears close to the centre of the object). The Southern end of the South American continent is also hidden from view. Additionally, not only did the blue match the tone used by the American Army, but the azimuthal projection was originally centred on the US and was limited 'in the Southern sector to a parallel that cut off Argentina' (Heller, 2009), as mentioned earlier.

It is also important to consider the subsequent changes made to the original design. During the first session of the UN General Assembly, which took place on October 15, 1946, the Secretary-General proposed that the organisation should have an official emblem.

Figure 13 – Proposed revision of United Nations emblem (1946).

Figure 14 – Proposed revision of United Nations emblem (second revision) (1946).

Figure 15 – The UN emblem in its colour version (no date).

Figure 13 reveals that the atlas was rotated to give prominence to the Greenwich Meridian, South America was extended (following the inclusion of Argentina as a UN member, which was signed on 26 June 1945 and became officially valid from 26 October 1945) and Australasia became more detailed. Additionally, notice the inclusion of several archipelagos in figure 14. In fact, as the original design (the lapel pin, figure 12) was considered to be too centred on the North American continent,

> A committee was tasked to make several modifications to the original design that had been used in San Francisco. The new version rotated the projection of the world so that east and west were more balanced and all continents could be seen in full, and also included southern South America. The UN logo we all know today was approved by the General Assembly on 7 December 1946 (UN, 2009).

Interestingly, despite the UN's current eschewing of the language of branding, as I described in the Introduction, note that the organisation uses the word logo in this early statement. The redesign process concluded quickly: the new proposal was submitted with revisions on 18 November, and again on 26 November, the latter design being approved on 7 December 1946 (see Annex II). The map was redrawn by the UN cartographer Leo Drozdoff, who changed the projection to an azimuthal equidistant projection with the North Pole at its centre that was rotated in order to provide a 90º angle to the Prime Meridian and the International Date Lines, extending the projection to 60º south latitude and including five concentric circles (figure 15), which follows the attempt to make the symbol less focused on the United States.

This short analysis (which I will continue in the next pages) leads me to identify yet another reason why my analysis and theoretical background differ from those of Gries (2015). The author's decision to focus on only one image (the *Obama Hope* poster) allows her to analyse its gradual emergence and transformation, leading her to identify a set of analytic principles. Among them is the principle of transformation, which she identifies as the 'virtual-actual process of becoming in which rhetoric unfolds in unpredictable, divergent, and inconsistent ways' (Gries, 2015, p. 86). Identifying, let alone analysing, the detailed components of the gradual process of transformation of the image (which would require having access to

information regarding the discussions that took place among the committee, for example) is impossible when such information isn't publicly available – as is, unfortunately, the case.

Let us then return to the analysis of the presented elements of the emblem. Its gold version (figure 15) is used in architectonical elements, including in the General Assembly. However, in most cases the emblem is similar to the flag: white on a blue background.

Figure 16 – The original proposal of the UN flag (1947)

Figure 17 – The UN flag in its current version (no date).

The modified emblem was then used to create a flag (figure 16) following the Secretary-General's memorandum to the General Assembly of 21 August 1947 (Annex II), which identified the need for an identifiable UN flag as both

> a sign of neutrality, and as a protective measure for its staff. It was embroidered or printed in white on a blue background, along with the name of the organisation in English and French […]. The Secretary-General felt that the UN emblem already being used possessed 'simplicity and dignity to a greater extent than any other design' that had been submitted. The General Assembly approved the use of the flag as the official emblem of the United Nations on 20 October 1947 (UN, 2009).

Resolution 167 (II) also instructed the Secretary-General to define a flag code and regulation, which was published on 19 December 1947, corrected on 11 November 1952 and revised on 1 January 1967, leading to the current design (figure 17). It is noteworthy that at this juncture the original colour was changed from a grey blue to the current blue[30], the wreath was slightly modified from the original version and the words 'United Nations/Nations Unies' were removed. Since then, the flags from the UN specialised organisations have been based on the UN flag and its colour has been used, for example, to identify UN peacekeeping forces. Indeed, the blue helmet is the major identifier of the UN in conflict zones – the UN initials have often been added, or have replaced the emblem altogether, for increased clarity in difficult conditions (which I will discuss in more detail below).

The subtle changes to which the original design was subjected (such as the decision to expand the representation of the planet's land masses and the removal of the English and French versions of the organisation's name) demonstrate an awareness, albeit a limited one, of the difficulties associated with representing the central value of the UN: universality. However, these changes do not represent a significant shift. In fact, in its decision to employ this symbol extensively, the UN seems to agree with the positive evaluation made by the international law scholar Peter Macalister-Smith when he writes in 'The United Nations Emblem and

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[30]   I should note that the colour blue is not codified officially (although the original UN Secretary-General report identifies it as Pantone 279), which leads to occasional variations.

Flag' (1986), regarding the UN emblem, that 'the design possesses the essential requirements of simplicity and dignity, as well as an aesthetic quality, which have enabled it to survive with a considerable measure of success as an effective international symbol enjoying global acceptance (1986, p. 263). However, a close engagement with the emblem/flag reveals that, contra Macalister-Smith, its straightforwardness is nothing but apparent.

a.2. Current Versions

This becomes evident when one analyses in more detail the current versions of the flag and the emblem, as I will now do. Additionally, there is an important point that will emerge clearly from this analysis: the noticeable absence of a practical concern for the symbolic implications of such design choices, which at times directly oppose the main aim of the symbol.

Two elements of the design in particular merit closer attention: the colour scheme and the olive tree branches. The colour blue is associated in Christianity with the Virgin Mary, who is often portrayed wearing it.[31] In Hinduism, several gods, such as Vishnu, Krishna, Ram and Shiva are depicted in blue tones, and it is also the colour of the Vishuddka chakra, the purification centre. In Judaism blue is understood as the colour of God's glory, which is why staring at it is understood as aiding in meditation, while in Buddhism statues prepared in Tibet and Nepal have their hair painted blue.

As for the colour white, it is associated with the sacred in the Talmud and ancient Greece. In ancient Rome, a white toga was worn on ceremonial occasions by all adult Roman citizens; subsequently, the early Christian church adopted the association of white with purity, sacrifice and virtue. Today, the colour is associated in western culture with innocence and sacrifice, originating from the Biblical sacrifice of lambs and other white animals to expiate sins. It is also associated with the new, again deriving from Christianity – the resurrected Christ is traditionally portrayed dressed in white. In China, Korea, and some other Asian countries, white (or the tones of undyed linen) is the colour of mourning, funerals and reincarnation. Pilgrims in Japan wear

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[31]   This analysis of the symbolic associations of the elements of the UN flag is based on information provided by *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols*, edited by Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant (1969).

undyed linen robes for rituals of purification; in India, white was traditionally reserved for the Brahmin caste – that with the highest status. Finally, the Bedouin culture sees white, the colour of milk, as associated with gratitude, joy, fertility and good fortune.

While blue and white are widely associated with purification, gold is associated with that which is of great value and, often, with the divine sphere. Indeed, the golden fleece[32] of Ancient Greek legend is seen by archaeologists and historians as representing the ideas of power, kinship, legitimacy, wealth or the forgiveness of God. The symbolism of gold in the Bible is also complex, ranging from the association with evil and rebellion against God (as in the case of the golden calf) to a simple of purity. Its embodiment of divine qualities is associated with the indestructible nature of gold, its malleability and its relative scarcity. This is one of the reasons why liturgical vessels, crosses and other objects required for sacred rituals in various religions were made in this material. In Buddhist mysticism, Tibetan statues (particularly their faces) are often painted with gold paint, symbolising the sun or fire. Finally, in Hinduism, gold is also associated with Surya, the sun god. As a result of this, the colours of the emblem/flag can be seen as representing purity/sacrifice and value in a universal manner.

The symbolism of olive tree branches, however, is more geographically specific to the West, having been recognised as a symbol of peace in western civilisation since the fifth century B.C.E., particularly in the Mediterranean basin. Indeed, the olive branch was one of the characteristics of the goddess of peace, Eirene, as noted by Virgil in the *Aeneid*. This association was also shared by the Romans, who used olive branches as a gesture of peace during the Pax Romana. The olive plant is also important in Judaism: in the Torah, Noah's story ends with a dove bringing an olive leaf as a sign of life after the Flood. The Christian interpretation of the symbol follows these two traditions. For example, in the New Testament, the spirit of God that descended on Jesus during his baptism is compared with a dove. The story of Noah is also incorporated in the Bible, leading to the establishment of a dove with an olive branch as a

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[32] The golden fleece is seen in Greek mythology as a symbol of authority and kingship. It refers to the fleece of a gold-hair ram that figures in the tale of Jason and the Argonauts. Jason, whose father had lost the throne in Iolcus to his brother Pelias, was ordered by King Pelias to find the fleece – an impossible task that Jason accomplished.

Christian symbol of peace, although that association isn't present in the Jewish tradition. Finally, the olive branch is also a symbol of peace in Arab folk traditions.

The unevenly distributed recognisability of the cultural meaning of the olive branch highlights a central characteristic of the symbol: the emblem/flag, while aiming to make the values and aims of the UN visible, also illustrates some of the central issues for which the organisation is often criticised. These include the disproportionate agency of the American delegation in designing the image and the selection of the English language to organise the flags alphabetically in front of the UN headquarters, as we will see in Chapter 3 ('The Publicness of the General Assembly and the Security Council – Performing Inclusion').[33] Interestingly, the acceptance of a design centred on the North Pole was unanimous: all the members of the General Assembly voted for the second revision of the flag and emblem, even those who weren't situated in the northern hemisphere.[34]

That is, contrary to the almost universal character of the colours of the emblem/flag (which have been a powerful symbol in several cultures for hundreds of years), this short overview stresses the cultural-specific connotations of the olive branch (i.e. its association with mostly western sources: classical Greek, biblical and islamic), and hence the difficulty of representing visually one of the central values of the UN. The use of the image as the key symbol of an institution that presents itself as universal emerges, then, as highly problematic. I can therefore posit that the flag may have an opposing effect to what it is intended to represent (i.e. separation rather than universality) in specific cultural contexts, although I wasn't able to find any studies that confirm this hypothesis. This said, this would be consistent with the criticism of the UN related to its tendency to give more attention to the political priorities of the New York and Geneva headquarters, i.e. of its perception as western-centric (see, for example, Roderic Alley, *The United Nations in Southeast Asia and the South Pacific*, 1998, pp. 138-139).

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[33]   The American origins of the UN also explain the official use of American English.

[34]   The 11 of the 51 member states which lie south of the equator but nonetheless voted in favour of the design centred on the North Pole are: Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, New Zealand, Paraguay, Peru, Union of South Africa (the predecessor to the Republic of South Africa), Uruguay.

Finally, it is also important to focus on the suggested elements of the UN emblem/flag. A close engagement with the image, inspired by Mitchell's method (here, in particular, his use of phenomenology, which leads me to ask how the image addresses me as a viewer), makes evident the double meaning that it contains: a sense of both protection and military risk. The first interpretation views the linear structure as a supporting net over which the continental and insular masses lie, i.e. in as a cradle of protection; the second interpretation sees the circular net as similar to a sniper's cross-hair or shooting target, establishing a relationship between visual subject and object that is structured according to the hunter–hunted dynamics. Both interpretations are equally founded on a visual imaginary that is associated with situations of tension and conflict – be it the aggression of the cross-hair, or the suggestion of a need for protection by the cradling net.

Clearly there is a tension, here, both with the UN's declared goals of bringing 'about by peaceful means […] adjustment or settlement of international disputes […] which might lead to a breach of the peace' (UN, 1945, Article 1) and with its arguable non-intrusive stance; not to mention with the officially stated goal of the emblem/flag: to function as 'a sign of neutrality' (UN, 2009). The feeling of surprise and uncertainty, which results from a close engagement with the symbol is commented on by the political scientist Reinhard Wesel (2004), who writes that

> a formal analysis of the UN 'Globe' shows that […] it is intricately unfamiliar […]. A mischievous interpretation […] would state that its designers support a straightforward unmasking: in this world only the North has had relevance so far (2004, p. 142; my own translation).

While my analysis of the presented elements that are contained within the image is aligned with his conclusion, my examination of the emblem/flag also highlights the surprising character of its contradictory suggested elements (a sense of cradling/protection and of military risk). This said, the discovery of the complex, unstable character of the emblem/flag, opposing its seemingly straightforward meaning (as was intended by its creators), broadly joins Wesel's identification

of several metaphors[35] at play in a set of official documents and elements of the UN: conversation, casino, politics, military, machine, care and religious (2004, p. 150 – surprisingly, though, he doesn't discuss the emblem/flag in detail in his analysis)[36]. This said, Wesel notes that

> political metaphors convey […] representations of logically incompatible facts and/ or subjects. […] Spoken images are therefore always simultaneously leaderly and seductive (2004, p. 72; my own translation).

I agree with Wesel both that (i) the emblem/flag is indeed both leaderly and seductive and (ii) when he affirms that the consequences of political metaphors cannot be explained by traditional rhetoric (2004, p. 72). However, I do think that recent work in rhetoric, such as that of Finlayson and Martin, can help us make sense of the ways in which, to use Wesel's words, metaphors 'enforce a perspective' (2004, p. 72). I am here thinking of Finlayson's understanding of politics as an arena in which political arguments are formed through public exchanges (2007), and of Martin's identification of highly successful rhetorical strategies as those that 'displace the context around them' (Martin, 2015b, p. 26) – as I discuss in detail in my analysis of the effects of the image later in this chapter.

It will become clear in the next pages that the emblem/flag contributes to a very specific argument (or, again, a perspective): that of the necessity and the legitimacy of an international organisation such as the UN. This is particularly interesting since the UN is organised around the model of the nation state, extending membership only to pre-existing political communities, to which it mostly accords equal power in the organisation. And yet, as is well known, the idea of nationalism is in clear tension with that of cosmopolitanism, of which the UN is the example

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[35]   For a thorough examination of the use of metaphor in political rhetoric, see Jonathan Charteris-Black, *Politicians and Rhetoric: The Persuasive Power of Metaphor*, 2005. While I do agree with the author that the deployment of metaphors is crucial in the political process of legitimisation, his methodology (Critical Metaphor Analysis, 2005, pp. 26-29) places ideology at the centre of the analysis– an idea that I do not support for reasons discussed in the introduction.

[36]   As mentioned earlier, this book analyses the texts and declarations associated with the international conferences and summits organised by the UN between 1961 and 2002.

par excellence. To better understand how the emblem/flag is positioned within this tension, it is important to briefly summarise these two ideas.

Regarding nationalism, as the political theorist Benedict Anderson demonstrates in *Imagined Communities* (1983), one should nonetheless remember that it is historically contingent. However, such utopias legitimised the construction of nation states at the end of the eighteenth century and still sustain the communities that such entities presuppose, hence contributing to the current global order. Anderson's argument is close to Edward Said's concept of 'imagined geographies', discussed in *Orientalism* (1979)*,* not least because both authors oppose primordialist explanations of nations, which affirm that the latter have existed since early human history (see, for example, Fichte (1808).

Regarding cosmopolitanism[37], this political notion originated in Immanuel Kant's seminal essay 'Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch' (1795) and has been taken up by several authors, such as Seyla Benhabib (2004, 2006), Martha Nussbaum (2000, 2006), and John Rawls (1971) as a means of investigating a form of belonging that does not assume the nation state as a bearer of rights and obligations. In fact, among the several principles identified by Kant as necessary to build 'a perpetual peace', the 'third definitive article' states that 'the law of world citizenship shall be limited to conditions of universal hospitality' (1795).

Clearly, there are several parallels between the cosmopolitan framework and the values of the UN. This is clear if one considers the work of Jürgen Habermas – a central reference in the debates regarding the possibility of a cosmopolitan political order. Throughout his life, Habermas's position has shifted from a more optimistic view imagining a global order that extended the model of the nation-state (which he presents in *The Post-national Constellation,* 1998) to more recent essays on the European Union (2008), in which he restricts his support of deliberative democracy to the national level. Amongst the many other critics of cosmopolitanism is also sociologist Craig Calhoun, who argued in '"Belonging" in the cosmopolitan imaginary' (2003) that cosmopolitan theories are often universalist, rationalistic,

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[37] From the *jus cosmopoliticum* (cosmopolitan law/right) that is identified by Kant as necessary to protect people from war, and which is morally grounded in the principle of universal hospitality (1975).

individualist and elitist – evidence of their being, to a certain extent, a 'product of Western dominance' (2003, p. 543) – and fail to pay enough attention to the importance of social ties. Cosmopolitanism is also strongly criticised for not acknowledging the importance of traditional forms of belonging, especially by authors working in the fields of multiculturalism (e.g. Kymlicka, 1995) and in political studies (e.g. Brown, 2010). Interestingly, these critics agree, explicitly or not, with the ideas expressed by Benedict Anderson. In any case, the coexistence of the cosmopolitan utopia with a modus operandi based on the nation state (which, indirectly, validates some of the critiques of the cosmopolitan model) highlights yet again the contradictory aims served by the UN. This short review stresses the coexistence of elements pertaining to the cosmopolitan utopia with a modus operandi that is based on the nation state – a key internal contradiction of the UN.

a.3. The Flag at Work

Let us now see in detail the image at work in different contexts: first, in peacekeeping missions/on the ground; second, in interior spaces; third and finally, in press conferences and similar events. To begin, an important use of the symbol, either explicitly or not, lies in peacekeeping missions (hence the suggestion that it should function 'as a protective measure for [the UN's] staff' – UN, 2009), which are at the heart both of what the UN does and of what it is seen to do. The following four figures (18, 19, 20 and 21) are representative of the ways how the UN emblem appears in the images that end up representing visually this dimension of the work of the UN (i.e. following the process of selection and filtering that I described in the Introduction).

Figure 18 – Members of the UN-African Union Mission in Darfur (2012).

Figure 19 – Peacekeepers from the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) take

part in the annual Bastille Day military parade in Paris (2012).

Figure 20 – A United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) peacekeeper from the

Indian battalion pictured with a child in Addis Tesfa, Ethiopia (2006).

Figure 21 – MONUSCO (UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of

Congo) peacekeepers on patrol (2013).

Let us consider some of their presented and suggested elements. As we see in figure 18, the emblem is replaced by the UN acronym when the headgear's material makes the reproduction of the emblem too difficult. This hierarchy is also present in the vehicles used by these forces. Additionally, figure 21 shows that the UN acronym is given relevance over the symbols representing the country where the mission takes place, the countries that coordinate it and/or the particular team that uses the vehicle (in this case, the Red Cross).

It is important to briefly explain the context of MONUSCO's peacekeeping mission: the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Following a succession of rebellions which began in 1996, 'the Security Council called for a ceasefire and the withdrawal of foreign forces, and urged states not to interfere in the country's internal affairs' (UN Peacekeeping, no date a). MONUSCO took over from an earlier UN peacekeeping operation on 1 July 2010 and was authorised to use all necessary means to carry out its mandate relating, among other things, to the protection of civilians, humanitarian personnel and human rights defenders under imminent threat of physical violence, as well as to the support of the Government of the DRC in its stabilisation and peace consolidation efforts (UN MONUSCO, no date). However, the acronym MONUSCO, as well as a few other codes (relating to the vehicle number and to the military section to which those individuals belong), are not as prominent as the UN acronym. That is, the image suggests that the recognition of the vehicle as pertaining to the UN results from a combination of two elements: the acronym and the blue colour of the helmets used by the military men.

The colour of the headwear is also the main element that allows for the visual recognition of the UN peacekeepers. This is why the term 'blue helmets' has come to refer to all headgear worn by UN troops (including berets and turbans) and, indeed, to the troops themselves.[38] Despite having become an umbrella term, the helmets (like the rest of equipment worn by UN troops on the ground – note the bulletproof vest in figure 18) vary greatly according to the security level of the mission and the country or origin of the troops that contribute to it (see figures 19 and 20). Indeed, since the UN does not have a military arm of its own, peacekeeping forces are

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[38]   References to this term can be found, for example, in the United Nations Peacekeeping site, which states that 'United Nations military personnel are the Blue Helmets on the ground. They are contributed by national armies from across the globe' (UN Peacekeeping, no date a).

constituted by soldiers from a range of national forces, whom the UN pays for their services.[39] As a result of this, the clothing and equipment of these soldiers not only conform to UN standards but also carry the emblems of the countries from which they originate. That is, international and national iconography coexist in the images that represent UN military forces, and hence in this mode of self-presentation of the UN. Nonetheless, as the nickname suggests, the blue helmet is indeed more easily perceptible than the national emblems, which suggests the presence of a clear hierarchical relation between the supranational/international order (since the UN combines elements of both, as I mentioned in the introduction) and the national dimension.

The evidence also suggests that the emblem is, functionally speaking, secondary to the colour (or, to put it differently, that the colour is recognisably synecdochal of the emblem). That is, although the emblem and the acronym have the same function (to identify the peacekeepers and their material as associated with the UN), the absence of the former highlights the secondary character of the full emblem/flag in this context. Additionally, the use of the blue or of the UN acronym can be interpreted as one of the rhetorical methods identified by Aristotle by speakers to establish proof, the *enthymeme* (which I mentioned in the Introduction), which refers to moments when the speaker implies a premise (Aristotle, 350 B.C., B 20-26). In this case, and based on the visual hierarchy that I identified above, seeing the blue headgear or the acronym leads the viewer to immediately associate the military men (and increasingly women, although these photographs don't include them) with the UN and hence to deduce that their presence is supported by the international community.

The analysis of these images has made clear that, despite the difficulty of representing the values of the UN in a neutral manner vis-à-vis its member states, the inclusion of the flag/ emblem or of an acronym in its replacement functions as a marker of the international space of the UN. By this I mean that the emblem (or one of its iterations and references, such as the blue colour) is a reminder of the UN's global values and space. That is, the emblem emerges not as manifesting a distant reality (which would be the case if the UN existed *elsewhere*) but, rather,

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[39]　In fact, as Alan Bullion explains in 'India and UN Peacekeeping Operations' (1997), India acknowledges that 'payment by the UN helps them offset the large standing armies they wish to maintain for local strategic reasons' (Bullion, 1997, p. 106). The breakdown of the numbers of troops and police contributed by member states can be retrieved at UN Peacekeeping (no date b).

as performing it (i.e., the UN, and the international community in whose name it acts, is *here*). This is a clear example of why Hoel's opposition to substance metaphysics in the analysis of the visual (2011 and 2012; discussed in Chapter 1) is so relevant to understanding my material: the rhetorical consequences of the use of the UN emblem/flag on the ground is one that cannot be fully grasped with the traditional representationalist framework. Rather, in a circular manner, the presence of the emblem/flag actively in this context contributes to strengthening the narrative which also justifies its existence, i.e. according to which the work of the UN is legitimate (since it represents the global will).

This rhetorical effect is particularly important in light of recent critiques of peacekeeping and its failures. Such criticism focuses on issues ranging from the insufficient funding that is allocated to peacekeeping efforts, to the lack of preparation of peacekeepers for the realities on the ground or even to the absence of clear legal mandates and evaluation standards and of institutional guarantees of accountability (see Reuters, 2008; Dorn and Libben, 2016; Sigri and Basar, 2014; Amnesty International, 2015, respectively). The recognition of these problems has led to the publication of several independent reports in the last years reviewing the peacekeeping framework, making recommendations and evaluating their implementation, especially since 2000. Of particular interest in this context is the establishment by then Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon of a High-level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations in 2014, whose report (known as Brahimi report, and published in November 2000 – UN General Assembly 2000) made a comprehensive review of peacekeeping operations. Specifically, the report called for increased financial support, institutional change and increased commitment from the member states (see UN, no date m for a full list of all the UN reports on this issue produced either by the Secretary-Generals or by their panels since 1995). In this context, it can be hypothesised that the presence of the emblem on the ground potentially reminds the viewers who are aware of such criticisms of the global mission of the UN, and hence suggests that peacekeeping is a practice that should be improved rather than abandoned.

Second, let us now look not at images taken in the field but, rather, in interior spaces: specifically, at photographs of speeches, press conferences and group photos. As before, I have selected photographs that are illustrative of the imagery of interior spaces that ends up

representing the UN in western media. The clear presence of the emblem/flag (rather than an allusion to it) will emerge as the most important visual difference between the previous images and those that I will now analyse.

Figure 22 – Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi addresses the 64th session of the General

Assembly in his first visit to the USA and to the UN (2009).

Figure 23 – General Assembly session with results of a vote being shown, in this case regarding

disarmament and international security issues (2012).

Figures 22 and 23 reveal the presence the emblem in the General Assembly chamber in front of (figure 22) and behind those making an address (figure 23, this time against the golden wall). Again, these two images were selected for illustration purposes following the method that I describe in the Introduction. Regarding the first image, it is important to state that Gaddafi had been invited as the leader of one of the then fifteen members of the Security Council to address the General Assembly. His speech was characterised by a series of indictments of the Security Council, the description of several western countries as terrorists, and by his tearing up the UN Charter.

The suggested elements of the image are slightly different in this case. The inclusion of the speaker within a room in which the emblem is central has an interesting effect: it incorporates the contents of the address (be it a nationally-elected speaker, as is the case, an expert or an independent speaker) within the scope of the UN. As a result of this, and to continue with the same example, the viewer is led to evaluate Gaddafi's statements and actions against the mission and the values of the UN. The rhetorical argument that is being made by the emblem differs, thus, from what we saw earlier.

Additionally, I should notice the public character of any address to the General Assembly (figure 23), which is evident not only in the dissemination of these images online (as I will discuss in detail in the following chapter) but also in light of the hundreds of attendees, representing the UN member states, that listen to and surround the General Assembly speakers. Although, in practical terms, such individuals only represent their own member states (when that is indeed the case, since some are international civil servants and hence represent the UN), in this type of imagery they could also be seen as representing the members of the UN and as echoing the 'We the Peoples' with which the UN Charter begins (1945). Combined with my previous point, this has a significant consequence: visually, the UN emerges as the benchmark against which national representatives or individual speakers are evaluated, i.e. which (again), naturalises the international/supranational order.

This said, I must note that the two interpretations of the symbol that I identified earlier – the emblem/flag as both a safety net and a cross-hair – are nonetheless still at play within the visual

framing of the speaker within the General Assembly chamber. The result of this combination (that is, of the naturalisation of the supranational order on the one hand with a lack of clarity as to how such an order is positioned vis-à-vis the member states on the other hand) is an unstable visual network characterised by the tensions between cooperation and force, that is, between national or individual agency (embodied by the speaker) and systemic forces (the international/ supranational order represented and sustained by the UN itself) – a tension that I will relate at the end of this chapter to the Derridean notion of the aporetic.

For now, it suffices to stress that this instability is revealing of the inherent internal or contradictions of supposedly universal political or social projects – which, in presupposing the agreement with a set of values (for example) deny their members the possibility of difference. This has been highlighted, in different ways, by several scholars. For example, David Harvey argues that universalising projects often reproduce the disregard towards uniqueness that is central to neoliberal forms of spatial expansion. Writing about cosmopolitanism in *Cosmopolitanism and the Geographies of Freedom* (2009), Harvey discusses the ontological assumptions behind the cosmopolitan concept of space as sharing the neoliberal flatness of Thomas Friedman's understanding of the term. Against the latter's *The World is Flat* (2007), Harvey argues that in Friedman's framework 'we all have to become the same everywhere in order to qualify for admission to the regime of universal (in this case neoliberal) rights and benefits' (2009, p. 52). In an analogous direction, network theory as derived from Hardt and Negri's *Empire* (2000) also stresses that the nonexistence of an easily identifiable political and financial leader does not equate to a leaderless society. In fact, Hardt and Negri give the United Nations as an example of this argument in *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (2005, p. 132). Another geographer, Doreen Massey, employs the concept of 'power geometry' to discuss the emerging time and space conglomerates that arise from the increased decentralisation of political power (1993) – an idea that one could extent to the analysis of the emergence of international law and hence of the UN.

In this context, the visual framing effect of the content of the address to the General Assembly by the UN emblem contributes to, if not denying, at least diminishing the significance of the tensions between cooperation and force as well as national and international/supranational

agency that are inherent to the UN. Specifically, and to return to Massey, the tension between the absence of a clear global leader and the centralisation of power can also be identified within the UN emblem/flag. That is, the widest circular line surrounding the world map delimits the space that the organisation sees as corresponding to its sphere of action: the global space, one without outsiders or opposition.

The UN emblem/flag also appears behind the speakers in press conferences. The following two images are illustrative of this type of imagery.

Figure 24 – Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in a Press Conference in Geneva (2011).

Figure 24 shows Hilary Clinton as she communicated to the international press the content of the discussions of the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC[40]) meeting in Geneva, whose subject had been the legitimacy to govern or lack thereof of Colonel Gaddafi following a series of attacks on his own people.

Let us then analyse the rhetorical argument that the emblem/flag makes in this type of imagery. In this specific example, Clinton appears in a complex role: her affirmations suggest the association of the decisions taken in the name of the UN with the legitimacy of an elected sovereign and its counsel (which she embodies). In a similar manner to the previous two images, the presence of the flag behind her, the size of which makes it compete with Clinton for the attention of the viewer, establishes a framework that not only explains the situation to the latter (Clinton represents one of the countries that are present at the UN meeting and hence speaks *for* the organisation) but also performs the global claims of the UN. That is, the image suggests that Clinton represents the principles of deliberation and the aim to maintain international stability for which the UN stands (hence, she speaks *as* the UN).

This series of movements between the national and the international is made possible by the combination of the three Aristotelian means of persuasion within the same image: *logos* (the content of the argument that is made in this and other press conferences, which most often stress the need for international collaboration and/or action); *ethos* (the credibility of the persuader – which is, in this case, a consequence of her legitimacy as an elected official) and, indirectly, *pathos* (the creation of an emotional response in the viewer by means of the two metaphors, care and risk, that the emblem elicits), as I discussed in Chapter 1. That is, figure 24 makes a complex rhetorical suggestion: rather than there being a tension between the legitimacy and the powers of a national political figure on the one hand, and the international organisation whose main visual identifier acts as a background to Clinton's presence on the other, the two realms emerge as partly overlapping. In the final section of this chapter, I will argue that, in doing so, the emblem/flag illustrates Martin's understanding of political ideas as dynamic 'projectiles' (2015b, p. 26).

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[40]   The UNHRC (a subsidiary body of the UN General Assembly that works closely with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights) is an intergovernmental body with 47 member states whose mission is to promote and protect human rights around the world.

Figure 25 – Group photo following the Paris Summit for the support of the Libyan people (2011).

Figure 25 was retrieved from the website of the French Ministry of Defence in a post that summarised the agreement of the European, Arab and North-American leaders participating in the summit regarding the need for an international military intervention on Libyan territory. This photograph is exemplary of the images that are made public following international meetings and other types of encounters, which represent united groups. Regarding the presented elements of the image, the flags and their arrangement are of particular interest: the UN flag hangs on one of the three central poles, as does the flag of the EU. Reflecting the hosts of the meeting, the French Tricolour takes the centre and the rest of the nations participating in the G20 summit (i.e. the group assembling the twenty major world economies) occupy the remaining space.

Let us now consider the suggested rhetorical elements within the image. Placing the flags of the UN and the EU at the same height as those of the nation states suggests that the UN is an independent party involved in the encounter, rather than an organisation whose work, accomplishments and legitimacy depends on the cooperation of, namely, the other nations that are represented in the photograph. Additionally, the central presence of the flags of the two supranational organisations suggests a compromise regarding the tension between the national and the supranational orders. By this I mean that, while it is clear that the international order is above the nation states in terms of its capacity to respond to some critical issues (such as climate change and the ongoing refugee crisis, for example), a well as in legal terms (think of human rights), the value and the relevance of international organisations continues to be evaluated at the national scale, i.e. by national leaders whose governments finance the UN, and by national populations responsible for the election (in most cases) of such leaders.

That is, echoing what we saw in the case of the inclusion of the image in the background of press conferences or as an element adorning the clothes of soldiers in peacekeeping operations, in events such as this summit, the relation between the UN and the sovereignty of its member states emerges as in flux. On the one hand, international political crises (such as those that lead to international interventions, as is this case) require the existence of international fora, legal frameworks and mechanisms of accountability. However, on the other hand, such institutions are funded, supported and evaluated by its members, who constrain part of their own

sovereignty (in the traditional sense – an assumption that I will criticise in the next section of this chapter) when they decide to join the UN. This instability adds to that which is present within the flag emblem/flag, as I identified earlier: on the one hand, the sniper's cross-hair connotation guides the viewer to the idea of military strength as a prerequisite for the maintenance of peace in international relations; and on the other hand, the safety net suggests a position of care, which I discussed in terms of network relations (specifically, international relations) as that which sustains international peace.[41] Indeed, this crucial tension within the mandate of the UN (fostering collaboration in the maintenance of peace while also ratifying, among other things, military interventions in sovereign territory) is particularly evident in contexts such as the one that originated this photograph.

My analysis of the rhetoric of the UN flag as illustrating broader tensions joins the conclusions of John MacAloon and Pinelopi Amelidou regarding the Olympic Flame Relay in their contributions to the special issue of the journal *Sport in Society* (2012). In 'This flame, our eyes: Greek/American/IOC relations, 1984–2002, an ethnographic memoir' (2012b), McAloon develops an ethnographic analysis of a set of Olympic flame relay relations across a 20-year period among a set of stakeholders: official Greek authorities, American Olympic organising committees, the Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and the International Olympic Committee [IOC]. Of particular interest to my analysis is the author's discussion of the relay as a site of tensions between the goals and the responsibilities of the international organisations (whose role has been increased since the 1996 Atlanta's Olympic games) and the national political players.

A strong example of this is provided by a a speech by (incidentally, also) Hillary Clinton (who was the American First Lady at the time) celebrating the global relay of the flame. The speech stressed the Greek civilisation as the birthplace of the Olympics but also proposed that 'in the modern Olympics, distinctions of class, nationality, religion, and race are forgotten in contests judged by individual speed, strength, and endurance' (MacAloon, 2012b, p. 619). In an

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[41]   I should note that both visual frameworks point towards shared assumptions associated with the liberal strand of thought within international relations theory. In this school, international relations are viewed as justified by the existence of an international civil society, whose well-being is considered necessary for that of thriving relations among nation-states, although a common theoretical framework is yet to be effectively developed. See Moravcsik, 1992.

analogous manner to the unstable relation between the international and the national orders that I identified in relation to the visual rhetoric of the flag, Clinton's statement highlights, even if paradoxically, the friction between the values of universality of the Olympics and the nation states in whose framework such individuals compete in these games. This conflict is also at play in the broader analysis that McAloon makes of the consequences of the success of the management strategy of the Atlanta Olympic Games. On the one hand, he notes that

> a new model of flame relay operations was to consolidate […] across America to Atlanta, a set of practices destined to claim the status of 'world's best' […] leading Greeks who had worked so closely with Atlanta in 1996 to complain in 2004 [about] the import of this 'American model' (MacAloon, 2012b, p. 623).

And yet, on the other hand, accompanying such a fundamental set of changes in management and production guidelines, the author identifies nonetheless the continuous reproduction of Olympianism as a social movement of 'intercultural encounter, mutual understanding, and détente' (MacAloon, 2012b, p. 624). That is, the scholar's analysis confirms the fact that international symbols articulate the relation between different orders (and, in this case, sectors) with competing interests, as I am suggesting.

The way in which this takes place is detailed in 'Olympic Flame Relay operations under a 'world's best practices' regime: a conversation with Steven McCarthy' (2012a), where MacAloon interviews the transnational manager of operational services for the Olympic Flame Relay. Their conversation mentions not only the constant negotiation between stakeholders with very different interests and goals (such as sponsors, local authorities, security forces, personnel and organising committees) but also the partly universal, partly ethnocentric elements of the relay. Indeed, the interviewer makes clear the organisation's wish not to be perceived 'as this flag waving, patriotic, nationalistic kind of exercise' (MacAloon, 2012a, p. 644).

MacAloon analyses this and similar statements as pointing to the high level of responsibility that is felt by the Olympic Flame Relay team regarding the management of a set of competing affinities – i.e. 'local meanings with host-country national meanings with the great international

meanings of the flame and its relay tradition' (MacAloon, 2012a, p. 645). A specific case that is discussed in detail in the conversation is that of the 2002 Salt Lake Winter Olympics (which took place in a high security context as a result of the 9/11 attacks in New York city and subsequent demonstrations), and that McAloon analysed as an example of the organisation's effort to protect 'a global peace symbol […] in a war context' (MacAloon, 2012a, p. 645). This is only necessary because the meanings of Olympism are strongly contested – 'the Olympic Flame is an open signifier […] the flame comes with its history, tradition, and significations of Olympism, but these themselves are contested' (MacAloon, 2012a, p. 645).

It is in this context that it is particularly interesting to consider the trend towards the centralisation of the promotional and operational dimensions of the Olympic caravan and the deployment of the symbol. This is highlighted in 'the 2004 International Relay: a Greek around the world with the Olympic Flame', in which Amelidou, one of the Greek team members, describes the 2004 Athens Flame Relay. Although she identifies a set of cases in which the sponsors disrespected the official guidelines (for example, by distributing flags that only included the logo of the sponsor), the author writes that the relay can still be successful as long as it places at its centre

> the human contact with the flame […]. If the torchbearer is visible only by the media people in the media van […], then the Olympic Flame Relay is being transformed […] to just another television event (Amelidou, 2012, p. 710).

I will return to the issue of affect – here suggested by the idea of 'human contact' – in the following section. Before doing so, and to return to the mode of presentation of the UN, this summary of the discussions around the Olympic relay makes evident yet another characteristic of the previous images. The presentation of the UN flag is managed in a highly controlled manner, hence responding to the specific demands of the national delegations or of media teams while also attempting to solve (as much as possible) the tension between the national and the international orders – without this being easily noticed by the viewer.

b) Effects: Making Foundational Problems Visible

After developing a close analysis of the arguments that are created by the presented and suggested elements of the flag/emblem, I will now consider how they relate to ongoing debates on the issue of sovereignty and then, in a manner that is particularly inspired by Finlayson, to issues of affect. To be more precise, this section will focus on a discussion of what I identify as the two broad rhetorical effects of the emblem/flag as a mode of visual presentation of the UN: first, its function in the context of the emergence of the relation between national and international sovereignty as an interrupted continuum (which I see as a performance of the space of the UN); second, its articulation of an aspiration for connectedness (which I discuss as the performance of its time). Both effects point to the role of the emblem/flag in legitimising the exigence of the UN.

b.1. Sovereignty as an Interrupted Continuum

In this section, I argue that the rhetorical arguments of the emblem/flag combine to highlight the fluidity of the relations between national and supranational sovereignty, which contributes to overcoming an understanding of the two orders as being in a zero-sum competition – the first rhetorical effect that I associate with this mode of presentation. Specifically, the analysis shows that the UN emblem/flag brings about – or performs – the space of the UN. I organise my argument into two parts: first, I discuss recent redefinitions of the notion of sovereignty and consider the position of the emblem/flag in relation to them; second, I discuss the performative elements of the image in light of this.

To begin, in order to understand this effect, it is important to consider key scholarly debates around the issue of global governance and changing understandings of sovereignty. I will only mention what I identify as central references in this discussion, but it should be noted that the literature on this topic is extensive. In *Global Governance and the UN: An Unfinished Journey* (2010), Thomas Weiss and Ramesh Thakur (mentioned in the Introduction) identify both what global governance has already achieved and key areas in which international cooperation must still be strengthened in order to confront the main transboundary problems facing the international system: from the limits of market institutions to international peace and security,

the response to natural disasters (such as the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami) or even climate change. Specifically, they highlight international security (i.e. the use of force, arms control and terrorism), development (trade, aid, finance, sustainable development and the environment) and human rights as areas that require stronger global governance.

Such gaps, the authors state, can be found in several dimensions of the work of the UN: knowledge, norms, policy, institutions and compliance. Particularly, and respectively, the authors mention: vested ideological stances and the lack of flexibility to identify threats that may be currently underestimated by the UN; the need to strengthen the existing conceptual tools and empirical research to better understand how international norms emerge, which could subsequently strengthen the process; the disconnect that is evident in the fact that while global challenges are global, policymaking is still mostly developed within and implemented by states; the lack of resources and autonomy of the UN; finally, the lack of mechanisms to identify defections from agreed commitments of international governance. That is, while the authors recognise the need for the UN and its contribution to global governance, they identify several weaknesses in how it implements the latter. In order to overcome them, the authors suggest that the UN member states and the individuals who compose the international civil service cooperate with non-state actors, that is, with those who represent civil society and market institutions.

Another key reference in these discussions is the work of the international relations scholar Michael W. Doyle. In 'Dialectics of a global constitution: The struggle over the UN Charter' (2012), Doyle compares the UN Charter with national constitutions and treaties, identifying a fundamental tension between the legal basis of the Charter, which is problematic (as I mentioned in the Introduction), and that of the member states. This analysis is strongly related to discussions of the emergence of the Responsibility to Protect doctrine (which I mentioned in the introduction) as well as the recent emergence of frameworks for genocide prevention (as is discussed, for example, by former Francis Deng, Special Adviser to the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in "From 'Sovereignty as Responsibility' to the 'Responsibility to Protect'", 2010).

A common point that is highlighted by such authors is that of the complex relation between the UN and the member states, which is far from being characterised by a seamless transition towards supranational legal frameworks and modes of working. This instability is highlighted, for example, by the political scientist David Forsythe in 'The UN Security Council and Human Rights: State Sovereignty and Human Dignity' (2012). Forsythe stresses that most decisions within the Security Council are made on political grounds, i.e. that its members use their options in an inconsistent manner that is based on their changing interests. For example, 'while universal human rights are well-established in international law, their enforcement often depends on inconsistent state policies and national power' (2010, p. 1). This is also confirmed by John Stoessinger in *The United Nations and the Superpowers: China, Russia, and America* (1977), who argues that states take to the Security Council table their own interests and aspirations for influence, security and material gain.

Let us consider in more detail the relation between the national and the supranational order in this regard. Abdulrahim Vijapur agrees with Weiss and Shaker's (2010) assessment regarding the flawed development of international jurisdiction. In 'The Question of Domestic Jurisdiction and the Evolution of United Nations Law of Human Rights' (2010), the human rights scholar considers recent changes in human rights legislation and writes that although

> 'international jurisdiction [has] evolved through the functioning of various legal instruments […] of the UN […] this does not imply that the UN's expanded jurisdiction has replaced state jurisdiction. Indeed, the incorporation of many principles/provisions in UN human rights treaties is aimed at protecting the sovereignty of states (p. 247).

In this view, national and international jurisdiction aren't opposed but, rather, intertwined. The scholar provides some specific examples of this relationship in his article, which demonstrate to what extent international legal principles are dependent on their support by nation states: 'the mere mention of human rights in the Charter provisions does not testify to its binding effect; they contain only a programme of principles, not legal norms' (2010, p. 251). To give another example, and in what joins Bijapur's analysis, the International Relations scholar Andrew

Linklater writes in an essay dedicated to Kosovo and included in *Critical Theory and World Politics: Citizenship, Sovereignty and Humanity* (2007) that

> as Kofi Annan (1999) has argued in connection with Rwanda, a clear tension exists between Article 2, paragraph 7 of the UN Charter, which maintains that the UN does not have the authority 'to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state', and support for human rights, which invites intervention in the case of supreme humanitarian emergencies (Linklater, 2007, p. 85).

To return to the emblem/flag of the UN, and to understand the role that its visual rhetoric plays in this context, it is important to consider recent discussions of sovereignty in more detail. The most complete discussion of this issue is provided by Anne-Marie Slaughter in 'Security, Solidarity, and Sovereignty: The Grand Themes of UN Reform' (2005, mentioned earlier), which analyses the recommendations included in the UN's secretary-general's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, entitled 'A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility' (2004). The report highlights several dimensions of collective security, from prevention to the use of force and to institutional reform, and argues that they are interrelated with issues of development, security, and human rights. Importantly, Slaughter argues that the report reconceptualises sovereignty.

> It asserts that all signatories of the UN Charter accept a responsibility both to protect their own citizens and to meet their international obligations to their fellow nations […]. In a word, membership in the United Nations is no longer a validation of sovereign status and a shield against unwanted meddling in a state's domestic jurisdiction. It is rather the right and capacity to participate in the United Nations itself, working in concert with other nations (Slaughter, 2005, pp. 619-620).

However, this reconceptualisation of sovereignty goes beyond an endorsement of the R2P doctrine. Rather, Slaughter argues that it abandons 'an idealized Westphalian conception of sovereignty as autonomy' (Slaughter, 2005, p. 620). In this new framework, state and human

security are interdependent and the UN emerges as a forum in which the challenges that threaten such security (poverty, infectious disease, environmental degradation; conflicts between and within states; nuclear, radiological, biological, and chemical weapons, transnational crime, terrorism) are dealt with. This is why the original document endorses, for example, the authorisation of force by the Security Council if the decision is multilateral (p. 621), and can be read as suggesting limits to the veto power of the five countries with permanent seats (UN Secretary-General, 2004, p. 79). However, rather than merely accepting the conclusions of the 2001 report on the R2P, which proceeded it, the high-level report from 2004 goes further,

> reinterpreting the very act of signing the Charter […]. [Member states] must accept the "responsibilities of membership" […]. Sovereignty misused […] could become sovereignty denied (Slaughter, 2005, p. 628).

The result is a form of sovereignty that, Slaughter argues, can be understood according to the framework proposed by Kal Raustiala (see 'Rethinking the Sovereignty Debate in International Economic Law', mentioned earlier, 2003). The author affirms that sovereignty is strengthened – not diminished – by a country's decision to join an international organisation. Indeed, the latter allows the former to engage in new institutional forms of cooperation, hence expanding the country's power. Another key reference in this context (and a central influence in Raustiala's analysis of the transformation of national sovereignty by increasing levels of international interdependence) is Abram Chayes and Antonia Handler Chayes' proposal of 'new sovereignty' (1995), which replaces the understanding of the term as built upon the assumption of autonomy.

These changed understandings of sovereignty, which acknowledge interdependence, necessarily suggest the need for institutional reform of the UN – an idea with which the UN high-level report concludes. Specifically, instead of the present power divide between the five global Westphalian potencies that have a permanent seat at the Security Council and the other member states, the report suggests that all members of the UN should be divided based on their respect (or lack thereof) towards the principles of security and solidarity. That is,

states that fulfil their responsibility to protect their own citizens in accordance with the minimum dictates of international human rights law and their responsibility to meet their international legal obligations toward their fellow states will be UN members in good standing [moving] from a rights-based conception of sovereignty to a responsibility-based conception (Slaughter, 2005, p. 631).

I see Daniele Archibugi and David Held's proposal of a model that they call cosmopolitan democracy as related to these discussions. The term refers to the creation of an international order based on democracy and the rule of law rather than force and power, increasing the accountability, transparency and legitimacy of global governance. The contributors of *Cosmopolitan Democracy: An Agenda for a New World Order,* which the two authors edited (1995), recognise the significance of nation states; however, they also argue that the decision-making processes of cosmopolitan institutions should be based on civic participation.

Doing so would require the simultaneous transformation of states and the international order. This idea is confirmed in their more recent 'Cosmopolitan Democracy: Paths and Agents' (2011), in which the authors identify several possibilities to build democratic global governance that would be of interest to political, economic and social agents that aren't fully integrated in today's international organisations – for example, the dispossessed, migrants and global political parties. Crucially, however, they do not call for a full replacement of the UN – rather, they suggest strengthening it by expanding and modifying its fora. Additionally, the authors argue that pressure by member states is one of the key paths that may lead to UN reform in this direction. This is why they write that

the expression "cosmopolitan state" may at first appear an oxymoron, but cosmopolitanism is a set of values and practices that can be implemented by any political institution, including the state (Archibugi and Held, 2011, p. 5).

That is, in this model states and the cosmopolitan order aren't seen as being in opposition. Rather. the authors proposed a transformation of states themselves in order to achieve cosmopolitanism: 'a cosmopolitan state […] would allow [international organisations] to use

their resources more independently, for example, as an external check and balance on the governmental action' (Archibugi and Held, 2011, p. 6).

In the context of these debates about global governance, which include criticism of the UN's inability to respond to global challenges in its current form as well as proposals to reformulate the notion of sovereignty and state institutions, how can we understand the first rhetorical effect of the self-presentation of the UN through its emblem/flag? To recapitulate, its analysis revealed a set of rhetorical arguments (here simplified and reorganised for the sake of clarity):

- the existence of a double meaning (protection and military risk) within the emblem/flag;
- the fact that, despite the coexistence of supranational, international and national iconography, the hierarchical relation between them often favours the supranational;
- the fact that the presence of the emblem incorporates the content of the individual addresses to the General Assembly within the scope of the UN, leading to the evaluation of such statements and actions against the mission and values of the organisation;
- the suggestion that peacekeepers represent the international community more so than the nation states that provide them.

As the analysis of the material made clear, the combination of these rhetorical arguments leads to a visual space that is characterised by two central, overlapping tensions: on the one hand, between cooperation and force; on the other hand, between national or individual agency and the international order represented by the UN, whose relevance the emblem/flag reiterates. However, rather than seeing the national order and/or the supranational domain as being independent or as in opposition, they appear in an unstable relation. That is, in this view, and in light of the debates that I identified in the last few pages, the emblem/flag is unstable precisely because it reflects and asserts the emerging (legal and normative) spaces of the UN, while also revealing the constitutive difficulties of doing so in a context in which national sovereignty is still central in contemporary international relations and, crucially, in the UN's institutional framework.

Additionally, the fact that this instability is evident in the flag/emblem itself and not only in its uses also reveals the difficulty of representing an international organisation in a way that would overcome the cultural background and specificities of those who lead that process (indeed, even if the globe were only reproduced with a circle, the choice of colours would always be culturally specific). However, and even more importantly, the internal instability of the flag/ emblem also highlights the fact that an international organisation such as the UN requires, for the successful achievement of its goals, the combination of a dimension of agreement and collaboration (for example, with the idea of peace) with another of conditionality (which is required to guarantee the implementation of such agreements). This, in turn, reflects the argument that the existence of divides within the UN cannot be fully overcome (Weiss et al, 2010). That is, what I am suggesting goes beyond a view of the image as merely reflecting the discrepancy in power among the member states of the UN; rather, I see the emblem/flag as also legitimising, through its performative character, an evolving understanding of the international order as a site of decision-making that requires the partial relinquishing of national control.

This leads me to the second point in his section. How shall we evaluate the success of these visual images? Before answering this question, it is important to remember Foss' approach (2004). As I discuss in Chapter 1, she proposes to evaluate images from the point of view of their reception rather than from the intention of those who created them, and to do so in three steps: first, to identify the function communicated by an image; second, to ask how well such a function is communicated; third and finally, to scrutinise the function itself by analysing the connection between the features of an image and its function. It should be clear by now that the function of this image is to communicate the existence of the UN and to identify its representatives or the contexts that are related to it (which I analysed and evaluated in the previous section). This section focuses on its scrutiny, i.e it analyses its broader implications.

When we evaluate the emblem/flag according to its intended use and actual effects, we discover that the emblem/flag functions as what Mitchell identifies as a metapicture[42] (in this case, of the

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[42] I should also note Mitchell's distinction between pictures as images. Although both are presented as visual representations on two-dimensional surfaces, whereas pictures are constructed objects that result from a deliberate act of representation, images don't always result from a voluntary act. See Mitchell, 'What Do Pictures "Really" Want?', 1996).

international order), a term proposed in *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (1986) and extended in *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (1994). Broadly, the term refers to all images that, and after a close engagement, may uncover previously unknown facts and relations. To give an example, he writes in *Cloning Terror: The War of Images, 9/11 to the Present*, referring to the multiplication of references to images of hooded men in different contexts, that

> the clone wars and the war on terror have combined in our time to produce the composite master image of our time, the metapicture that framed the dominant imagery of the Bush era (2011, p. 15),

Mitchell proposes to understand metapictures as metaphors that 'become real' (2011, p. 15) – although, unfortunately, he doesn't discuss this transformation in a detailed manner. I would like to propose that the emblem/flag can also be seen as a metapicture in that it suggests the performative character of the international space of the UN – an effect whose details I will now discuss.

The argument presented by the geographer David Campbell in his paper 'Geopolitics and visuality: Sighting the Darfur Conflict' (2007) explains how images can have effects that are significant with regard to western geopolitics. The author's argument emerges from a study of the uses of documentary photography and photojournalism in newspapers such as *The Guardian*, specifically in their coverage of the war in Darfur, Sudan in late 2003 and early 2004. Campbell analyses the ways in which photographs of children and women portrayed as passive and pitiable were chosen to communicate the Darfur conflict. This decontextualised its particularities, especially compared to the effect of images of combatants or casualties, which would 'support a story of ethnic cleansing or genocidal violence specific to Darfur' (2007, p. 372). This reveals that photographs contribute to

> the visual performance of the social field […]. This visual enactment is itself geopolitical […], that is, it both manifests and enables power relations through

which spatial distances between […] North/South, developed/underdeveloped are produced and maintained (2007, pp. 379–380).

To be clear, I am suggesting that Campbell's analysis can be expanded to also include the national/international tension. Yet the idea that the emblem/flag performs the space of the UN also joins recent arguments made by other authors with regard to the relations between performativity and space. As Derek Gregory, Ron Johnston, Geraldine Pratt, Michael Watts and Sarah Whatmore write in *The Dictionary of Human Geography* (2009),

> Some [geographers] have theorized space itself as performative (Gregson and Rose, 2000) […]. Non-representational styles of thinking, in particular […] envisioning social life 'as *processually enactive*, as styles and modes of performative moving and relating' (McCormack, 2003, p. 489 [original emphasis] cit in. Gregory et al., 2009, p. 527).

The idea that performativity is associated with 'non-representational' approaches is also consistent with my approach to the image, as I discussed in the previous chapter. Additionally, I should also mention that in performing – and hence naturalising its space – the UN emblem/flag supports the rewriting of the UN's narrative regarding its historical origins, which appear as guided by a gradual (even if contested and far from seamless) movement towards supranationality. As is known, historical writing and fictionalised narrative are not clearly separated – as has been discussed by, among others, the historian Hayden White, whose work emphasises the existence of literary elements in historical texts. White proposed the concept of 'history of narrative' in *Metahistory: the Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-century Europe* (1973), later developed in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (1978) and in *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (1987). This said,it is important to stress that White does not merely state that all historical narratives have fictional elements; rather, he also argues that historical analyses of the past are fundamentally guided by the historian's explanatory theory of the present. That is, historical narration about the past organises individual events within an overarching narrative (what White calls 'emplotment', 1973, p. 83).

As I discussed earlier, contrary to the official discourse of deliberation and universality, the US played a disproportionate role under Roosevelt and Truman in the founding of the UN. However, if we read White's argument in light of the previous discussion of the performativity of space, the UN emblem/flag emerges as more than a mere example of the problematic origins of the institution and the subsequent asymmetrical power relations that still structure its modus operandi. Instead, one can also see the flag as indirectly (even if unwillingly) acknowledging this disproportionality, whose significance it is able to minimise by promoting a historical narrative that presents the mission of the UN as framed by the gradual construction of international governance (albeit imperfect and incomplete).

Returning to Finlayson's analysis of rhetorical arguments in detail will allow me to clarify the specificities of this movement. Finlayson structures his analysis around three key ideas: points of controversy (2007, pp. 554-555), substantive content (which he places within the particular/ universal continuum, 2007, p. 555) and their relation to the framing of a problem (2007, p. 556). It is worth quoting the author at length regarding the first idea.

> The point of a dispute, the 'bone of contention' is established by the act of arguing itself and the side that succeeds in fixing it secures great advantage. Roman rhetorical theory [identified] four points of argument: if a thing is (conjecture), what a thing is (definition), what kind of thing it is (quality) and whether or not it is a thing we should be arguing about at all (place) […] Arguments of conjecture concern facts. What is in dispute is whether or not something is the case, whether or not it happened. Arguments of definition centre on the names of things. They are attempts to define a thing in an advantageous way […]. Arguments of quality […] seek to establish that a particular act should be judged as, for example, well-intentioned (2007, p. 554).

If we apply this typology (further developed by Finlayson in 2007, pp. 554-555) to the emblem/ flag, its rhetorical argument (in Finlayson's definition of the term) emerges as combining elements of conjecture and definition, that is, as the confirmation that the UN is relevant and

that its order and space are at least partly independent from those of its member states (hence also overlapping with the point of place). Finally, the framing aspect of the emblem/flag (which sets the values of the UN as the benchmark) can also be seen as an argument of quality. As for the axes of the particular and universal, the author is here referring to the possibility of locating any topic within such a duality. For example, 'an educational policy document will be in a relationship with the particular policy domain of education [and] in a relationship with the 'universal' context of all policy discourse' (Finlayson, 2007, p. 555).

This analysis confirms my reading of the emblem/flag in light of White's work (1973). However, and again, it also suggests that its rhetorical effect is even broader. Specifically, it indicates that the image not only enunciates the emergence of the international space of the UN but also points towards ideas such as international collaboration and non-competing sovereignty as *aspirations*. Yet the image can only do so because, while fulfilling its role as an identifier of the UN, it combines two of the three Aristotelian genres of rhetoric: epideictic or ceremonial (because it praises something, the UN itself), and deliberative (because it exhorts to continued support in the organisation and in the supranational order).

> In epideictic or ceremonial rhetoric the objective is the praise or condemnation of someone or something. It is oriented to the present, to the current feelings of the audience and is often ritualistic, rehearsing common values […] Forensic or legal rhetoric is concerned with prosecution or defence […]. Deliberative, political rhetoric is concerned to exhort to, or deter from, a course of action (Finlayson, 2007, p. 556).

That is, this particular rhetorical effect, i.e. of the performativity of the space of the UN, is dependent on an inner movement within the image between two arguments: on the one hand, to reaffirm the common values that led to the creation of the UN and that are evident in its Charter and, on the other hand, to acknowledge that their implementation has been limited and, hence, to point towards its strengthening as an aspiration.

<u>b.2. Aspiring for Connectedness</u>

This section will argue that one can identify a second, albeit partly related to the first, effect to the emblem/flag of the UN and its uses: it reiterates an aspiration for connectedness and, in doing so, performs the temporality of the UN. The argument is structured into three main parts: first, I discuss the aspiration for connectedness in light of the role of affect in rhetoric; second, I consider the relation between this discussion and that of the temporality of the UN; third and finally, I finish with a reflection on the possibility of the failure of the emblem/flag to rhetorically signify the two effects that I have identified.

To begin, the emblem/flag and its uses also contribute to establishing or strengthening the sense of belonging of the viewer to the organisation. Here, citizenship of the UN itself emerges not as in competition with the sense of belonging to a national state but as in an overlapping relation with the latter. This is clear if we read Moor's argument, made in 'The Making of Place: Consumers and Place-affiliated Brands' (2011), regarding the role played by design in the encounters of citizens with the state (in which she refers to a 2004 publication by the Institute for Public Policy Research and the Design Council) and apply it to the rhetoric of this mode of presentation of the UN.

> Noting that many citizens' encounters with the state took place at a 'heightened emotional register', the project commissioned nine designers and design consultancies to 'redesign our encounters with the state in order to enhance a sense of citizenship' […]. This type of rhetoric is typical of branding projects, in the sense that it attempts to take an actual or potential sentiment […] and to harness this for strategic ends (2011, p. 86).

Moor goes on to describe the ways how brands currently build on such affective associations, an issue that I will discuss in more detail below. More relevant for now is the author's analysis of recent changes in state branding based on a discussion of the rebranding of the Lambeth Council in London in 1999, including the redesign of its logo and council tax forms. It is worth quoting her at length.

The use of design by state institutions […] is used not only to generate consensus or build legitimacy for specific departments and policies, but also to maintain the authority of the nation itself […]. Designed *objects* […] have thus always been involved in the constitution of national *subjects* (2007, p. 85 [original emphasis]).

In light of this analysis, one can see the emblem/flag of the UN as enhancing a 'sense of citizenship' (2007, p. 85), to use Moor's expression, that further reiterates the relevance of the mission of the UN. Indeed, as she also writes in *The Rise of Brands*, 'repetition is a *strategy of self-reference*' (2007, p. 79 [original emphasis]). My goal with this section is, then, to understand in what ways the repetition of the emblem/flag participates in the process of 'closing off' that, according to Couldry, and as I identified in the previous chapter, characterises mediation (2008, p. 8) – which I will do by focusing on the image's reiteration of an aspiration for connectedness, hence 'closing off' the idea that the aspiration for global citizenship would be questionable. Additionally, the embedding of the emblem/flag within what I am proposing to see as an affective relation with the UN clearly relates to the ability of branding to 'take an actual or potential sentiment' (Moor, 2011, p. 86), as was mentioned earlier in this chapter.

Returning to Finlayson's argument will help me understand why this affective engagement is relevant. As I explained in the previous chapter, the author proposes to focus on the processes of forming beliefs and public arguments, which he sees as simultaneous (2007). He connects this idea with the 'contestable and contested' character of figures of speech, which he sees (and I share his position) as reflecting the uncertainty of the political (following Derrida 1992 and 1998, among others). Crucially, however, the author doesn't reject this uncertainty. Rather, he proposes to place it at the centre of RPA.

'Undecidability' derives from the fact that people understand different things by terms like 'freedom', 'choice', 'democracy' […]. The formation of a consensus […] involves not the 'discovery' of a shared interest or opinion but its creation. This involves the provision of 'reasons' of all sorts: instrumental but also rational-legal, affective (Finlayson, 2007, p. 551).

This understanding of the political as that which 'motivate[s] a particular action' is what leads Finlayson to the idea of politics as an arena (2007, p. 552) in which arguments are publicly developed, as I mentioned earlier. In what is crucial to understand what I am identifying as the second rhetorical effect of the emblem/flag, the author stresses that politicians rhetorically organise facts into sequences, 'tacitly constructing a particular version of 'how we got here' and of where we are going' (2007, p. 557) – echoing White (1973). This suggests that the second rhetorical effect of the image is built upon a fundamental tension that is strongly connected with that around the changing nature of sovereignty: the (symbolic) idea of UN citizenship, split between the cosmopolitan vision of the UN and the member states to which it is formally attached. I will return to the idea of cosmopolitanism and connect it with my interest in visual rhetoric as, following Rice 2005, a distributed process (an idea that I discussed in Chapter 1) in Chapter 4.

For now, I must stress that we can also establish a connection between what Finlayson identifies as the rhetorical organisation of ideas (2007) and what Martin identifies as the rhetorical consequences of affect, based on recent psychoanalytical research (2013, 2015b; this also reflects the suitability of Mitchell's tripartite approach to the visual, which including principles of psychoanalysis, in my methodology). As Martin writes,

> speaking to emotions helps capture desire and makes arguments into plausible stories that grip us in non-rational ways. Psychoanalytical theory, however, expands our understanding of how rhetoric achieves this: namely, by articulating 'symptomatic beliefs' that affectively organise subjectivity (2015b, p. 15).

We can see this affective network at play in the suggestion (evident in the emblem/flag's rhetorical arguments) that the UN is a relevant organisations despite its flaws, i.e that it is worthy of support in its aim to progressively build a strong international community. Specifically, I would like to propose seeing the aspiration for connectedness as a matter of affect that demonstrates the relevance of Ahmed's discussion of emotions as relational, i.e. as that which 'involve (re)actions or relations of 'towardness' [sic] or 'awayness' [sic] in relation to

such objects […], affective forms of reorientation' (2004, p. 8) – in this case, towards an organisation that legally connects the viewer with billions of unknown others.

Indeed, and to return to the emblem/flag, it can be argued that, for the contemporary western viewer, the emblem/flag embodies two affects: hope (which could potentially be understood as a form of historical nostalgia) and frustration, whose coexistence can be discerned if we refer to Lauren Berlant's work (another important voice within the affective turn). In *Cruel Optimism* (2011), Berlant analyses the affective dimensions of belonging in America in the last two centuries and identifies a set of affective strategies that, the writer argues, are developed by individuals in order to survive in a context of permanent crisis. Such strategies include optimism, which sustains the fantasy of good life and allows individuals to make it through daily life, but makes individuals remain attached to 'compromised conditions of possibility' (2011, p. 24). Crucially, she sees optimism as structural, i.e. as a form of investment 'in one's own or the world's continuity' (2011, p. 13). One can apply this analysis to the UN: in this case, the tension that is evident in the UN emblem/flag as a net and as a target reflect the constitutive tension underlying the forms of affective engagement of the contemporary western viewer toward the United Nations.

Jonathan Dean's 'Tales of the Apolitical', which was published in 2014 in the journal *Political Studies*, may help us further understand the particularities of this form of relation. Although Dean's article mainly discusses the circulation of narratives of rejection of radical politics in political theory, the way in which he relates Ahmed's work with the Lacanian notion of fantasy (thereby combining a social understanding of affect with the psychoanalytic vocabulary and explanatory capacity) makes it possible to understand how individual investments in fantasy acquire a wider social significance. Dean writes that even if

> Ahmed distances herself from Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis by moving away from a subject-centred account of affect […] she is also concerned with making sense of the stickiness and intractability of social norms (2014, pp. 463–465).

I see this analysis as compatible both with Finlayson's proposal to focus on 'the intersubjective, dynamic, formation and reformation of arguments' (2007, p. 560) and with Martin's interest in rhetoric as a process of closing off incoherence (2008, p. 8). Indeed, as Dean also writes, following Lacan,

> subjects *invest* in particular identities […] because they offer the possibility of overcoming this constitutive lack via a promise of order, coherence and stability, which in turn allows for ambiguity […] to be cast out to the margins (Glynos, 2011, p. 59) (2014, p. 462 [original emphasis]).

Drawing from Dean's political reading of Lacan's argument, I would like to suggest that some of the tensions that are at play in the emblem/flag of the UN and their subsequent ambivalent affective dimension can be interpreted as illuminating the fragile foundations of the sense of coherence that the western world maintains with regard to its role in sustaining global peace and international stability. That is, the flag/symbol and its second rhetorical effect – the reiteration of an aspiration for connectedness – can, in fact, be seen as a symptom of a fantasy. However, I should reiterate that this analysis might not apply in non-western contexts; that is, only further research could confirm or deny it.

This leads me to the second point of this section, which considers how the emblem/flag performs the temporality of the UN. I believe that the coexistence within the emblem/flag of the ideas of, on the one hand, international collaboration and, on the other hand, military urgency (due to the inability of the international community to attain long-lasting peace), is a socially and historically localised example of the general tension between political utopias (which are, by definition, to be achieved in a future to come) and their permanent deferral – a movement that is central in the later work of Jacques Derrida. This tension is also evident in the instability of the relation between national sovereignty and the supranational order – which, as I argued before, the emblem reflects and performs.

What is at stake, then, is no less than what one can identify as the aporia of the political (following Richard Beardsworth's interpretation of the Derridean *oeuvre* in *Derrida and the*

Political, 1996): its double condition of permanent potentials and failures. To be clear, my belief is that the incorporation of multiple dimensions within this image has a wider significance: on the one hand, the idea that the UN represents the international community highlights the utopian character of the institution while, on the other hand, the military interpretation of the image stresses its permanent delay. The emblem/flag can hence be seen as situating the UN within this long-term temporality of the political.

Indeed, the aporia, a figure of simultaneous opening and closing, immanence and deferment is not only very useful for thinking through the UN's relation to peace or even justice (wherein just decisions are continuously required whilst justice is always incomplete and permanently 'to come') but can also be read as describing very acutely a problem concerning global citizenship. Discussing hospitality with regards to the European Union (Derrida and Dufourmantelle, 1997), Derrida argues that an unconditional openness of the borders is impossible by definition and that hospitality itself is always accompanied by violence (in the form of the decision as to whom is granted permission to enter: the very limit of hospitality itself). Consequently, full hospitality (and hence, to return to my argument, global belonging or connectedness) is permanently unachieved, permanently to come in the future (1993).[43] This temporality – moving between promise and implementation – is key in the work of the UN. The emblem/flag, with its inner tension as well as the instabilities that are evident in its uses, not only reflects it but also reinforces it, hence contributing to legitimising the UN. It is in this context, and to return to the idea of Derrida's 'ghost of the undecidable' (p. 24) that I mentioned in the previous chapter, that I believe that we can see the flag/emblem as rhetorically closing off (to refer to Martin's work yet again, 2008, p. 8) or denying a specific haunting: the possibility of failure of the UN's mission and its irrelevance.

However, and in what leads me to the third and final point in this section, I must also acknowledge the possibility that the UN emblem/flag isn't successful in this effect, i.e. that it fails in its rhetorical address of some viewers – for example, those from member states who are not among the five permanent Security Council members. In doing so, I am taking Didi-

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[43]   It is important to stress, however, that its impossibility never leads the author to conclude that justice ought to be understood as a Kantian ideal (see 1992, pp. 26–28).

Huberman's advice, which I mentioned in the previous chapter, regarding the need to 'pay attention to the contradictions and the limits harboured by images' (2008, p. 134). Although I don't have direct evidence of this possibility, there is scholarly literature that confirms the key role of flags in social confrontations and identity challenges. To give but on example, this is evident in Kenneth Pennington and Orla Lynch's 'Counterterrorism, Community Policing and the Flags Protests: An Examination of Police. Perceptions of Northern Ireland's Operation Dulcet' (2015), in which the authors analyse the official response to the 2013 illegal but peaceful protests and subsequent violence that emerged after Belfast City Council decided to remove the Union flag (which was perceived as a sign of the dilution of Britishness in Northern Ireland and hence as supporting an anti-Unionist agenda).

In what is of interest to my discussion, the response to the flag removal also highlighted historical community divisions. On the one hand, the police was afraid that the issue would be manipulated by loyalist terror groups, i.e. that being seen as supporting the agenda of one terrorist group would potentially antagonise others. That is, the police had to manage not only the event but also, and especially, the perception of how it did so to ensure the maintenance of a long-term albeit unstable community equilibrium. However, and on the other hand, the participants also spoke of perception management in their own activism.

Pennington and Lynch's identification of the complex consequences of a seemingly simple change to an official flag protocol confirms my hypothesis regarding the possibility of a negative reception of the emblem/flag, i.e. one that would see it as reflecting the UN's failure to achieve its institutional mission as an equal, inclusive, consensus-based organisation. Clearly, this is also closely connected with Derrida's understanding of the aporia as a promise that is permanently unachievable. That is, seeing the emblem/flag from the point of view of the Derridean framework between, for example, law and justice (law, which is partial; justice, which is impossible to achieve full) also make possible a critical evaluation of the work of the UN. This idea brings me back to my disagreement with Martin's reading of Derrida, which I presented in Chapter 1.

Figure 26 – Interior of the Security Council Chamber (2013).

The chapter discusses the second central mode of presentation of the UN: its publicness, which I define as the combination of aesthetic and communicative elements aimed at giving a sense of immediacy and transparence regarding the functioning of the institution. That is, the rhetorical function of this mode of presentation is to reveal the UN's *institutional functioning*. However, it does so in a way that suggests that the latter is deliberative and open, which subsequently performs the inclusion of the viewers of the UN into a community.

Specifically, I am going to analyse images of the UN headquarters, followed by a section dedicated to its main fora: the General Assembly and the Security Council (albeit mostly focused on the latter due to the high number of images of this forum in media stories pertaining to the UN). The notion of the inter-image will be implicit in this chapter in two ways: some of the images that I analyse include the UN emblem/flag within them while others refer to the ideas of universality, collaboration and international stability (which are key in the mode of presentation discussed in Chapter 2).

To reiterate my approach, the reason why I have decided to analyse the visual elements of these two fora (rather than other UN headquarters or organs, such as the International Court of Justice, for example) reflects my methodology and research goals. As I explain in the introduction, I selected my visual material based, *not* on the communicative intention of the United Nations (i.e. to make its work visible), but according to the images that end up representing it, after a process of filtering by the media, to western viewers. This research made me discover that images of the New York headquarters, the Security Council and the General Assembly are ubiquitous in UN-related stories – as such, they emerge as the UN's main institutional visual expressions. That is, and to mention one example, significantly fewer images of the Geneva UN headquarters emerged in my initial research.

The chapter is organised into three main sections: first, a discussion of the presented and suggested elements of the UN Headquarters, including the General Assembly and the Security Council ('Argument: Introducing the Tension between the Values and the Modus Operandi of the Institution'); second, an analysis of the rhetorical effect of the publicness of the General Assembly and the Security Council: the performance of inclusion ('Effect: Performing

Inclusion'); third, a specific incident that took place within the latter forum (to which I refer as 'Colin Powell's Presentation'), which allows me to focus on issues of spectatorship.

a) <u>Argument: Introducing the Tension between the Values and the Modus Operandi of the Institution</u>

a.1. <u>The UN Headquarters</u>

The UN headquarters can be found on a piece of New York land bought in 1946 with funds donated by John D. Rockefeller Jr., an American billionaire. This donation (which, it is argued anecdotally, may have given the Rockefeller family profound power within the UN) came shortly after the first official events of the UN. Indeed, the first General Assembly, which took place in Westminster, London, on 10 January 1946, was attended by representative of 51 nations. A week later, also in London, on 17 January 1946, the Security Council met for the first time and agreed upon its own rules of procedure. The first Secretary-General (the Norwegian Trygve Lie) was elected on 1 February 1946, which was followed by the designation of 24 October 1947 as the official United Nations Day. On 10 December 1948 the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the General Assembly and, finally, on 24 October 1949 the first cornerstone for the UN Headquarters in New York City was laid (UN, no date i; UN date r).

Figure 27 – The United Nations Headquarters, New York (view toward the East river) (no date).
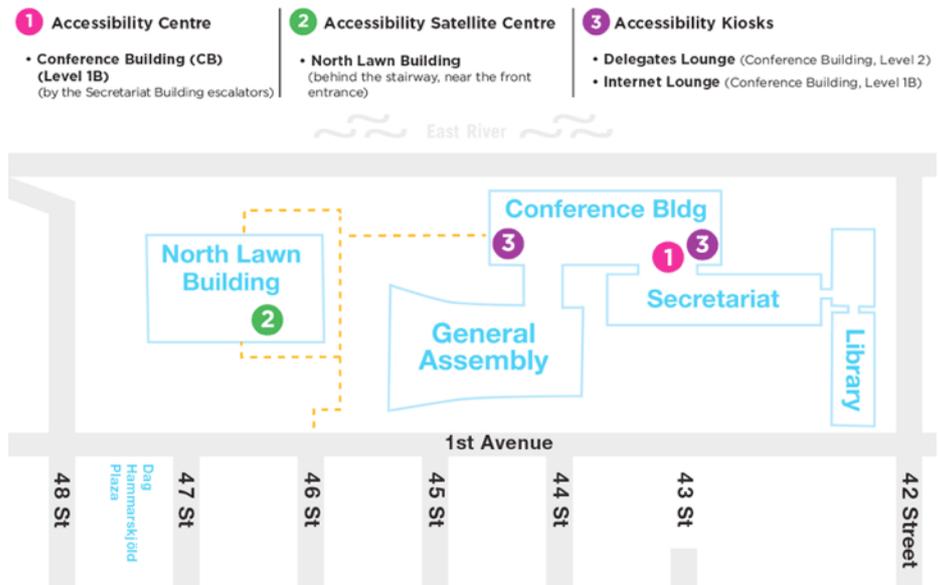
Figure 28 – Layout of the Headquarters (plan view) (no date).
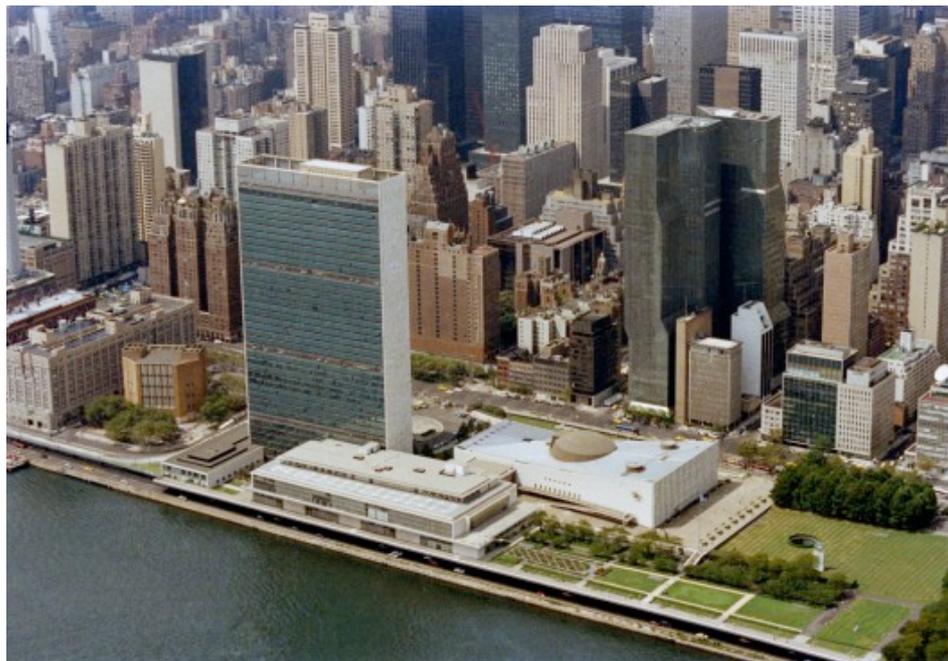
Figure 29 – The United Nations Headquarters (view from the East river) (UN, no date, s).

The complex of the headquarters is composed of four main buildings: the Secretariat, the General Assembly, a Conference Area and the Dag Hammarskjold Library, which was added in 1961 (see figures 27, 28 and 29). The Secretariat, surrounded by open spaces, is the tallest building of the four and comprises 39 floors above ground level and a further three below. One of these open spaces is decorated by the flags of the members of the UN organised alphabetically (figure 27). As described in detail by the former UN map librarian Nathaniel Abelson in the article 'Vexillology at the United Nations', published in 1986 (which explains the discrepancy between the actual number of member states and that of flags mentioned in the quote),

> Each day at 0800 […] a team of from eight to eleven security officers hoist the one hundred and fifty nine flags […]. On weekends, unless a meeting takes place, only the United Nations flags are raised: they are located apart from the line of national flags. During the daily ceremonies, these flags are raised first and lowered last […]. Except on the days when the flags of new member states are raised, all flags are flown in alphabetical order with A to the north and Z to the south. (1986, p. 1).

In a similar manner to what the previous chapter revealed, this quote highlights the fact that, on the one hand, the official flag protocol negotiates the relation between national sovereignty and the international order as represented by the UN flags but also, on the other hand, recognises them as (at least, partly) independent. Indeed, the two types of flags are separated and there are occasions when only the UN flags are only raised. This is particularly interestingly because the flags of the member states are one of the most easily recognisable elements of the photographs of the headquarters, as figure 27 exemplifies.

The tension between these two orders is also suggested by the building of the Secretariat, which was the first International Style skyscraper erected in New York. As is typical of this style, its curtain wall façade is made of aluminium, marble and green-tinted glass. The building was designed by an international team of architects including Nikolai G. Bassov (Soviet Union), Gaston Brunfaut (Belgium), Ernest Cormier (Canada), Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, (Le Corbusier) (France), Liang Seu-Cheng (China), Sven Markelius (Sweden), Oscar Niemeyer

(Brazil), Howard Robertson (United Kingdom), G. A. Soilleux (Australia) and Julio Vilamajo (Uruguay). Le Corbusier and Niemeyer were responsible for the general plan but the team was led by the American Wallace K. Harrison, a choice that (as in the case of the design of the emblem/flag), confirms the privileged position of the US with regard to the UN as both a member and a privileged founder. The construction of the headquarters, which started on 24 October 1949, cost $65 million. The construction was financed by an interest-free loan made by the government of the United States, repayments on which were completed in 1982 (UN, no date h). Today, the complex is an international zone with its own stamps, security force, fire department and postal administration. Additionally, like all other diplomatic spaces, the UN headquarters are extraterritorial, coming under international law.

When attempting to understand the significance of the aesthetics of the UN with regard to the modes of self-presentation of the organisation, it is key to consider the suggested elements of American modernism. This architectural style emerged in the post-World War II and reflected an ethos affirming the power of individuals to define themselves and improve their surroundings through their resources, scientific knowledge and practical experimentation – a belief in progress epitomised by the city of New York and reflective of the city's historical context. The aesthetic dimension of modernism projected these values: the architectural International Style aimed to be innovative and futuristic, often employing new materials and engineering techniques, which is visible in the clear rectilinear lines and glass façades of the Secretariat building (recently renovated for the removal of asbestos and the renewal of old equipment and wiring in the Assembly wall – see Rochon, 2012). It is in this direction that, in *Building American Public Health: Urban Planning, Architecture, and the Quest for Better Health in the United States* (2012), the urban scholar Russell Lopez writes in a chapter dedicated to modernist aesthetics in the US after Second World War that 'the United Nations building […] seemed to be designed to tell the public that the International Style could lead to a new world, where war would be eliminated (2012, p. 90).

Yet the aesthetics of the UN headquarters also testify to the problematic legitimacy of the organisation, the complicated relation between national sovereignty and international law, and its western bias. This last point is highlighted in the introduction to *Modernism and the Middle*

East: Architecture and Politics in the Twentieth Century, 2008. It is worth quoting the editors Sandy Isenstadt and Kishwar Rizvi at length. They write that

> the dissemination of values held to be both Western and universal was a keynote of international politics after World War II, with the United Nations emblematic of such aspirations. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, for example, approved in 1948 by the United Nations' General Assembly, […] stressed rights such as personal privacy, private property […]. Indeed, an unquestioned faith in the goodness of development […] is an often overlooked but nonetheless fundamental aspect of modernism […]. The elegant glass-walled slab was the leading symbol of a 'supranational aesthetic of bureaucracy and technocratic efficiency' that evoked a prosperous future precisely by forgoing cultural references. The abstracted forms of modern architecture seemed to herald wider participating in society by sponsoring a symbolic franchise accessible to all social strata (2008, p. 18).

This quote highlights the problem of assuming that western references (in this case, evident in the architectural elements of the UN headquarters) have, in any way, a universal dimension: it wrongly conflates the mission of the UN (sustaining and supporting global peace and development) with a western understanding of how such values may be realised.

Other sources find in the aesthetics of the UN headquarters not only a suggestion of a belief in progress but also a reminder of the organisation's limitations – although their criticism tends to involve an iteration of the tension regarding sovereignty that I discussed in the previous chapter. For example, in the introduction to *Sanctioning Modernism: Architecture and the Making of Postwar Identities* (2014), the architecture scholar Dennis Doordan writes that

> the UN buildings are assailed by some as the sinister architectural symbol of a new world order that threatens to strip nations of sovereign control over their own affairs. For others, the pristine geometry and midcentury palette of materials and artworks serve as a poignant reminder of the naive hopes and disappointing

achievements that trail in the wake of the promise of a new peaceful world order (2014, p. 1).[44]

This tension between, on the one hand, the belief in global progress that is suggested by the architecture of the headquarters and, on the other hand, the specific cultural and political values enacted by the UN in the definition of progress that it supports is evident not only in the aluminium and glass curtain wall of the building of the Secretariat but also in the interior decoration of the General Assembly and the Security Council chamber.

a.2. The General Assembly and the Security Council

I will now focus on the presented and suggested elements of the General Assembly before discussing those of the Security Council (the central fora of discussion and decision within the UN), and, finally, engaging with the publicness of the meetings that take place in the two halls.

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[44]   The significance of the reference to a phoenix will be explored later in this chapter.

Figure 30 – Panoramic view of the interior of the General Assembly, providing a sense of the layout of the room (no date).

Figures 31 and 32 – Murals created by Fernand Léger (1952).

The General Assembly hall is the largest room in the building. It can accommodate up to 1800 people and is the only forum containing the UN emblem (see figure 30, centre). In order to stress the international character of the organisation, the room contains no gifts from any of the UN member states – with the exception of an anonymous donation given to the United Nations Association of the United States of two abstract murals by the French artist Fernand Léger, which are situated on either side of the hall (figures 31 and 32).

Clearly, the choice of two artworks by a well-known western artist illustrates the conflict between the decision-making processes within the UN and its supposedly neutral and international values. Additionally, a close analysis of the imagery (influenced, again, by Mitchell's use of phenomenology) confirms that it is possible to extend my analysis of the conflicting readings of the UN emblem/flag as a net and a cross-hair (developed in the previous chapter) to the murals and argue that they can be seen as representing, at turns, an individual dancing and the beseeching gesture of someone asking for help. This interpretation of the suggested elements of the artworks reiterates, yet again, the unstable understanding of sovereignty – moving between autonomy and interdependence – that is at the core of the institutional framework of the UN, as I identified in Chapter 2.

Interestingly, this tension is also evident in the way in which the UN website describes the General Assembly:

> The General Assembly is the central organ. This is where all 191 Member States can gather to discuss the pressing problems of our times, most of which involve many countries or continents and therefore require international cooperation. The General Assembly is not a world government – its resolutions are not legally binding upon Member States. However, through its recommendations it can focus world attention on important issues, generate international cooperation and, in some cases, its decisions can lead to legally binding treaties and conventions (UN, no date p).

I am here pointing at the clear distinction that the organisation makes between the General Assembly as a world government (an understanding that it rejects) and its definition as a site in which 'decisions *can* lead to legally binding treaties' [my own emphasis]. That is, the potential of the forum to act as a site of global governance is acknowledged – but so is the fact that such a potential must be supported, at every resolution and decision, by the UN's member states. This view confirms the argument made by Kal Raustiala (2003), whom I mentioned in the previous chapter. As the author explains:

> International institutions derive their powers from the explicit consent of the contracting states […]. When delegated powers can in fact be withdrawn, by definition states retain the ultimate power to decide an issue or choose a policy […]. Revocable delegations do not implicate sovereignty (2003, pp. 836-847).

To be clear, I see this quote as highlighting the state's autonomy to make the decision to join an international organisation as the cornerstone of sovereignty in a context of increasing international interdependence.

Before advancing, I should stress that the General Assembly is the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the UN. Meeting regularly from September to December and when necessary outside of this period, it includes all members of the organisation and, crucially, it aims at being a forum for multilateral discussion. Although its decisions are not binding on member states, it is responsible for the codification of international law and for the process of international standard-setting in areas such as education and health. Chapter IV of the Charter is dedicated to the General Assembly, stating its composition (article 9), functions and powers (articles 10 to 17), voting (articles 18 and 19) and procedure (articles 20 to 22). Among its functions and powers are the following:

> Article 11. […] The General Assembly may call the attention of the Security Council to situations which are likely to endanger international peace and security. […]

Article 13. The General Assembly shall initiate studies and make recommendations for the purpose of: a. promoting international co-operation in the political field and encouraging the progressive development of international law and its codification; b. promoting international co-operation in the economic, social, cultural, educational, and health fields, and assisting in the realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction. […]

Article 14. Subject to the provisions of Article 12, the General Assembly may recommend measures for the peaceful adjustment of any situation, regardless of origin, which it deems likely to impair the general welfare or friendly relations among nations, including situations resulting from a violation of the provisions of the present Charter (UN, 1945).

These articles restate the fact that the General Assembly's stated goal and priority is to reach either consensus or broad majorities. Indeed, each of its members (now 193, following the admission of Montenegro in 2006 and South Sudan in 2011) has one vote (article 18, 1) and important issues such as the election of members to councils[45] and recommendations concerning 'international peace and security' can only be taken if a two-thirds majority of the members is involved (UN 1945, Article 18, 2). This characteristic of the General Assembly is suggested in figures 30, 31, and 32, which reveal a chamber filled with hundreds of chairs in a similar tone of blue to that used in the UN emblem/flag. That is, the images of the interior of the General Assembly make a similar rhetorical argument to that of the emblem/flag in the context of peacekeeping operations. They (the images of the Assembly) suggest that the representatives of the member states to the General Assembly not only sit at the UN – rather, in doing so, their power differences are also neutralised by the suggestion of unity, which implies a shared commitment to enacting the vision of the international organisation. Indirectly, and again, this rhetorical argument reiterates the relevance of the institution.

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[45]   For example, the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council and the Security Council (non-permanent members).

It is also important to consider more directly the significance of the modus operandi of the General Assembly. As I have mentioned, the UN is organised around the historical model of the nation state, extending membership to preexisting political communities, to which it accords equal formal power in this forum. This confirms the idea that, and as I said in Chapter 2, the utopian dimension that underpins nationalism both legitimised the construction of nation states at the end of the eighteenth century (as Anderson demonstrates in *Imagined Communities*, 1983) and sustains today's international order. In light of this, it becomes evident that the images of the General Assembly also navigate the tension between these two utopias (cosmopolitanism and nationalism) joining my analysis in the previous chapter.

That there are several parallels between the cosmopolitan vision on the one hand and the values of the UN on the other is something that has been discussed at length (Koivukoski and Tabachnick, 2015). However, focusing on the visual rhetoric of its interior spaces reveals their contribution to transforming the cosmopolitan ethos into more than a political aspiration. Rather, the General Assembly suggests visually that such a framework and aspiration is both attainable and compatible with national forms of political representation.

Let us now focus on the Security Council to examine this idea in more detail.

Figures 33 and 34 – Interior of the Security Council Chamber (2013).

As we can see in figures 33 and 34, the circular table of the Security Council is overlooked by circa 20 rows of seats, half of them red and similar to the ones surrounding the circular table, and half of them folding and in green. The front part of the room is clad in marble, which frames Per Krohg's oil canvas (figure 33). As the images make clear, the central element of the room is the circular yet open table, around which sit the members of the Security Council, and whose work is observed not only by the members of the audience (figure 34, right side) but also by the translation and support teams, who stand behind the long horizontal windows (figure 33, left and right; figure 34, top).

Again, an engagement with the images that is influenced by Mitchell's approach (and particularly by his combination of principles of semiotics and phenomenology) leads to a set of discoveries. First, although those who speak at the table are identified by plates stating their countries, the photograph suggests that these individuals are members of the Security Council *before* or *above* their being representatives of their nation states. That is, they are incorporated by the circle, which suggests that the Security Council responds to and focuses on issues pertaining to the international order more than it does to national concerns. Additionally, the openness of the circle suggests that, despite the existence of five permanent members, the Security Council is not self-centred, i.e. that its members listen to (if not serve) those who are in attendance of its meetings (figure 34, right side). This is reiterated by the existence of very visible doors to the left and the right of the table, which suggest fluidity, and hence an openness to institutional change.

At this point, it is relevant to mention the work of the philosopher Kenneth Burke, who views language as a form of symbolic action and opposes a 'scientistic' to a 'dramatistic' approach to literary and rhetorical criticism (*Language as Symbolic Action,* 1966). In light of Burke's argument, I believe that the UN's use of the reference to an circle, which suggests dialogue between equals and openness, should not necessarily be evaluated vis-à-vis the full institutional enactment of these principles but, rather, as ideographs (McGee, 1980). Indeed, such terms (for example, 'justice' or 'equality') do not have a stable definition and yet often function as the summary of political positions. In this case, what is ideographic is the suggestion of openness and movement, which echoes the temporality of the UN that I identified and discussed in

Chapter 2. That is, like the emblem/flag, the visual rhetoric of the Security Council suggests that the realisation of the vision of the UN lies in a future to come.

The Security Council chamber was given to the UN in 1952 as a gift from Norway and was designed by the Norwegian architect Arnstein Arneberg. This is why some of its elements 'are reminiscent of the interior of the Oslo City Hall [which he also designed], the venue for the presentation of the Nobel Peace Prize' (Norway, 2013a).[46] Indeed, as is described in a post from 15 April 2013 published on the official website of the Government and Ministries of Norway,

> when the Norwegian politician Trygve Lie was chosen as the first UN Secretary General [sic] in 1946, the UN decided to build its headquarter […]. Norway decorated the room […]. Architect Arnstein Arneberg designed the room; artist Per Krohg made the painting for the room, whereas Else Poulsson designed the wallpaper (Norway Post, 2013).

Arneberg wanted the chamber to embody the Norwegian art and culture of the time (as we can see in the mid-century modernist chairs, which are similar to those in the General Assembly – see figures 30, 31, 32) while also being 'so neutral that it could withstand the test of time', as he affirmed in 1952 (see Norway, 2013). This highlights once again the organisations goal to present itself and its values as atemporal, as well as the tension between this intention and the UN's historically and culturally-specific character.

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[46]   These words were said by the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Espen Barth Eide at the reopening of the Security Council Chamber in April 2013 following renovation.
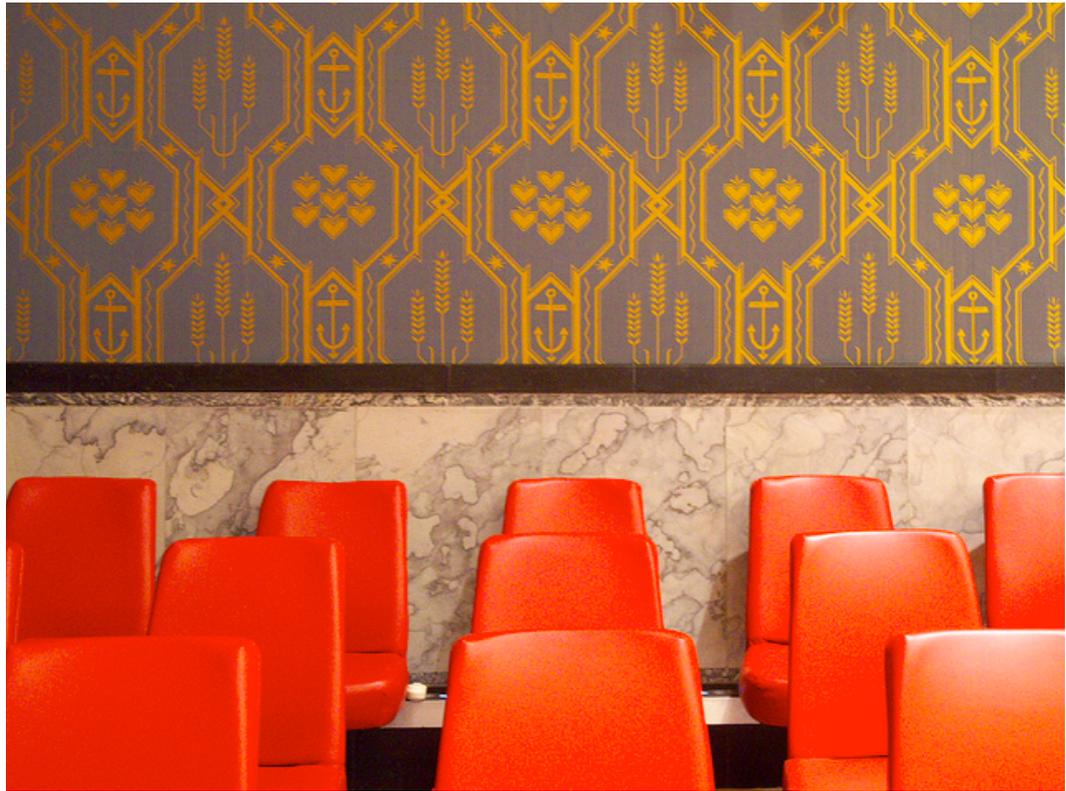
Figure 35 – Detailed view of the wallpaper (2013).

Figure 35, a photograph of the blue and gold wallpaper (which is present in two of the walls of the chamber), and curtain (covering the two parts of the façade that surround the mural and face the East River), was taken on April 16, 2013 – the day of the reopening of the Security Council Chamber following extensive renovation work. During the restoration, the original wallpaper was removed and replaced with a new one with the same pattern that was made especially for the occasion. The Damask wallpaper was designed by the Norwegian textile artist Else Poulsson. It features a repeated pattern of olive branches, anchors, stars and drawings in the shape of hearts. Both the olive branches and the choice of gold draw from the flag and the emblem of the UN, while the anchors, stars and hearts suggest the strength of its values and mission. As the Norwegian Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide affirmed at the opening of the Security Council Chamber,

> the anchors symbolise faith, growing wheat symbolises hope, and hearts symbolise charity. Norway's ambition was to provide an appropriate and inspirational setting and background for discussing the very issues that lie at the core of the UN's purpose: peace and security (Norway, 2013a).

Although the symbols of gold, wheat, anchors and hearts are understood in a similar manner globally, that is not the case of the olive branches, as I discussed in Chapter 2. This confirms yet again the tension between the UN's attempt to represent its mission (building and sustaining international peace and security among all of its parties) and the fact that most of the nation states that played a key role in its establishment and original funding (in this case, of the Security Council itself) were western.

Nonetheless, the result is a room that, as former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated in the inauguration of the renovated room, 'speaks to us in a language of dignity' (Norway, 2013b). As he remarked at the inauguration of the renovated Security Council Chamber,

> just as it did when the first resolution was tabled here long ago, the room speaks to us in a language of dignity and seriousness. At the same time, it entices us with its surprising and enchanting simplicity. Its horseshoe table unites the Security

Council members. […] The tapestry and draperies are meant to inspire them in their work by depicting the anchor of faith, the growing wheat of hope, and the heart of charity. The famous backdrop to all that goes on here […] has itself risen anew, symbolizing […] humankind's eternal hopes for peace and freedom (Norway, 2013b).

It is particularly interesting to read that the decoration of the room 'inspires' the work of the Security Council members – rather than merely reflecting the principles of the UN or, indeed, the values that arguably underpin the work of the forum. Additionally, I must reiterate the fact that such a visual 'language of dignity and seriousness' (2013b) is brought forward by an interior decoration modelled upon the Oslo City Hall – an important official building of a European capital. That is, Ban Ki-moon's description of the room as 'dignified' points, yet again, to the unspoken yet pervasive influence of the western, economically advanced world in not only setting up the UN but also defining its mission, values and understanding of what their successful achievement would look like. This discovery echoes one of the conclusions of the linguistics scholar Esara Sandikcioglu (2000), whose empirical work analysed the news coverage of the Persian Gulf War and, among other points, argued that self-representations of the West tend to be associated with positive ideas such as rationality, stability, civilisation and power – while the Other is associated with negative concepts such as irrationality, instability and barbarism.

Figure 36 – Detailed view of Per Krohg's mural (no date).

Finally, one must also mention Per Krohg's painting (figures 33 and 36; for a detailed view, see Annex III): an oil-on-canvas mural depicting a phoenix rising from ashes, which is easily recognisable as a religious trope.[47] The UN website describes it as

> a symbol of the world being rebuilt after the Second World War. Above the dark sinister colours at the bottom different images in bright colours sybolizing [sic] the hope for a better future are depicted. Equality is symbolized by a group of people weighing out grain for all to share (UN, no date n).

The phoenix represents hope in the possibility of building a world of clarity and harmony (as hinted not only by the dancing, music and celebration portrayed in the panel that is placed between the central couple and the right corner panel, which hints at science and knowledge, but also by the central right and left panels) against the background of a collapsing world. Additionally, before creating this piece, Krohg (1889-1965) had been captured by the German forces and forced to work at the Veidal Prison Camp during the Second World War – which explains the clear reference to forced labour and slavery in the lower part of the painting. These individuals are pushed back to a world of clarity and hope, as is evident in the left panel, in which a woman opens a window. Altogether, the mural hints at the context of the foundation of the UN (the Second World War). Indeed, Per Krohg himself affirmed in 1950 that 'the world we see in the foreground is collapsing, while the new world based on based on clarity and harmony can be built' (Norway, 2013a).

It is clear that myriad features of the chamber's architecture and interior decoration combine to stress the central goal of the Security Council, that is, the maintenance of peace and security, as it is described in Chapter V of the Charter – which states the composition (article 23), functions and powers (articles 24 to 26), voting (article 27), and procedure (articles 28 to 32) of this forum. In particular, points 1 and 2 of article 24 affirm that

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[47]   This painting is one of many artworks and historic objects that are part of the UN art collection, which is exhibited within the headquarters of the organisation as well as in its duty stations. The collection is presented in *A World of Art: The U.N.Collection*, written by Boutros Boutros-Ghali et al. (1961). I also discuss it in my chapter 'The United Nations Art Collection: Origins, Institutional Framework and Ongoing Tensions' in the forthcoming *Routledge Companion to Global Cultural Policy* (ed. by Dave O'Brien, Toby Miller, Victoria Durrer, forthcoming, 2017). Its analysis is beyond the scope of the thesis because most of the artworks are only visible to those who visit the UN headquarters.

1. In order to ensure prompt and effective action by the United Nations, its Members confer on the Security Council *primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security* […].

2. In discharging these duties the Security Council shall act *in accordance with the Purposes and Principles* of the United Nations (UN, 1945 [original emphasis]).

However, as I have already mentioned, the modus operandi of the Security Council doesn't fully respect such principles either. The forum is composed of five permanent members (China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States) and ten non-permanent members who are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms. Each Council member has one vote and an affirmative vote of at least nine of the 15 members is needed to pass an action. Additionally, in the case of fundamental issues, nine votes, including the five of the permanent members holding veto power, are required for an action to proceed. This is particularly important since the Security Council has the power to establish peace enforcement operations, including international sanctions, and to authorise military action. Moreover, of all the organs of the UN, only the Council can take decisions that are enforceable under the Charter. A clear tension emerges, then, between the limited number of members of the Security Council, the powers of this organ (such as military action against a member state), and the circular shape of the table (which suggests inclusivity and deliberation based on the current global order rather than on the exclusive interests of the Security Council members).

Interestingly, the circularity of the table is also echoed in the geometric pattern of the wallpaper (albeit subtly, figure 35) and, again, in the central panel of the mural (which is oval and represents a united family, figure 42 – although I must mention that the latter is white and heterosexual, which is noninclusive). Another key element in the mural is its symmetry, which suggests geopolitical stability and peace. This analysis echoes Charteris-Black's discussion of the messianic myth in Martin Luther King's speeches, which leads him to stress 'the use of metaphor to legitimate ideology through the creation of myth' (2005, p. 206). In light of this

statement, one could argue that the myth that is cultivated in this case is that of the UN as the guarantor of international stability and global understanding.

This makes it particularly important to consider in more detail the tension between, on the one hand, the centrality of peace in its Charter and mission (which otherwise states the formal equality between the member states) and, on the other hand, the significance of the veto power of the five permanent members of the Security Council in the case of international conflict, which introduces a hierarchy within the members of the UN. An important reference to understand this tension is the work of philosopher and jurist Carl Schmitt, who argued in *The Concept of the Political* that 'the specific political distinction […] is that between friend and enemy' (1932), p. 26), leading to the argument that the possibility of war is inherent to any political collective. That is, Schmitt argued that national sovereignty is built upon a right of exception that allows the sovereign to bypass international law. In this direction, and in what joins my analysis, as the international law scholar Richard Falk has argued, the right of veto of the five permanent members of the Security Council can be understood as 'a constitutional right of exception embedded in the UN Charter' which 'to some extent contradicts the basic imperative of the Organization' (Falk, 2015). Additionally, Falk also identifies a 'geopolitical right of exception' within the UN that adds to the difficulties of implementing its mission:

> In UN contexts the geopolitical right of exception allows a state to prevent the implementation of behavior that has been otherwise given formal approval [for example by] acting behind the scenes, threatening funding cuts and actions for and against a high official. […] Since World War II, the United States far more than any other political actor has enjoyed a geopolitical right of exception within the UN (Falk, 2015).

This brief survey of the literature reiterates yet again the existence of a clear tension between, on the one hand, the mission and the values of the UN (including the principles of deliberation and universality) and, on the other hand, the inherent difficulty of achieving them considering the principles that govern the organisation (the centrality of nation states within it, the existence of permanent members of the Security Council, their veto power on issues that include military

action, and Falk's 'geopolitical right of exception', which I see as extending to the fact that most of the budget of the UN depends on a small number of member states, including, and especially, the US).

To summarise, the two fora suggest ideas of peace, togetherness and universality. That is, the UN clearly employs its architectural environment in a strategic manner – and this is reflected in the rhetoric of its modes of presentation. However, as in the case of the emblem/flag, some of those elements also highlight the cultural and geopolitical background of the UN. Additionally, the Security Council's visual representation of the values of the UN emerges as in tension with the ways in which it enacts such a claim. In this context, and in light of the above discussion, the rhetorical argument made by the interior decoration of the Security Council and the General Assembly is key: it suggests that such tensions can (or will) be solved as long as the UN's members focus on shared, rather than national concerns (as the interior of the General Assembly rhetors), and continue to work towards the enactment of such a potential future (as is suggested by the interior of the Security Council).

Figure 37 – Security Council page of the UN website (2013).

a.3. The Publicness of the General Assembly and the Security Council

Although my focus is on the rhetoric of the modes of self-presentation of the UN, in order to fully understand the significance of the aesthetic characteristics of the Security Council and the General Assembly one must also acknowledge the fact that they are often accompanied by images pertaining to the meetings that take place either within them or in relation to its work. Indeed, the UN has recently begun to make available documents relating to the work that is developed in the Security Council and the General Assembly. I will argue that this decision aims to reinforce the position of the viewer as a participant in the processes of decision-making of the organisation, and hence (preemptively) reinforces her implicit support with the UN's modus operandi and existence – a movement that was also implicit, albeit not as clearly, in the images that I have just analysed. Before developing this analysis, it is important to briefly consider the presented and suggested elements of the websites that make the recordings of the meetings available for public consumption.

Figure 38 – General Assembly page of the UN website (2013).

First of all, notice the colour scheme (blue, white and golden) of the cover webpage of the UN dedicated to the General Assembly (figure 38); the banner, which includes a photograph of the chamber; the option to access the website in its official languages (in the upper right hand corner of the screen) and, above everything else, the message 'Welcome to the United Nations. It's your World.'

The page also describes the functions and powers of this organ, its foundation and procedures, the list of monthly presidents of the Security Council and also includes information regarding its members, its schedule, its subsidiary organs, working and key documents, meeting records, as well as several kinds of associated documents. The page is managed by the UN Web Services Section, a part of the Department of Public Information. The latter was established in 1946 by resolution 13 (1) of the General Assembly (UN, 1946a), which defined its mission as the promotion of global awareness and understanding of the work of the United Nations.

What is suggested by this page is clear: the work of this forum is open, accessible and transparent. Additionally, the UN is presented as belonging to the viewer as much as to those who work in it (the civil servants) or address its fora (experts, politicians, representatives of NGOs or others) in her name.

Figure 39 – UN Web TV page (2013).

Notice, again, the colour scheme of the cover webpage of the UN dedicated to the Security Council (figure 39); the banner, which includes a photograph of the chamber; the option to access the website in its official languages and, once again, the message 'Welcome to the United Nations. It's your World.'

The equivalent page for the General Assembly provides information on its current session, information about the work of the president of the current session, details regarding the General Assembly, its meetings and its main committees, and news stories, documents and similar information about past sessions. As is the case of the Security Council's webpage, the General Assembly's page is also managed by the UN Web Services Section.

Both the Security Council and General Assembly sections of the UN website include links to the 'UN Web TV' page, which provides live and on-demand video content. This page is also organised by the Department of Public Information, albeit by a different team: the television section. The Web TV page provides a live webcast but it also includes an archive of official meetings (recorded meetings and events at the General Assembly, Security Council, Economic and Social Council, International Court of Justice, Human Rights Council, conferences/summits and other meetings/events), other media (for example, recordings of press conferences), news and features and a tab of content that is organised by themes and issues.

However, the content that is made public in this manner (that is, and to give one example, regarding the positions of specific member states vis-à-vis LGBT rights) is not discussed or evaluated critically in view of how it relates to the mission and the values of the UN, that is, it is disseminated without comment. This said, rather than reading this fact as evidence of the neutrality of the UN vis-à-vis such political debates, I believe that the dissemination of such content, organised according to topics such as human rights or LGBT rights, is evidence of the UN's politicisation of information, not content (as discussed by Center, 2009), which can be interpreted as reiterating the mission and the values of the UN (and, subsequently, the idea the organisation isn't responsible for their limited implementation). This said, I will argue later in this chapter that my agreement with Center's conclusion is partial – i.e., it doesn't apply to the analysis of the rhetorical *effect* of the publicness of the UN.

Another question that must also be considered in this context is that of whom it is that the organisation is addressing by making its internal work available. On the one hand, the website of the UN refers to an indistinct 'you'; however, on the other hand, accessing the website and watching the videos or live-streaming its content requires a fast internet connection and, since most videos are not translated, that the viewer speak English. The ways how this content is disseminated presupposes, therefore, a specific socioeconomic and geopolitical position.

Before continuing, it is helpful to summarise the main rhetorical arguments that I identified in this section, organised by the order in why they first appeared. One can read the first group of discoveries (simplified for the sake of clarity) as reiterating the first rhetorical effect that I identified in Chapter 2, i.e the idea that the UN emblem/flag conveys the relation between sovereignty and the international order as fluid:

- the official flag protocol of the UN headquarters recognises the national and the international/supranational orders as independent;
- the architectural elements of the UN headquarters and its two fora use western stylistic references to represent universal values, conflating the two;
- one can extend the conflicting readings of the UN emblem/flag as a net and a cross-hair to the two General Assembly murals, which reiterates the instability of the relation between national sovereignty and the international order;
- although the Assembly's action as a platform for global governance remains limited by the centrality of the nation states within its modus operandi, its blue chairs suggest unity and a shared commitment to enacting the vision of the UN;
- the content that is made public in the webpages of the two fora demonstrates the latter's politicisation of information; which can be interpreted as reiterating the mission and the values of the UN and, subsequently, the idea the organisation isn't responsible for their limited implementation.

This existence of shared rhetorical arguments and effects by different modes of presentation confirms my argument regarding the functioning of such images as a network. However, my

analysis also identified a set of rhetorical arguments that are partly independent from those summarised above:

- the tension between the limited number of members of the Security Council and the powers of this organ is visually solved by the circular shape of the table, suggesting, inclusivity and deliberation and that its members focus on the international order;
- the openness of the circle suggests that the Security Council is open not only to the positions of other member states but also to institutional change;
- the pages of the UN website that are dedicated to the General Assembly and the Security Council suggest that the UN belongs to the viewer as much as to those who work in it or speak in its name.

These rhetorical arguments coalesce around the ideas of openness and inclusion.

b) Effect: Performing Inclusion

The spatial and visual devices that I am analysing in this chapter assert a set of principles and aspirations as if they were enacted by the organisation, and in so doing directly influence the way how the viewers perceive its operation. This is why I will now focus on how this mode of presentation performs the inclusion of the viewers. This analysis will be organised into three main moments: first, I relate an understanding of the UN's branded space to discussions around the frame; second, I consider the publicness of the UN headquarters and the two organs according to the idea of media rituals and their legitimising and integrative consequences; third, I relate the previous discussion to an expanded understanding of rhetoric.

First, I believe that the visual elements that I have described combine to produce the effect of a branded institutional space in the sense that Liz Moor discusses in *The Rise of Brands* (2007). I also consider that this has geopolitical consequences, as I will now discuss. Analysing rebranding strategies such as those employed by Tesco and Orange, Moor sees them as confirming the need to expand the definition of the brand, as I mentioned in the Introduction.

That is, she sees brands as including more than the set of graphic design elements that distinguish a set of products or services from the competition. Namely,

> aspects of material culture that would not usually be considered 'media' at all are recast as communicative sites […]. What is offered instead is the idea of an entire *environment* of visual and material culture […]. This in turn is premised on a model of consumer perceptions that emphasizes immersion and habituation rather than stimulus-response (2007, p. 47 [original emphasis]).

It is particularly interesting to read Moor as she highlights the role of environments as a form of communication. This position validates my decision to combine and discuss, for example, the wall tapestry and its rhetorical argument with that of the building's aesthetic and, finally, the dissemination of the work that takes place in the two main fora of the UN, leading to my proposed notion of publicness (that is, the combination of the aesthetic and visual elements that present and disseminate the work of the UN as an institution). This analysis can also be seen as joining what the commercial semiotician Laura Oswald, mentioned earlier, discusses as the contribution of 'spatial semiotics' (2010, pp. 148-184) to brain equity, an argument based on the semiotic analysis of the stores of a fast-food chain and the surgeries of a North American health organisation.

Moor's conclusion, regarding the importance of habituation, leads me to an idea that is widely recognised by scholars working in fields ranging from media studies to photography studies and war studies: the visual plays a role in constructing and sustaining what is acknowledged as reality and hence – and this is what interests me in this context – in maintaining the geopolitical order. In this context, it is worth considering the argument made by Campbell (mentioned in the previous chapter) in an essay on documentary photography. He states that, rather than evaluating images for their accuracy, one should consider

> what they do, how they function, and the impact of this operation […]. We need to depart from an understanding of photographs as illustrations and carriers of

information […] to an appreciation of pictures as ciphers that prompt affective responses (2007, p. 379).

In Campbell's understanding, images are catalysts: while they do carry information, their potential content can be activated in different manners – including affectively. In light of this analysis, one can also understand communication means as constitutive of forms of relation – as I will do later in this chapter. For now, it is important to reiterate that this analysis opposes the understanding of images as ideological instruments held by, to name but two: Nicholas Mirzoeff, who associates visuality with imperialism and forms of control (opposed by what he refers to in *The Right to Look: A Counterhistory of Visuality,* 2011, as I mentioned in Part One, as 'countervisuality');[48] and Paul Virilio, known for his analysis of panoptical visions of the battlefield (a conclusion that he reaches when he analyses the 1999 NATO air campaign over Kosovo in *Strategy of Deception*, 1999).[49] Rather, it is important not to let go of Campbell's understanding of images as balancing openness and persuasion – an idea that is key in my discussion of the spectatorship of the UN in the final section of this chapter. Only then can one make the argument that the images with which the UN makes itself public *perform* the values of the UN and that, in doing so, they also reinforce the entanglement of the viewer with the global political order.

That said, there are other scholars who have recently began to identify the particular ways in which geopolitics is performed visually, such as Judith Butler in *Frames of War – When is Life Grievable?* (2009), which I mentioned in Chapter 1 and that I would like to approach as providing a broader understanding of the idea that the modes of presentation of the UN can be seen as part of its brand. Although Butler's intention in this book is to identify the possibilities for recognising lives as precarious (i.e. by overcoming the framing effects that structure the viewers' perception of reality) her analysis can be extended to a more general understanding of

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[48] He writes 'the 'realism' of countervisuality is the means by which one tries to make sense of the unreality created by visuality's authority from the slave plantation to fascism and the war on terror that is nonetheless too real, while at the same time proposing a real alternative' (Mirzoeff, 2011, p. 5).

[49] Virilio also sees this panoptical vision at play in the surveillance of the public opinion (as in the case of the Global Information Dominance programme). Interestingly, however, I should note that in this book Virilio refers to NATO as an armed group while in comparison the UN is seen as representing democratic nations and international jurisdiction, sacrificing speed for accountability.

the visual, which includes photographs of conflict (as discussed by Campbell) but also, I would argue, the modes of address by political organisations of their viewers. The writer argues in 'Torture and the Ethics of Photography' that

> The frame does not simply exhibit reality, but actively participates in a strategy of containment […]. The frame is always […] de-realizing and de-legitimizing alternative versions of reality, discarded negatives of the official version (2010b, p. xiii).

In the specific context of the publicness of the UN, and to use the author's words, one should ask what 'negatives' are indeed being discarded by the visual dissemination of the work that take places within the UN headquarters. The analysis of the rhetorical argument made by the previous images made clear that this is happening to the *de facto* limits of equality and evidence-based deliberation in the modus operandi of the UN.

Indeed, the idea of deliberative decision-making processes has been repeatedly criticised for assuming both an equality of power among the participants and the possibility of consensus. A key reference in this context is the philosopher Chantal Mouffe, who argues that radical democracy can only exist on the condition of an 'antagonistic pluralism' (as discussed in Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Toward a Radical Democratic Politics*, 1985). This point is highly relevant to make sense of the relation between, on the one hand, the public dissemination of the work of the Security Council and the General Assembly (both the architectural and other visual characteristics of these organs and the continuous stream of information from the UN website, including the seemingly direct access to the UN's work that it claims to facilitate) and, on the other hand, their modus operandi and procedures (which are portrayed as being based on rational deliberation). Combining Mouffe's critique with Butler's analysis of the framing effects of images leads me to the conclusion that the decision to grant the public access to the workings of the UN has two goals: on the one hand, to highlight the supposedly technical (and hence apolitical) nature of the discussions and, on the other hand, to produce a sense of (again, seemingly) access to them by the viewers.

To be clear, I am suggesting that the framework of deliberative politics is of limited application to explain the processes of decision-making within the UN – especially the Habermasian understanding of deliberation, which sees discourse as facilitating the neutral selection of the best solutions from a pool of different political options (see *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society,* 1962, and *The Theory of Communicative Action: Reason and the Rationalization of Society,* 1984). Interestingly, this assumption of neutrality coexists with Habermas' acknowledgement of the situated nature of speech. This internal paradox is the reason why, although the German philosopher identifies Austin's work on illocutionary force (1962) as one of his central references, he is often criticised for missing a central corollary of this notion: the social and political conditions that make the performative possible. Nonetheless, this critique is surprising, as Peter Middleton emphasises in the essay 'Getting Some Distance On The News: Simon Armitage, Douglas Oliver and the WTO' (2000). The scholar notes that

> criticism of Habermas usually focuses on either the cognitivism of this process or its apparent reliance on ideal conditions […]. Such reservations, though, can miss the direction of Habermas's interest in the conditions which make communication possible, which point to the way in which social agreement is reached (2000, 198–199).

Despite the internal contradictions of Habermas' work and, more broadly, the limits of the deliberative framework to fully understand the functioning of the UN (which, as I have been discussing, is limited by a set of institutional characteristics that reflect the geopolitical context that originated it, not to mention what Falk identifies as the geopolitical right of exception, 2015), I share Habermas' interest in the social dimension of communication. This said, I would like to approach deliberation as an *intention* (echoing my discussion of the aporetic temporality of the UN in Chapter 2) rather than a fact. Combining these two ideas demands that I consider not only the rhetoric of the individual elements of the publicness of the UN but also the role that it plays in reiterating the 'social agreement', to borrow Middleton's words (2000, p. 199) regarding the continued relevance of the existence of the UN – the other side of the framing process that is identified by Butler (2009).

This leads me to the second point of this section, which proposes to see the publicness of the UN as a set of media rituals, combining Wesel and Couldry's findings. Wesel (2004), whom I introduced earlier, argues that the rituals and inner procedures of UN world conferences and summits create in their participants a sense of shared identity. At the same time, the viewers of these events are given both a sense of coherence with regard to the geopolitical order, and a sense of organisational certainty regarding the UN (see 2004, p. 235). More broadly, Wesel's conclusion is that these rituals have myriad political benefits: they represent, justify and confirm a specific political order; they integrate the political actors at the cognitive, communicative, emotional and social levels, thereby sustaining a community; they produce, support and secure consensus; they defuse and regulate conflicts; they mitigate and dissolve crises (2004, pp. 237–243).

Wesel's conclusions allow me to see the repetition of international events (his empirical material) as contributing to the maintenance of an international order and also, I believe, to the legitimacy of the UN itself (that is, as a platform for international dialogue and consensus-making). However, I believe that it is necessary to expand his conclusion. Specifically, I want to argue that this mode of presentation of the UN also contributes to integrating its viewers – an argument that can be best understood by reference to ongoing discussions in media studies. In *Media Rituals: A Critical Approach* (2003), the media scholar Nick Couldry, mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2, proposes relating the notion of ritual to issues of power, government and surveillance. His argument, drawing on sociological and anthropological insights, is that media rituals legitimise the social organisation of power.

> The term 'media ritual' refers to the whole range of situations where media themselves 'stand in', or appear to stand in, for something wider, something linked to the fundamental organisation level on which we are, or imagine ourselves to be, *connected* as members of a society (2003, p. 4 [original emphasis]).

This idea is developed in the more recent *Media, Society, World: Social Theory and Digital Media Practice* (2012), in which Couldry focuses on the transformation of media in the digital age. Couldry writes that

> it is not that media institutions 'solve' such underdetermination by providing values around which consensus actually coalesces; rather they offer, *by default*, the most powerful, or most legitimate, available certification of value and reality (2012, pp. 62–65 [original emphasis]).

The author is here suggesting that media practices contribute to validating a coherent narrative about reality despite the existence of evidence that opposes it – an argument whose relevance to my analysis is confirmed in light of discussions that see the UN as an internally conflicted institution. For example, in *The United Nations and Changing World Politics* (2010, 7th ed), Thomas Weiss, David Forsythe, Roger Coate and Kelly-Kate Pease (to whom I will refer from now on as Weiss et al.) present the UN as combining three different and not fully overlapping dimensions: first, it is the organisation of states in an institutional framework that allows them to pursue foreign policy objectives through multilateral negotiations; second, the UN is the leading international politics institution, supported by an international civil service whose work influences states and other actors (despite working under the latter's restrictions); third and finally, it is the convenor of the global civil society. The authors focus their attention on the first two dimensions, which allow the UN to create new norms and institutional mechanisms to deal with a changing global landscape by means of 'operational activities, diplomatic bargaining, and new norm setting' (2010, p. XIX).

The tensions that are identified by Weiss et al. (2010) can be interpreted, to use Couldry's term, as part of the UN's core indetermination. In this view, the images of the UN's headquarters and central fora that emerge, after going through several media filters, as one of their key modes of presentation, play an important role in 'providing values around which consensus […] coalesces' (Couldry, 2012, p. 62). This returns me to the analysis of one of the rhetorical effects of the UN flag and emblem: their reiteration of an aspiration for connectedness, as I discussed in Chapter 2.

Interestingly, Weiss et al. also analyse the relation between sovereignty and supranational cooperation (which I brought up in the previous chapter) as complex and unstable. Indeed, as I also mentioned earlier, the field of human rights provides one example of this instability – there has been global progress in collective political approval in spite of continued opposition by some member states, subsequently influencing the normative frameworks of a significant number of countries. Additionally, the authors also identify a tension between, on the one hand, the increasing demand for the role of the UN in maintaining peace and security as well as in human development and in human rights and, on the other hand, its limited institutional and legal resources. An example of this can be found in the emergence of new rules (such as R2P) that still require further clarification and consolidation. This leads to what the authors name as the UN's 'perpetual political transition' (Weiss et al., 2010, p. 365).

To be clear, in light of Weiss et al.'s argument, I am suggesting that Couldry's analysis of the significance of media rituals (2012) can be combined with Wesel's discussion of UN international conferences (2004), hence highlighting the limits of Seth Center's conclusions (2009, discussed in the Introduction) regarding what he sees as the absence of politicisation of the communication of the UN (and hence of its modes of presentation). Rather, in my view, the appearance of the publicness of the UN as a seemingly neutral mode of institutional dissemination contributes to legitimising its continued existence despite the many internal divisions of the organisation (which its visual rhetoric devalues). Additionally, and crucially, the performative integration of the viewers reinforces this effect. By developing this analysis I am joining the understanding of political rituals that is proposed by Shirin Rai (2015), mentioned earlier, based on Émile Durkheim, Erving Goffman and Steven Lukes. It is worth quoting her at length.

> Durkheim (2001) suggested that social coherence was achieved through a common recognition and translation of ritual […]. Rite was by definition attached to religion's boundedness, providing *legitimate* cohesion. When ritual is repeated over time [individuals] recognise each other as co-participants and become a community […]. Goffman adapted Durkheim's framework to suggest that in contemporary

society, 'What remains are […] interpersonal rituals' (Goffman, 1971, p. 63, cit. in Rai, 2015, p. 154).

Influenced by the work of Steven Lukes, Rai's understanding of rituals stresses instead their role within a society that is internally conflicted.

> Rather than giving rituals an integrative and uncritical role in society, Lukes posits persuasively that political rituals play […] 'a cognitive role, rendering intelligible society and social relationships, serving to organise people's knowledge of the past and present […] through placing it [as Durkheim did not] within a class-structured, conflictual and pluralistic model of society' (Rai, 2015, pp. 155-156).

I want to reiterate that the conflictual assumption of the notion of political rites, which I share, leads me to interpret the rhetorical effect of the media rituals of the UN (that is, the performance of inclusion) as strengthening the perceived legitimacy of the organisation. Additionally, since the UN can refer to the continued global support for its mission that global polls repeatedly demonstrate (as I mentioned in the Introduction), this indirectly helps the organisation respond to any criticism and navigate its internal conflicts.

I now arrive at the third and final point of this section. As I return to my discussion of the relation between rhetoric and affect, it is important to reiterate that my focus on rhetorical arguments follows Finlayson's approach (2007, 2012), which was extended in 'Proving, Pleasing and Persuading? Rhetoric in Contemporary British Politics' (2014). Analysing political speeches by Tony Blair, the author affirms that 'political speech is in part a product of the way in which a society organises and arranges communication institutionally, technologically and aesthetically' (2014, p. 428). However, the aesthetic dimension of his analysis is the least developed of the three dimensions. My aim in this section is to consider the specific role of the affective realm in the performance of inclusion that emerges, as I am arguing, as the rhetorical effect of this mode of presentation of the UN. Specifically, I will claim that the integrative and legitimising effect of the publicness of the UN has affective consequences, not only from the

viewers towards the UN (as I discussed in Chapter 2) but also among the viewers, which suggests the enactment of the idea of the international community.

My approach will now depart from that of Chapters 1 and 2, in which I referred to the work of Ahmed and Berlant. This is because I consider it necessary to fully shift my focus away from the individual dimension of affect (as a form of relation between an individual and another person, object or idea) and toward the role of rhetoric in the social construction of such an attraction or lack thereof. The significance of this change of perspective becomes clear if we return to the argument made by Jenny Edbauer Rice (whom I also mentioned in Chapters 1 and 2) regarding the idea of rhetorical ecologies, which highlight the fluidity of rhetoric (2005). The author reaches the conclusion that the traditional focus of rhetoric on individual texts should be replaced by the analysis of its dissemination within a wide network of 'lived practical consciousness or structures of feeling' (2005, p. 15) when she analyses the dissemination of an expression within the urban area of Austin, Texas.

Specifically, her analysis is based on a study of the changes to the slogan 'Keep Austin Weird', which was originally used to oppose the urbanisation boom of the late 90s but was subsequently appropriated by several institutions, which adapted the motto to their own goals while still making references to its original graphic elements. This led to uses that contradicted the original intention behind the slogan – what the author describes as a practice of gradual transformations 'distributed across purposes and institutional spaces' (2005, p. 19) and 'within shared structures of feeling' (2005, p. 20), that is, of different modes of affective engagement toward Austin. To be clear, rhetoric is seen by Rice as an open, active, distributed practice – i.e. 'a mixture of processes and encounters' (2005, p. 13) that, combined, sustain 'a context of interaction' (2005, p. 9). My concern with the framing effect that is created by the dissemination of the visual rhetoric of the publicness of the UN joins, then, Rice's expanded definition of rhetoric. This said, I want to stress that, contra Rice, my understanding of rhetoric presupposes a conflictual (i.e. political) view of rituals and their consequences, as I discussed before (Rai, 2015).

At this moment in my analysis, I must stress the difference between the traditional idea of the political community (the nation state, based on which individuals acquire rights and

responsibilities) and what I am proposing to identify as the effect of the rhetorical network that is sustained by this mode of presentation of the UN: the creation of an expanded space, centred on the headquarters of the UN, that includes the viewers within its revealing, including affectively. To be clear, I am arguing that the dissemination of the institutional work of the UN creates a rhetorical network that both mirrors and expands the rhetorical arguments that are made by the visual elements of the New York headquarters and its fora. That is, I propose to see the dissemination of the institutional functioning of the UN as making possible the emergence of an open, flexible network that combines partly overlapping affiliations and aspirations.

In 'A feeling for democracy? Rhetoric, power and the emotions' (2013), Martin also stresses the need to acknowledge the political role of emotions in political rhetoric, i.e. in 'securing public attention and allegiance' (2013, p. 461) and hence desire – an analysis that the author continued in 'Capturing Desire: Rhetorical Strategies and the Affectivity of Discourse' (2015a). Analysing Enoch Powell's speech of 1968, he argues that its rhetoric produces 'plausible stories' (2015a, p. 1) that both mobilise and, crucially for my analysis, lead to affective 'investments into political judgements' (2015a, p. 1). Yet this process is only successful, the author affirms, when politicians combine an articulation of 'symptomatic beliefs' (2015a, p. 1) with a sensitivity to and a response to wider 'situational exigencies' (2015a, p. 10). Applying this analysis to the publicness of the UN confirms the importance of the second rhetorical effect that I identified in the previous chapter, i.e. an aspiration for connectedness by western viewers (here interpretable as symptomatic beliefs). But it also highlights what corresponds to the situational exigencies of the rhetoric of this mode of self-presentation, that is, the need to communicate the inner workings of a complex, internally conflicted and permanently unsuccessful organisation.

This said, although the dissemination of the inner work of the UN reflects an attempt to build a community with and among its viewers, one must nonetheless acknowledge the conflict between the explicit intended audience of the UN's digital communication (the global population) and its likely audience.[50] That is, the tension between the intended universality of

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[50]   Interestingly, digital forms of communication have been gradually replacing printed information, particularly since the end of the 1990s (see Defourny, 2003). However, while the UN is here following the trend for digitalisation (as more widely disseminated and sustainable), the decline in print may be effecting its dissemination of information disproportionately.

the UN and its geopolitical specificity, something to which I had already alluded in Chapter 2, is confirmed yet again. In this context, however, it also emerges as something that the rhetoric of the publicness of the UN implicitly denies – which is consistent with the visual denial of its internal divisions that I identified above.

Even more significant than this tension is the changed understanding of the public that the publicness of this material and its rhetorical effect suggest. It is crucial to highlight the key difference between these terms yet again. As Sonia Livingstone writes in 'On the relation between audiences and publics' (2005), "'public' refers to a shared understanding or inclusion in a common forum [and] implies an orientation to collective and consensual action" (2005, p. 17). Crucially, I see this understanding of the public as showing a common orientation rather than occupying a specific place or being engaged in an action as compatible with Rice's idea that 'rhetorics are held together trans-situationally […]. Public rhetorics do not only exist in the elements of their situations, but also in the radius of their neighboring events' (2005, p. 20). To be clear, I am proposing that the publicness of the UN contributes to transforming its viewers into a public that is aware of its shared set of aspirations and orientation toward the UN: one of hope (echoing my analysis of the temporality of the UN in Chapter 2). I will briefly consider the partial overlap between this idea, which doesn't assume that those within it are connected by a common identity or history, and the notion of the People (which is associated with the nation state) in Part Three.

That is, I am suggesting that the publicness of the UN also contributes to creating its own public. Key to this process is the relation between, on the one hand, the performance of inclusion that is evident in the architectonical characteristics of the headquarters and in the meetings that take place at the General Assembly and the Security Council (for example) and, on the other hand, the performance of the future-oriented temporality of the UN that I discussed in the previous chapter, as I have just indicated. Returning to the work of Jacques Derrida clarifies the nature of this relation. Two texts are particularly useful: first, Derrida's essay on Austin ('Signature Event Context', 1972) and, second, the preface of a lecture given in 1976 at the University of Virginia, focusing on The American Declaration of Independence (later published in *Negotiations* as 'Declarations of Independence', 1976). The texts highlight the

radical instability, on the one hand, of the meaning and effect of any declaration and, on the other hand, of the subject of the declaration itself.

In the first text, Derrida discusses Austin's notion of the performative speech act, arguing that the context-dependence identified by Austin is a constitutive feature of all utterances. Derrida also discusses the issue of intention, proposing that any utterance can only be communicable if it is understandable in the absence of its author or speaker. As a result of this, communicable utterances emerge as having a life outside their original context – which opposes a metaphysics of presence. The presence of the written mark is always divided: it must function both in the present and in the future potential absence of its author. In the second text, Derrida evaluates the status of the people as the sovereign that is the guarantor of the constitution, i.e. as *pouvoir constituant*, arguing that it is not only radically indeterminate and internally differentiated but also temporally deferred. Derrida's argument is that the signature of the declaration is both constative and performative. That is, the people on behalf of whom the representatives sign the declaration only emerges as an entity when and because the representatives declare it as such. In this view, the authority of the people is established *post factum*, i.e. through a retroactive affirmation and there is no moment of spatial and temporal closure where the people is present, definable or delimited once and for all.

In light of Derrida's work, the fact that the publicness of the UN makes possible a position of attention and orientation (to use Rai's expression, 2005, p. 17) toward it without, however, being open to regular forms of engagement by those that it represents, does not inhibit the emergence of such a public. That is, the declaration of inclusion – either visual or verbal: 'Welcome to the United Nations. It's your world.' or 'We the peoples of the United Nations', the words with which the preamble of the Charter of the UN begins, 1945 – is performative rather than constative. This reflects, again, the aporia of political representation: the entity whom the organisation represents and addresses emerges in the moment of its naming ('your world') and during its visual address as such.

I want to conclude by briefly positioning this analysis (and, particularly, my reference to the publicness of the UN as a context of interaction despite the impossibility of interactivity

between its viewers) within recent discussions in media studies. I agree with David Holmes' criticism in *Communication Theory: Media, Technology, Society* (2005) of the instrumental view of communication, which often emerges in discussions of the second media age (based on interactivity, where the many speak to many, p. 10). The author highlights the fact that such discussions aren't able to recognise 'the socialising and socially constituting qualities of various media and communication mediums' (p. 123), which is why Holmes proposes replacing the framework of interactivity with that of social integration. At this moment in the analysis, discussions of mediums as sites of ritual, which I mentioned earlier, reemerge as crucial. A key reference is James Carey, whose 'Communication as Culture' (1989) highlights the role of communication in producing social reality and stresses the performative dimension of this movement. This argument is strongly influenced by the Derridean criticism of the value of presence and his subsequent development of an understanding of language as constituted by difference – as I have discussed. Indeed, Derrida criticised Saussure in 'Signature, Event, Context' (1972), arguing that there isn't such a thing as a closed, completely saturated context of meaning (although, as I explained in Chapter 1, one can also read Saussure's work as partly denying this critique) and stressing the importance of communicative contexts.

Unfortunately, I believe that Holmes' definition of mediation (which he proposes as key to analysing the socialising role of media following the performative turn) remains too technocentric and that Couldry's asymmetrical understanding of the term (2008, following Silverstone, 2002, which I presented in Chapter 1) is more relevant to my material. Indeed, the publicness of the UN demands paying attention to the form of social integration that takes place through the repeated experience of the same images by distant viewers. In this context, an interesting and relevant point in Couldry's approach of the issue of reciprocity in mediatised sociality is precisely his reconceptualisation of the idea of integration (2003), which overcomes the limitations of John Thompson's framework, who first developed the idea of reciprocity without interaction but still evaluated such a form of social organisation according to the model of face-to-face interaction. In Couldry's model, and as Holmes clearly summarises,

> 'social integration' need not be seen to occur in a singular homogeneous space that
> changes over time. Rather, […] individuals can source their sense of integration

from a range of levels of association […] from embodied forms of intimacy to the generalization of 'action at a distance' which characterizes contemporary global culture (2005, pp. 153-154).

The next chapter will discuss the Goodwill Ambassador as a complex mediator, which can also be considered as an embodied form of 'action at a distance' (2005, p. 54).

Before advancing, I would like to point out that the changed understanding of rhetoric with which I align my work, and that I consider fundamental to understand the rhetorical effect of this mode of presentation, also confirms Rai's conclusion in the discussion of the performance of politics (2015): the need for a stronger understanding of the role of the viewers in the success of political performances. However, Rai isn't alone in stressing that 'the presumption of an audience or spectators is built into the 'invented' performance of ritual' (Rai, 2015, p. 160) – this implicit acknowledgement is also mentioned by Finlayson in 'Becoming a democratic audience' (2015). Reflecting on ritualised political performances, the author argues that 'political audiences are not necessarily disempowered when being spoken at. A performer must tailor their performance to the publics they come before' (Finlayson, 2015, p. 93 – notice his interchangeable use of the two terms). This assumption opposes Platonic rhetoric (which is based on the idea of dialectical exchange without an audience) and the Kantian understanding of the public (enlightened individuals who share a set of readings, which they consume by themselves) (Finlayson, 2015, p. 97). In a similar manner, 'deliberativists […] write as if in politics one seeks to convince an opponent. A more common scenario is that one tries to beat an opponent in front of an audience' (Finlayson, 2015, p. 99). That is precisely the case of the meetings of the Security Council and the General Assembly that are publicly disseminated: they address the viewers, actual (that is, live) or potential, and this is likely to impact on the content of said meetings – a topic for future scholarly work.

In this section, I have gradually identified the rhetorical effect of the dissemination of the institutional work of the UN. Although the performance of the inclusion that this mode of presentation rhetors isn't accompanied by its *de facto* institutional existence, the repeated experience of a set of images has integrative consequences. Rhetorically, this mode of

presentation bypasses the centrality of the nation state and the separation of the viewers into different political communities, and can hence be interpreted as contributing to the enactment, (albeit profoundly limited) of the idea of the international community.

c) Colin Powell's Presentation

I would now like to turn my attention toward a recent incident in the history of the UN, which saw the organisation come under particular scrutiny. The main reason why I have chosen to focus on it is that it allows me to directly address the second question at play in this thesis, which I will discuss in more detail in Part Three. I start with a presentation of the context of the event, followed by a short discussion of its visual rhetoric and, finally, an analysis of the modes of spectating that it demanded.[51]

c.1. Context

On 5 February 2003, Colin Powell, the then Secretary of State of the United States, made an 80-minute presentation to the United Nations' Security Council. His aim was to secure the support of the international community[52] for an invasion of Iraq by presenting some of the intelligence that had been gathered by the American Secret Information services. This evidence, Powell argued, demonstrated that Iraq was infringing resolution 1441, which had been passed by the Security Council in 2002 with the aim of disarming Iraq of weapons of mass destruction. I will return to this below.

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[51]   I should note that a part of this section, as well as of Part Three (particularly my discussion of Goshka Macuga's installation, as we will see) was expanded and transformed into a chapter titled 'Images against Images – On Goshka Macuga's The Nature of the Beast' in the book *Meta- and Inter-Images in Contemporary Art*, edited by Carla Laban and published by Leuven University Press in 2013.

[52]   I must stress that although the phrase international community is often used in reference to a broad group of governments, implying the existence of shared principles, it does not stand legal scrutiny. The doctrine of 'Responsibility to Protect' – or R2P, as I mentioned earlier – argued that the international community has the responsibility to protect civilians when their governments are either unwilling or unable to do so, which highlights the redefinition of state sovereignty that is implicit in this notion (as I discussed in Chapter 2). However, the absence of consensus in relation to issues such as global warming leads international relations scholars to stress instead the continued pertinence of multilateralism in international relations. See, for example, the op-ed 'What International Community?', written by Richard N. Haass (2003).

Powell's presentation was haunted by several moments in the recent history of the UN, such as the Rwandan genocide, which took place in 1994. As the situation became increasingly difficult, a UN-mandated force established and maintained a safe zone for the escape of Hutu refugees. This force did not, however, interfere in what was then considered to be a domestic conflict. A similar failure to act was evident during the Kosovo War (1998–1999). The UN had held evidence of systematic repression of the Albanian population since 1990 (see, for example, the 1993 reports by the UN Special Rapporteur Tadeusz Mazowiecki). However, this did not prevent the Račak massacre of 45 civilian Kosovo Albanians from occurring in January 1999. Following this incident, and despite there being no consensus between the Security Council members, NATO led a military peacekeeping force into Kosovo. Given that the Security Council had not resolved to back the move, the illegality of NATO's actions have frequently been asserted.[53]

These failures in Rwanda and Kosovo prompted former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan to initiate discussions regarding interventions aimed at the protection of populations. In a 2001 round table meeting organised by the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, constituted by members of the General Assembly and under the authority of the Canadian Government, the politician Gareth Evans, the diplomat Mohamed Sahnoun and the politician Michael Ignatieff proposed the concept of a 'responsibility to protect' (also known as 'R2P', and that I mentioned earlier – see the Introduction and Chapter 2). The R2P was endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly in the 2005 World Summit, which established it as a UN norm – albeit not a law.[54] The R2P states that national sovereignty may be disrespected when a nation state fails to provide protection and security to its population. In those cases, the international community is responsible for intervening through coercive measures – military intervention agreed by the Security Council being the last resort. This norm

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[53]   Russia brought the issue to the Security Council on 26 March 1999, arguing that 'such unilateral use of force constitutes a flagrant violation of the United Nations Charter' (see UN, 1999). However, the votes of China, Namibia, and Russia were insufficient to pass the resolution.

[54]   Interestingly, Mark Reiff, an international law scholar, argues that the general acceptance of the principle by members of the international community makes it part of 'international customary law – a kind of international common law – which is just as binding on states as a treaty', although this issue remains the subject of ongoing debates. See The Guardian (2013).

aims to prevent four types of crimes – genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing. Since its endorsement, support for R2P has been shared, albeit in different ways, by both the Security Council and the General Assembly (Global R2P, no date).

While Powell cited R2P in his argument for intervention in Iraq – attempting to make a case on humanitarian grounds – several authors have highlighted the differences between the examples mentioned above and that of Iraq. For example, the 2004 Human Rights Watch World Report, unequivocally titled 'War in Iraq: Not a Humanitarian Intervention', stated that

> The common use of the humanitarian label masks significant differences among these interventions. The French intervention in the Democratic Republic of Congo, later backed by a reinforced U.N. peacekeeping presence, was most clearly motivated by a desire to stop ongoing slaughter. In Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire, West African and French forces intervened to enforce a peace plan but also played important humanitarian roles […]. All of these African interventions were initially or ultimately approved by the U.N. Security Council […]. By contrast, the […] Security Council did not approve the invasion, and the Iraqi government […] violently opposed it (Roth, 2004, p. 1).

This summary of the context surrounding Powell's presentation stresses, yet again, the significant and asymmetrical influence that a particular set of countries plays within the Security Council. This is accompanied by the emergence of norms that reflect the gradual transformation of the idea of sovereignty (as I discussed in see Chapter 2). Altogether, this context also confirms Weiss et al.'s (2010) analysis of the UN as an increasingly divided organisation, particularly regarding the changing global landscape.

c.2. Argument: Elusive Images, Elusive Danger

Let us now focus on the visual rhetoric at play in Powell's presentation (even if only briefly due to a combination of space constraints and the fact that this analysis answers a research question that, despite being pertinent to fully address the main issue under discussion,

remains nonetheless secondary) beginning with its presented and suggested elements. A PowerPoint presentation accompanied Powell's speech. It was composed of several visual elements, such as diagrams pointing to the supposed links between al-Qaeda terrorists and Iraq; aerial photographs with added captions (allegedly representing chemical laboratories and terrorist poison explosives factories, among others – figures 41 and 42); sound, namely intercepted and recorded conversations accompanied by transcripts; and props, such as a test tube that Powell showed to the Security Council members during his speech (figure 40). The test tube contained white powder and, according to Powell, represented the equivalent amount of Anthrax that, when discovered in an envelope in the US Senate in 2001, had killed two people and necessitated that hundreds of others go through emergency medical treatment. The presentation also included short videos of experiments purportedly being carried out in Iraq toward the aerial dissemination of biological weapons. As is now well-known, none of the photographs referred to by Powell were manipulated, although his interpretation was subsequently dismissed as inaccurate.

Figure 40 – United States Secretary of State Colin Powell holds a bottle representing Anthrax during his presentation to the Security Council (2003).
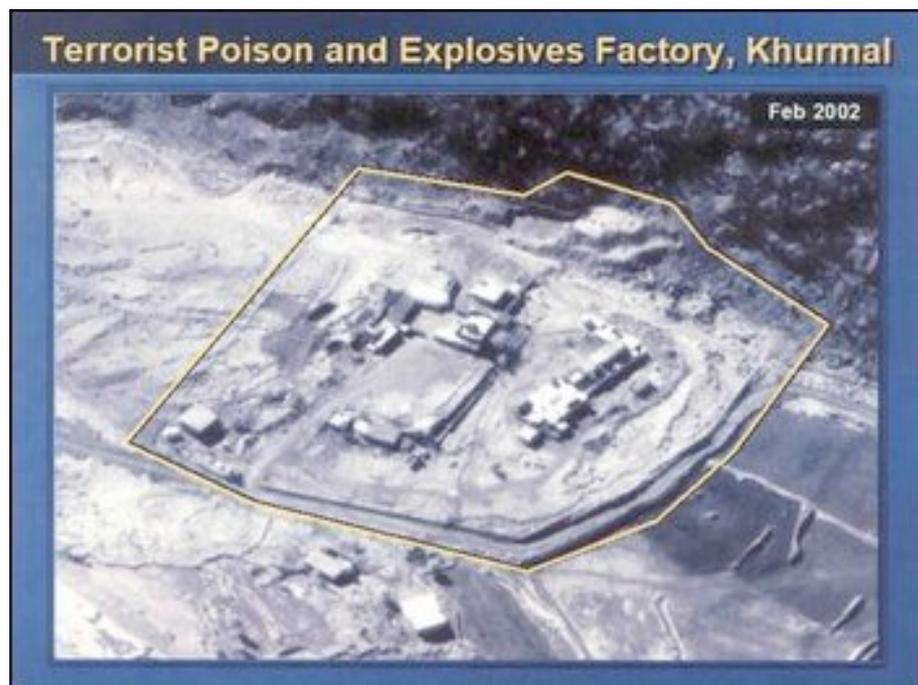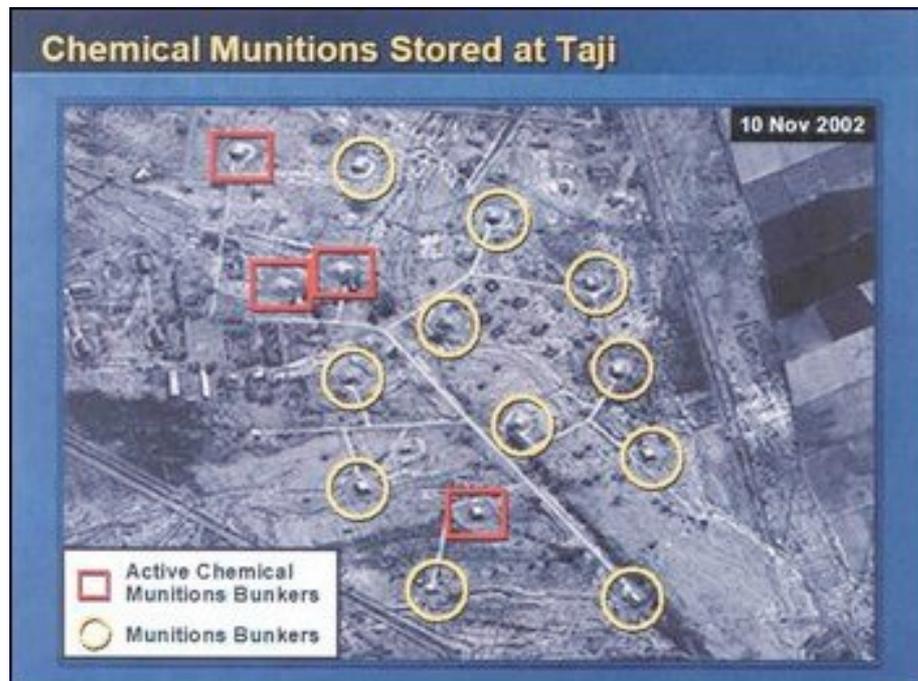
Figures 41 and 42 – Examples of the images used by Colin Powell in his address to the Security Council (2003).

First of all, note the lack of clarity of figures 41 and 42, which can only be understood because of the labelling that they include. Interestingly, in his presentation Powell argues that the information available to him pointed conclusively to several 'facts', including the continuing Iraqi production of biological weapons and its interest in producing nuclear weapons, as well as the ability to disperse those lethal biological agents in the water supply. As a consequence, he insisted, the international community was under threat. Although Powell's interpretation was subsequently dismissed as based on misleading testimony, the photographs included in Powell's address were not manipulated. However, and this leads me to the another presented element, the long-range nature of tele-photography meant that the images were difficult to see clearly – hence the use of captions and Powell's constant reliance, for their elucidation, on information provided by both experts and anonymous witnesses. Consequently, there was an uncanny parallel between the elusiveness of the images used by Powell in his presentation, which were difficult to interpret by themselves, and the elusiveness of the dangerous enemy described in his address, which could not be clearly depicted or identified but only inferred and imagined.

The suggestion of a dangerous yet elusive enemy – if not reality – against whom military action, Powell argued, would be the logic conclusion, highlights yet again a key tension at the core of the UN. Indeed, as I discussed earlier in this chapter, although one of the UN's central aims is the maintenance of international peace, the Security Council holds as its fundamental power recourse to military intervention. Crucially, the entanglement of peace and violence was the central theme running through a 1983 address by Derrida to Cornell University on nuclear deterrence.[55] Derrida argues for thinking of the then ongoing Cold War escalation of nuclear armament as an exchange of messages between political adversaries, stressing the importance of the possibility of destruction within the rhetoric of international diplomacy. This textual analysis of nuclear war (later developed in a contribution to the journal *Diacritics*, 1984, titled 'No Apocalypse, Not Now (Seven Missiles, Seven Missives, Full Speed Ahead)') sees the nuclear as an elusive signifier that reifies the apocalypse that it predicts (1984, p. 26). However, the framework of mutual assured destruction was not at play in 2003. This is why, although Powell's presentation (combining a language of fear and the use of elusive images) can be

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[55]   Later, in 'Force of Law' (1990), Derrida focuses more explicitly on the relation between law (which he views as founded on violence) and justice – an analysis that is similar, to a certain extent, to Clausewitz' views on war as an extension of politics.

viewed as an example of the manifold roles played by such 'phantasms' (to use Derrida's terminology in *Specters of Marx,* 1993) in international relations, its rhetorical effect must be interpreted in a different manner.

c.3. Effect: Including the viewer

First, Powell's presentation can be approached as illustrating the complexity of the position of the viewer of the meetings that take place at the Security Council and the General Assembly. Specifically, I would like to argue that Powell's rhetorical strategy was grounded on the legitimacy that his position as a Secretary of State and former general brought to his interpretation of the visual material, and not on the ontology of witnessing or of representation – an argument that can be extended to the addresses by any other political leaders to the Security Council and the General Assembly. This argument also echoes the analysis that I developed in Chapter 2 regarding the ways how nationally-elected speakers speak *as* the UN rhetorically, i.e. albeit not *de facto.*

In the case of Powell's address, the instigation of fear in the viewers resulted from two issues. First, and on the one hand, his speech was addressed to a global public, a context in which it might seem unlikely that he would risk his credibility as a statesman; on the other hand, the very context of the UN lends credibility to the claims made there. This said, when Muammar Gaddafi spoke to the UN (see Chapter 2, figure 22) he wasn't any more convincing because of the context that surrounded him – a difference that highlights the importance of the viewers' belief as to whether the member states in the name of which these official representatives speak (in this case, the Unites States) broadly share (or not) the values of the UN.

Second, and to return briefly to psychoanalysis (again, one of the three key methods used by Mitchell, 2005, 2015) Powell's attempt to present a legitimate, unquestionable narrative may also be interpreted according to the Lacanian framework of the four structurally different kinds of discourse into which human communicative exchanges may be conceptualised: the Master, the University, the Hysteric and the Analyst (Lacan, 1969-1970, pp. 14–25 and 90–103). There's an interesting tension at play here: for Powell was speaking as a member of the American

government, which is elected and subjected to multiple mechanisms of accountability; but he was speaking at the UN Security Council, which is a non-elected body in an organisation whose ambassadors are only accountable to the heads of state that nominate them. Thus, by claiming an authority over the interpretation of these images, Powell's speech was positioned, from a Lacanian perspective, between the discourse of the University – in which the provision of objective knowledge grounds the legitimacy of the speaker – and the discourse of the Master, who holds absolute power to determine the life and death of his subjects. Given the UN's stated commitment to deliberation (which, as I noted earlier, is in tension with the non-elected nature of its representatives) and the centrality of peacekeeping to its mission, Powell's speech, in its attempt not only to legitimise a call to war from within the non-elected Security Council, but also to do so through the language of objectivity (i.e. combining multiple, partly incompatible ways of addressing the viewers), exemplified clearly and, yet again, some of the foundational contradictions that lie at the core of the UN.

This incident clarifies the complex position of the viewers of the UN. Although they are given some of the evidence based on which the members of the organisation make their decisions, this process of disclosure is limited. Mostly, the UN and its member states expect trust (rather than critical engagement) from the viewers regarding the management of international affairs. It is also in the context of this position that one must understand the increasing importance of the figure of the Goodwill Ambassador in maintaining a sense of proximity both to the viewers and to those that the UN represents on the ground, as I will now discuss.

Figure 43 – Angelina Jolie sits next to a child in the refugee camp of Katcha Ghari, Pakistan
(2005).

This chapter will focus on the third mode of presentation of the UN that I have identified: the Goodwill Ambassador (GA), whose emergence follows recent changes in the UN's deployment of public relations (as I discussed in the Introduction) and subsequently, in what interest me, in how the organisation appears to its viewers. Indeed, the GA is an increasingly important figure in the visual dissemination of the work of the UN on the ground and also, as we shall see, in the relationship of the UN with its viewers. I will suggest that the visual rhetoric of this figure (a complex mediator that functions as a catalyst for encounters between different actors) stresses the manifold roles of the UN (for example, humanitarian and in providing development support) and performs proximity to those that it represents – an intention that, although never fully achievable, guides the actions of the GA and hence also contributes to sustaining the legitimacy of the UN.

Due to the particularities of this figure, this chapter is organised in a different manner from the previous two. I begin by presenting the history of celebrity humanitarianism ('Context: Celebrities and the UN – Fulfilling Competing Functions'). This is followed by the close analysis of Angelina Jolie as the case study that allows me to understand the ways how this figure appears to its viewers ('Argument: Celebrity Diplomacy in the Context of a Changing Political Landscape') and, finally, a discussion of what I identify as its rhetorical effect ('Effect: Performing a Network of Proximity').

I should note that this chapter was mainly written in 2011 and in the beginning of 2012 and that Angelina Jolie has since been promoted to the role of Special Envoy, giving her an explicitly diplomatic role. However, this change does not detract from the relevance of the analysis to the main concerns of the thesis. The increasing profile of Victoria Beckham, for example, who was appointed a Goodwill Ambassador in September 2014, reiterates the public importance of the role (UNAIDS, 2014).

a) Context: Celebrities and the UN – Fulfilling Competing Functions

Let us begin by considering, first, the history of celebrity ambassadors and, second, recent changes within the UN with regard to this figure.

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) appointed what can now be identified as the first Goodwill Ambassador in 1953.[56] The American actor Danny Kaye was the first celebrity Ambassador-at-Large of the UN (a title created especially for him in 1954) and was followed by Audrey Hepburn, who became a Goodwill Ambassador for UNICEF in 1988. Today, this role is described by the UN as well suited to 'prominent individuals from the worlds of art, sport, literature and entertainment' who 'highlight priority issues and […] draw attention to its activities' (UN, no date g). Indeed, the official goals of this position oblige all GAs to

> engage in public advocacy; fundraising where authorized and in accordance with the applicable regulations, rules, policies and procedures of the designating UN Office, Fund or Programme; and in public awareness activities (UN, no date g).

The individuals assuming these roles are mainly involved in activities of fundraising, public awareness (aimed at raising the awareness of specific issues among the public) and public advocacy (understood as a transparent form of lobbying, that is, aimed at influencing the action of political representatives). In this sense, their official functions place them in a role of mediation between the UN and consumers of international mass media. Before advancing, I should also note that the GAs are appointed by the Secretariat or by the Funds and Programmes[57] whereas those appointed by the Secretary-General are given the title of 'Messenger of Peace'. However, their role is similar. This is why, although I will be mainly referring to the figure of the Goodwill Ambassador throughout this chapter, my discussion of its political consequences applies equally to the Messengers of Peace.

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[56]   This role has been discussed by Andrew Cooper (2008), whose work I will mention later, and Mark Wheeler (2011) among others.

[57]   'Funds and Programmes' include, among others: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), World Food Programme (WFP). The UN has nominated Goodwill Ambassadors in these seven organisations. See UNHCR (no date a). There are also Goodwill Ambassadors working within several specialised agencies. Retrieved from UN (no date a).

Between the appointment of Danny Kaye and the current roster of more than 200 Goodwill Ambassadors, there were also other prominent celebrity activists, such as Marlon Brando, who became involved with UNICEF in 1966, and, in the late 1970s, the actress Luv Ullman. However, it was only in the 1990s that the appointment of celebrity diplomats by the UN started to increase steadily. This increase was driven by motivations from both the UN and the celebrities: on the one hand, following Bob Geldof's Live Aid campaign in 1985[58], some celebrities started to express the wish to get engaged with agencies such as UNICEF, UNHCR and the WHO (Cooper, 2008); on the other hand, it was equally a result of Kofi Annan's (the UN Secretary-General between 1997 and 2007) active embrace of celebrity culture, his revolutionising of the UN communication strategy through the appointment of more than 400 UN Goodwill Ambassadors and the establishment of 'a new tier of celebrity diplomats known as Messengers of Peace' (Drezner, 2007).

Annan believed that significant reforms were required to improve the UN's public profile, and he oversaw the wider deployment of Goodwill Ambassadors. This was tied together with an increase in the number of departments with responsibilities for media and communications, celebrity relations and special events across the UN's offices. In turn, the celebrity relations department formalised three tiers for Goodwill Ambassadors – international, regional and national. International Ambassadors are those film, music or sports stars who have wide recognition from the world's media; regional and national ambassadors are celebrities whose sphere of influence is more localised (Cooper, 2008, p. 13).

Seth Center, whose article 'The United Nations Department of Public Information: Intractable Dilemmas and Fundamental Contradictions' (2009) I mentioned in the Introduction as being one of the few exceptions to the absence of scholarly studies of the communications strategy of the UN, addresses a set of changes that are related to the emergence of this figure. He writes that the

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[58]   Live Aid was a concert held simultaneously on 13 July 1985 in Wembley Stadium, London and the John F. Kennedy Stadium, Philadelphia, US. It was organised by the singer and songwriter Bob Geldof and the guitarist and singer Midge Ure to raise funds for the Ethiopian famine. On the same day, other concerts inspired by the initiative also took place in other countries, such as Germany. The broadcast had an estimated global live audience of 1.9 billion across 150 nations, and was organised following the success of 'Do They Know it's Christmas?', the single that Geldof and Ure put together with several British and Irish musicians, which took place in December 1984 and raised £8 million.

enthusiastic embrace of public relations began under the leadership of Secretary-General Kofi Annan (1997-2007). The Ghana-born diplomat's own embrace went so far that he was labelled the "American Secretary-general" because of […] his propensity to "view all the criticism of the United Nations as a matter of public relations" (Rieff in Alleyne, 2005, p. 177 cit. in Center, 2009, pp. 896-897).

This quote is also interesting in that it highlights, again, the influence of the United States in the modes of working of the UN (albeit, this time, in a more indirect manner than what I discussed in Chapters 2 and 3). And yet, despite its embrace of public relations, the UN continues to face the need for an increased recognition of its work. The emergence of the figure of the Goodwill Ambassador can be interpreted as an attempt to deal with this problem. As Center writes:

Polls suggest that most people see the global issues which the United Nations tackles as important and worthy. The paradox, however, is that people often do not realize that the United Nations is in fact actively engaged in these issues. Thus the DPI [Department of Public Information] sees an untapped reservoir of goodwill for the United Nations that can be unleashed […]. The communications challenge that the DPI faces today is not wholly that of countering criticism or counteracting biases. It is more a problem of overcoming ignorance (Center, 2009, pp. 897-898).

It is particularly interesting to read that the UN sees itself as mostly having both 'moral power and substantive successes', especially considering the substantial limitations and failures that I highlighted in the final section of the previous chapter. Nonetheless, this goal (to communicate its strength in order to unleash the goodwill that the DPI assumes to exist within the public) is one of the aims served by the figure of the GA. The crucial moment in its emergence occurred in 2002, when Annan hosted a conference entitled 'Celebrity Advocacy for the New Millennium' and expressed his wish for the UN to use celebrities as a way to 'pressurise reluctant governments to take seriously the rhetorical pledges they make during every General Assembly' (Alleyne, 2005, p. 179) – the moment in which the figure of the Messenger of Peace

was established.[59] In an analogous manner, the political scholar Andrew Cooper has argued in *Celebrity Diplomacy* (2008) that Annan's priority in his renewal of the UN's communication strategy was to 'offset the international cynicism that had been directed towards the UN and to counter-balance the view that it was beholden to the US's realist foreign policies' (Cooper, 2008, p. 28). It should begin to become clear, then, that the GA is not a neutral mediator between the UN and the viewers, as I will be arguing in more detail. Indeed, John Street's tripartite framework of 'celebrity performance' identifies three main ways how the UN has used celebrities to draw attention to its activities (2004). First, UNICEF used celebrities whose activism was, Street argues, conformist. Second, the expansion of the GAs across the UN system was accompanied by increased politicisation, present in the selection of celebrities who were often critical of UN member states. This

> led to criticisms that while star power brought attention to international affairs it affected little in the way of real change [...]. This [third] phase of celebrity diplomacy referred to a re-calibration of fame within an expanding range of global media sources and an attempt to raise the UN's public profile to enhance its principles of idealism and universalism (Wheeler, 2011, p. 16).

Among these individuals, Angelina Jolie has been the most successful (that is, she is the individual whose work for the UN has become best known while also achieving a high level of support from scholars, policy-makers and activists), followed by George Clooney (UN, no date l).[60] In 2005, Jolie launched the National Centre for Refugee and Immigrant Children, an organisation that provides free legal aid to young asylum-seekers in the USA. In 2007, she became a member of the influential Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and, in October 2011, High Commissioner António Guterres (who was subsequently named UN Secretary-General in 1 January 2017) expanded her role for UNHCR to special envoy in some of the world's most

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[59]   This group of 'distinguished men and women of talent and passion' are composed from those celebrities whose fame has been understood to provide a global focus to 'the noble aims of the UN Charter: a world without war, respect for human rights, international law and social and economic progress' (UN, 2007 cit. in Wheeler, 2011, p. 46). They are selected from the fields of art, literature, music and sports and serve as Messengers of Peace for an initial period of three years.

[60]   Although there wasn't any hierarchy embedded in the position of Jolie vis-à-vis the remaining GA and MP, her recent nomination as Special Envoy of UN High Commissioner for Refugees changed that.

difficult refugee situations. Furthermore, the Jolie-Pitt Foundation[61] provides funding in Namibia to the N/a'an ku sê Wildlife Sanctuary for the care of injured wildlife, has funded children's centres in Cambodia and Ethiopia for children infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis and the Jolie Legal Fellows Programme, established in Haiti in 2010, places young lawyers within existing child protection state organisations.

Regarding George Clooney, the American actor and filmmaker was named a United Nations Messenger of Peace in 2008, following his personal efforts from 2006 onwards toward ending the Darfur crisis. In April 2007, Clooney and others also co-founded 'Not On Our Watch', a non-profit organisation aimed at capturing attention and accumulating resources as a way to combat mass atrocities around the world, with a special emphasis in Darfur. That is, the GAs whose work is most successful as a mode of presentations of the UN tend to engage in substantial activist and philanthropic work.

This said, it must be mentioned that the negative impact of some of the actions of nominated Goodwill Ambassadors (that is, before the nomination of Jolie and Clooney) forced the UN to reconsider the individuals that it invites for the position. For example, the Italian actress Sophia Loren, who was named a UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador in 1992, was often criticised in the press, beginning with her first trip to the field, for the way in which she dressed to visit refugee camps – her outfits included fur coats and expensive sunglasses (evidence, surely, of the absence of a strong PR team behind her). As a result of the negative criticism, the UN ended its collaboration with Loren and developed a set of protocols aimed at preparing celebrity ambassadors for their role as public speakers. This was accompanied by the publication and public dissemination in 2003 of a document entitled 'Guidelines for the designation of Goodwill Ambassadors and Messengers of Peace' UN (2003a, 2003b), which specifies the functions, conditions and protocols for termination of contracts with celebrity diplomats.

These changes may have had positive implications with respect to the conduct of some of the most recent Goodwill Ambassadors and Messengers of Peace. Indeed, most authors evaluate

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[61]   This foundation is likely to be dissolved following the recent divorce of the actress from the actor Brad Pitt.

positively 'the ability of Jolie and Clooney to bring focus to international campaigns, to impact on diplomatic agendas and to advocate the UN's principles' (Cooper, 2008, pp. 15–16).[62] This does not deny, however, the criticism that has been directed at the role itself, following similar criticisms of other forms of celebrity humanitarianism. For example, the media scholar Douglas Kellner draws on the Debordian concept of 'spectacle' (1967) to argue that celebrity diplomacy severely oversimplifies foreign affairs (Kellner, *Media Spectacle*, 2002). It should be noted, however, that Kellner does not mention the figure of the GA in his analysis.

b) Argument: Celebrity Diplomacy in the Context of a Changing Political Landscape

Before analysing the visual rhetoric of the GA, it is important to summarise the main ways in which the emergency of celebrity ambassadors is discussed in the literature. This will be followed by a general presentation of my case study, a brief discussion of the UNHCR website and Jolie's written reflections and, finally, a close analysis of the presented and suggested elements in photographs of her work on the ground.

Although the field of celebrity studies has only recently emerged, the study of celebrity politics is already a well-established theme in the discipline.[63] Despite its many differences, the literature shares the aim of understanding the consequences of the increasing use of celebrities by political organisations and NGOs, whose lack of accountability is seen as exemplary of the legitimacy problems facing the UN. As for what explains the growth in celebrity political work, the existing scholarly analyses and critiques can be grouped into three main recurrent

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[62] To my knowledge, the UN hasn't made publicly available any studies that evaluate the effects of this figure since its creation.

[63] Evidence of this emerging field can be taken from the journal *Celebrity Studies*, published by Routledge, which has had its first volume in 2010. There have also been several books recently published in this area, such as Joshua Gamson's *Claims to Fame* (1994), David Marshall's *Celebrity and Power* (1997), Wheeler Dixon's D*isaster and Memory: Celebrity Culture and the Rise of Hollywood Cinema* (1999) and Graeme Turner's *Understanding Celebrity* (2004), sharing a focus on the rise of celebrity and its structural conditions. The recent A *Short History of Celebrity* (Inglis, 2010) establishes a cultural history of the phenomenon.

The study of celebrity can be identified as having been initiated by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer's Marxist critique of the culture industry (1947). However, while these authors assumed the passivity of the audience vis-à-vis the creation of needs constantly renovated by the entertainment industry, the most recent publications consider that the relation between the spectators and media is more complex and layered.

explanations: first, the weakening of the Welfare State through the increasing agency of forms of diplomacy and governance not centred on the state; second, recent changes in international relations and, third, the idea of post-politics, as I will discuss below.

First, among the few authors that discuss the reasons behind the emergence of celebrity diplomacy in international affairs, most agree that it is a consequence of the recent, gradual weakening of the Welfare State, which indirectly leads towards the need for civil society to intercede in areas formerly addressed by governments. In this sense, celebrity diplomats are understood as a new form of international intermediation, a trend that the case of the UN undoubtedly exemplifies. Mark Wheeler (2011) – a media theorist whose research focuses on, among other things, the political relations between Hollywood and Washington and the political economy of the global mass media – views the rise of celebrity politics as illustrative of the 'transition between state-centric to public forms of diplomatic initiatives' which are questioning the values that sustained the Westphalian diplomatic order (2011, p. 6).[64] It is in this context that, the author argues, 'a new "currency" of public diplomacy has emerged in which emotion, rhetoric and opinion have become key bargaining tools' (2011, p. 6). I will return to the idea of affect later in this chapter.

In another direction, Andrew Cooper (2008), mentioned earlier, argues that the need to fill 'the void left by public mistrust in more traditional political elites', leads to a 'Bonoisation' of diplomacy, as only 'celebrity diplomats, such as the U2 singer Bono, can access key circles of power to make effective interventions' (2008, pp. 3–4). This is one of the reasons why the international development theorist Lisa Ann Richey and Stefano Ponte, an academic in international studies, argue that successful events such as Band Aid in fact diminish the importance of diplomatic and aid initiatives (see *Brand Aid: Shopping Well to Save the World*, 2011). To their diagnosis can be added Carlo Piccinini's negative conclusions in *Public Humanitarian Advocacy: Challenges, Opportunities and its Channeling through Celebrities*

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[64] The reference is to the Peace of Westphalia, which emerged in 1648, as a result of several treaties signed between May and October 1648, between Sweden, France, Spain, the Holy Roman Empire and the Netherlands. Calvinism was recognized, it was established that rulers could decide for toleration, and religious warfare initiated by the Holy Roman Empire was over. Westphalia therefore inaugurated the modern European state system, built over a new system of political order according to which the state is sovereign.

(2011) regarding the gradual weakening of the originally positive connotations associated with the engagement of celebrities in public humanitarian advocacy.

The second central explanation that emerges in this context is that of the relation between the emergence of this figure and recent changes in international relations. Writing from the perspective of public affairs, Joshua Busby has argued in 'Bono Made Jesse Helms Cry: Jubilee 2000, Debt Relief, and Moral Action in International Politics' (2007) (which references the Jubilee 2000 campaign in the United States and in Japan to defend the relief of developing countries debt, though, clearly, with a wider application) that the fact that celebrity advocates get the attention of decision-makers points to an evolution of the main schools of thought in international relations theory. Specifically, Busby notes that neorealism and neoliberalism, often discussed as opposing theories, share the assumption that the state is an unitary actor whose interests can be understood objectively through the analysis of the international system.

Indeed, while neorealist authors argue that the behaviour of states is mostly constrained by the international structure, neoliberal authors argue that nation-states should focus their strategies on sustaining absolute gains vis-à-vis the other states with which they compete. Using elements from both theories, Busby argues that celebrity activists influence institutional players and policy gatekeepers by adding moral concerns to their evaluation of the trade-offs between costs and benefits with regard to their international policy decisions. He writes that

> the dominant traditions – neorealism and neoliberalism – assume the state as unitary actor has interests that can be objectively read from conditions in the international system. The major difference between them is in their assessments of how much cooperation can be fostered by institutions (2007, p. 249)

Reading this argument in light of the previous discussion of sovereignty (which I developed in Chapter 2), it becomes clear that the rise in celebrity ambassadors can also be seen, albeit indirectly and unintentionally, as supporting the reproduction of an international order organised around the nation state – and hence of the tension that I identified and discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

Additionally, the emergence of celebrity activists and ambassadors can also be understood as broadly illustrating the recent diplomatic theories of soft power, as I discussed in Part One: a term coined by the international relations theorist Joseph Nye (mentioner earlier) who introduced it as an alternative to post-Cold War unilateralism and as a response to those who believed that the unbearable rising costs of military force would lead to the decline of the international power of the United States. In *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (1990), the notion of soft power is opposed to hard power – that exercised through military and economic power – and related to the ability to shape what other international powers want through strategies such as agenda-setting, the mastery of institutions and the attractiveness of a particular culture, especially through use of information technologies.

Clearly, the concept of soft power relates to other recent developments in diplomacy studies, especially the increasing recognition of the notion of public diplomacy, viewed as a strategic way of informing, engaging and influencing foreign leaders and publics through behaviour that increases the attractiveness of a nation's ideals, institutions, culture and ideas and, therefore, of its foreign policies.[65] Although Nye's concept has since been appropriated into the geopolitical strategies of other nations (including Germany and the UK), it should still be pointed out that the affirmation of soft power was originally associated with the geopolitical supremacy of the United States.[66] This reiterates, yet again, the influence of the US in the UN, not only directly (as I discuss in Chapters 2 and 3) but also indirectly (as is indicated by Richard Falk's idea of a 'geopolitical right of exception', 2015, mentioned in Chapter 3).

I finally arrive at the third general critique that is directed toward humanitarianism, which includes that of celebrities: it is seen as contributing to the seeming depoliticisation of

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[65] Nye's *The Powers to Lead: Soft, Hard and Smart* (2008) proposes a typology of forms of leadership, opposing an authoritarian style to those who rely on charisma, persuasion and influence, illustrating a form of 'soft power'. Such discussions surrounding 'soft diplomacy' have led to the emergence of what is known in international relations theory as discussions surrounding public diplomacy (such as Nicholas Culls' proposed taxonomy, 2008).

[66] This idea is expanded by Nye's notion of 'smart power' (2009), which concerns the balanced combination of hard and soft power in order to achieve specific diplomatic goals. Nye's model has been recently incorporated into the Chinese diplomatic efforts, as discussed by Yiwei Wang (2008), although not always fully successfully, as discussed by Manzenreiter vis-à-vis the weak impact of the Olympic games in changing global perceptions of the country (Manzenreiter, 2010).

international conflicts and power disparities. These discussions focus, in different ways, on what the sociologist Keith Tester (*Humanitarianism and Modern Culture*, 2010) names as 'common-sense humanitarianism' of the affluent West – an ideology that reiterates the moral human obligation to alleviate suffering while blocking non-western political actors from speaking and being heard. Tester discusses the reasons why this form of expressing concern about suffering taking place in the Third World has become widespread in the West. Specifically, he discusses the 1985 Live Aid concert, the staged appearance of a survivor of the Ethiopian famine at Live 8 (similar to Live Aid) twenty years later (2005) and, finally, Madonna's 2006 adoption of a Malawian orphan child, arguing that these three events can be viewed as remnants of the western imperial legacy. Specifically, the author proposes that an imperial mindset is at work in events that focus on the possibility of helping the victims of humanitarian crises, who are seen as passive individuals who have no ideas to express other than gratitude. I will return to this discussion in the final section of the chapter.

b.1. Case Study

I would now like to propose a close engagement with some of the images that have been used to portray this role, as epitomised in those representing the work of Angelina Jolie on the ground.

My decision to select this case study is, yet again, a consequence of my methodology: perusing the images that come to represent the UN to western viewers made clear that the international media presence of Angelina Jolie, contrary to that of other Goodwill Ambassadors and Messengers of Peace (with the exception, noted above, of George Clooney), is close to ubiquitous. Indeed, to give an example, a quick search on Google for news in which there's a reference to 'George Clooney' and to 'UN', in the period between 31 December 2006 to 1 January 2012 retrieves 22,900 pages, while 'Angelina Jolie' and 'UN' retrieves 35,600. For comparison, a similar search for news relating to two other actors who are among the better known Messengers of Peace – Michael Douglas and Charlize Theron – retrieves 7620 results, in the case of the former and 6570 results in the latter.

The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHRC), for which Jolie works, has a section dedicated to its Goodwill Ambassadors.[67] Their selection processes and goals are described as follows:

UNHCR's Goodwill Ambassadors are, along with High Commissioner António Guterres, the public faces of the UN refugee agency. There are not many of them, but they help bring UNHCR to every corner of the world through their celebrity, popularity, influence and hard work [...].

UNHCR's Goodwill Ambassadors have all either worked with UNHCR or shown a keen interested in refugee issues before taking up the appointment. They must be approved by the High Commissioner before being formally appointed by the UN Secretary-General (UNHCR, no date).[68]

Note how the quote presents the association of the GAs with the UNHCR as allowing for a one-sided transference of global popularity. Instead, as I will suggest below, the GAs establish a complex network of affinities.

This idea begins to emerge when one surveys the visual material that is made available on the UN webpage of the UNHCR ambassadors. Although a detailed discussion of this material is outside the scope of my research, such a brief survey suggests the existence of a typology of three broad kinds of images. The first category covers press material aimed at representing the Ambassadors in their own professional practice – that is, they represent the ambassadors (for example, Muazzez Ersoy, George Dalaras and Giorgio Armani) by themselves, sitting or standing, in spaces that don't have any connections with their work with the UN. These images represent around 10% of all images available in this context. A second, identifiable group of images presents the Goodwill Ambassadors in the western world or in the field without

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[67]   Its official title is The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, no date). In March 2012, its Goodwill Ambassadors were the American actress Angelina Jolie, the Italian designer Giorgio Armani, the French singer and songwriter Julien Clerc, the Greek musician George Dalaras, the Turkish singer Muazzez Ersoy, the American-Swedish classical singer Barbara Hendricks, the Egyptian actor Adel Imam, the Uruguayan actor Osvaldo Laport and the Spanish TV presenter Jesús Vázquez.

[68]   Should read 'Jesús Vázquez'. Note the Anglophonia of leaving the accents out, although this seems to be an occasional rather than a systematic mistake.

including a refugee in their frame. This category represents around 40% of the available images. Finally, a third group of images (corresponding to around 50% of the images available in this context) depicts the Goodwill Ambassadors engaging with refugees.

A cursory engagement with this material could lead one to conclude that both the second and third types of images are evidence of the process of depoliticisation that is identified by the critics of celebrity humanitarianism surveyed earlier in this chapter, that is, it could be argued that the images depoliticise the causes of refugee crises. However, if one reads in detail the several interviews that are provided by the UNHCR in the website dedicated to its Goodwill Ambassadors, such as that between the UNHCR Web Editor Leo Dodds and Adel Imam (2008), for example, one becomes aware of the intense political work behind such moments of celebration, which begins to complicate this narrative. In one of them, Imam affirms that:

> I was able to help […] during my last visit to Syria, which was organized by UNHCR […]. My intervention was related to some Iraqi children who were stuck at the border […]. I facilitated [their getting entry visas] (Dodds and Imam, 2008).

Additionally, when asked if he had ever made a film about refugees, the answer demonstrates an awareness of the sometimes contradictory consequences of actions motivated by political intentions.

> If I do a movie just about refugees, I'm not sure how appealing it would be to the people who usually go to watch my films. That's why I try to include messages within the context of my comedy or drama that are easier for people to absorb (Dodds and Imam, 2008).

This last quote stresses the awareness of the individuals who take these roles regarding the need to adapt their public behaviour to different contexts and audiences. As a result of this, this interview also begins to problematise the neatness of the typology that I identified earlier. Additionally, it confirms my earlier suggestion that the accusations of depoliticisation that are

often associated with the political engagement of celebrities with humanitarian issues (as I briefly introduced earlier) aren't fully applicable to the official modes of presentation of GAs.

To better identify the multiple ways in which these figures appear to their viewers and their rhetorical arguments and effect, I will now engage in more detail with the way how Angelina Jolie's work for the UN appears to its viewers (indeed, as I explained in Part One, the images that I have selected illustrate the type of photographs that western viewers are more likely to come across). Before doing so, I will briefly analyse the official website associated with the figure as well as her own explanation of the position. This contextualisation will allow me to better grasp the significance of the visual rhetoric that is at play in the official images of the GA, i.e. to identify its presented and suggested elements.

b.2. UNHCR Website and Written Reflections

To begin, the following image (figure 44) shows the webpage that is dedicated to Jolie on the UN website; it which is similar to those of the other UNHCR Goodwill Ambassadors.

Figure 44 – Webpage on the UNHRC's Goodwill Ambassador Angelina Jolie (no date b).[69]

The website headlines the actress' well-known name, accompanied by the UNHCR logo, and makes available several kinds of content: a fact sheet, a biography, Jolie's personal journals from her field missions and a chronological list of those missions. There are also images, videos and a compilation of news items referencing her role. Although I will be focusing on images referring to her work on the ground since those are the ones that tend to be reproduced in western media, the website reveals that she also participates in selected events in the West aimed at raising the visibility of the UN's work with refugees – including speeches at UNHCR, Geneva, and at the UN, New York; celebrations of the anniversaries of the UNHCR (in 2010, for example); award ceremonies, including her acceptance of the 2003 Citizen of the World Award (awarded to her by the United Nations Correspondents Association) and, finally, other events, such as her launching, alongside former UNHCR High Commissioner Wendy Chamberlin, of the Council of Business Leaders in Davos, Switzerland, in 2005 (see UNHCR, 2012). This confirms that my case study, in an analogous manner to Adel Imam, also engages in forms of lobbying that address multiple stakeholders.

Before focusing on image of Jolie in her field missions, a brief discussion of the content of the personal journals made available on this website will cast light on her own understanding of her position as a Goodwill Ambassador.[70] Jolie's writing, in the form of long or short notes, reveals some of the context of the images that the UN publishes (for example, the issues that arise during her field trips and details of her work). These notes are compiled in seven documents relating to trips in Sudan (2004), Thailand (2004), Jordan (2003), the Russian Federation (2003), Sri Lanka (2003), Kosovo (2002) and in a book with reflections on visits with refugees in Africa, Cambodia, Pakistan and Ecuador (2001 and 2002). The book was published in 2003 and is entitled *Notes from My Travels: Visits with Refugees in Africa, Cambodia, Pakistan and Ecuador*, referring to trips made in 2001 and 2002. This said, it is not clear why the online publication of Jolie's journals stopped in 2004, especially since she is still often seen carrying a notebook, as we will see below (figures 45 and 46, for example).

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[70] It should be kept in mind, however, and as mentioned previously, that Jolie was recently (April 2012) been appointed as Special Envoy of former UN High Commissioner António Guterres. This means that Jolie now also represents the UNHCR at a diplomatic level. However, this new role does not replace the previous responsibilities; instead, it adds a strictly political dimension to them.

The journals are presented as 'personal impressions and reflections', which Jolie writes continuously during her trips, and in which she expresses her awareness (illustrated in the following series of quotations) of a variety of complex issues, including the gravity of a humanitarian crisis and the articles that discussed it (or lack thereof) in the international media. These notes also highlight the complex relation between the UN workers and local politics.

> We have a meeting with the community leader. […]. The leader gets tense and asks if I am here to look at security. I explain – purely humanitarian. I am not here to judge […]. In my opinion today's homes would be built only to be burnt down and pillaged again. So if the government won't take responsibility and cannot ensure safety, should the aid agencies invest further in building? (Jolie, Sudan's journal, 2004, pp. 21–22).

Additionally, it is interesting to discover that Jolie understands her position as simultaneously that of a humanitarian and a political agent. An example of this is when she is praised for her careful use of words following a meeting with Russian politicians in August 2003 aimed at lobbying for the amelioration of the situation of the Chechen refugees (Grammaticas, 2003.).[71] Nor are the subtleties of her role as a witness of key moments in which international politics takes place lost on her:[72]

> I am beginning to feel I will often be stunned in Russia […]. The moment we sit I am reminded of how many times this area of the world has been in conflict. How many dinners like this have taken place? (Jolie, Chechnya's Journal, 2003, p. 6).

More broadly, Jolie also expresses her awareness of her position as an historical witness.

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[71] During this trip, Jolie visited several refugee camps in southern Russia, such as the Bella refugee camp in Ingushetia. This and similar camps originated during the Chechen Wars (1994–1996 and 1999–2009). At the time of Jolie's trip, Chechen refugees were being forced by the Russian government to return to Chechnya – described by the Russians as safe, which was discredited by the refugees and non-governmental organisations.

[72] For example, in this specific case, she is referring to an official dinner taking place in Moscow on 21 August, 2003. Apart from Jolie, several government officials were present.

I know that if thousands of people were dying every day […] in California, London or New York, it would be very different […] They are families like us. And they need our help, our support. And in areas like Chechnya: they need us not to forget. (Jolie, Chechnya's Journal, 2003, p. 4).

I am not claiming that the diaries/notebooks provide a direct, unmediated line to Jolie's innermost thoughts and feelings – even if the decision to share them probably aims at causing that impression. Additionally, the role of Jolie's journals differs significantly from that of the images through which her work is disseminated in international news reports, after passing through several filters (her public relations team, the UN website editors, the teams in international news offices around the world, etc.). That is, I should stress yet again that since the viewer has most often access to the photos than to the journals, it is rather the photos that are of interest as well as the inclusion of notebooks in the photos (and not so much their contents). However, the diaries/notebooks do foreground the complexity of the position, directly opposing the ways in which the figure of the Goodwill Ambassador is most often discussed in the specialised literature.

The following pages, whose main aim is to understand the visual rhetoric at play in the images that represent Jolie's work, will lead me to a discussion of the broad rhetorical effect of this figure. As I have mentioned before, I have selected for close analysis a set of photographs exemplifying the type of images that, after a repeated process of filtering, end up representing Jolie's work in the field and, though it, presenting the work of the UN. Once again, I will be paying attention to their presented and suggested elements, as well as to the argument that they make, and my approach will be inspired by Mitchell's combinatory framework (particularly by his combination of principles of semiotics and phenomenology, 2004).

Figure 45 – Jolie sits next to a child in the refugee camp of Katcha Ghari, Pakistan (2005).

To begin, the image of Jolie sitting next to a child in the Katcha Ghari refugee camp presents several visual motifs: namely, the age and gender difference between Jolie and the child is accompanied by an ethnical dissimilarity.

Furthermore, although not dressed ostentatiously – i.e. in a way that would serve as an identifier of her wealth – the pen that she holds suggests nonetheless her independence vis-à-vis the situation that is photographed, signalling her ability to choose between being there, in the refugee camp in which the child lives, or not. As a result, this image could be seen as illustrating some of those criticisms of humanitarianism – ranging from the interpretation of any discourse centred on 'humanity' as seemingly apolitical, to the critique of human rights as a western concept that is instrumental in sustaining the global power of western states, as discussed by Immanuel Wallerstein in *European Universalism: The Rhetoric of Power* (2006).

However, a closer analysis reveals that the image is, in fact, multilayered: it also suggests a portrait of the encounter between the child and Jolie. The latter is presented as squatting, not merely sitting, and this stresses her intention of proximity, suggesting a relation of affinity: both are in a similar position, wearing similar colours and absorbed in the same event beyond the photographic frame. Additionally, the image fosters the identification of the gaze of the viewer with Jolie's, who looks out of the frame with the child, subsequently leading to the viewer's identification with her act of 'seeing-with' the boy. Indeed, in this direction, her unusual traits (notice the combination of almond-shaped eyes, full lips and dark hair) could even lead the viewer of the image (if she did not recognise Jolie) to mistake her for someone originating from the Middle East. I must also mention the pen, which can be viewed as revealing Jolie's intention to gather information that will allow her to report on the problems that the refugees face in the camp.

That is, contrary to its official definition as a neutral mediator between the UN and its viewers, the figure reinforces my emerging argument: the fact that the figure of the Goodwill Ambassador plays a highly complex and significant role. In this context, Jolie's deployment of proximity and authenticity doesn't merely have an individual significance. Rather, it is incorporated by the UN as exemplary of the organisation's wider proximity to those that it

serves on the ground and hence performative of its institutional relevance, as I will be arguing during the rest of this chapter. Indeed, as the scholars Philip Drake and Michael Higgins write in 'Lights, Camera, Election: Celebrity, Performance and the 2010 UK General Election Leadership Debates' (2012), in which they compare the performance of David Cameron, Gordon Brown and Nick Clegg in a series of television debates,

> sincerity and authenticity are not simply ways of engaging the questioner or studio audience […]. What is offered in such a performance is, as often with celebrities, a paradoxical double address: performing ordinariness ('I am like you and understand your concerns') alongside extraordinariness ('I am an exceptional and gifted leader') (Drake and Higgins, 2012, p. 381).

That is, the authors note that politicians align their speech and embodied presence with the audiences both in the studio and at home – an idea that I find applicable to the case of the GAs (and that joins my analysis in Chapter 3). This is confirmed when, later in the article, they argue that considering the modes of political address of the viewers as a form of performance 'has the potential to offer a more dynamic model of the interface between celebrity, political communication and politics' (Drake and Higgins, 2012, p. 386).

Doing so also responds to the need to analyse what John Corner identifies in 'Mediated persona and political culture: Dimensions of structure and process' (2000) as the 'neglected cultural and affective dimension of the formal political process' (p. 386) i.e. the specificities of public performance by politicians. However, I must stress that our approaches differ in two fundamental ways: first, while Corner is interested in the role of deceit (for example, by former President Bill Clinton in his press conferences following his affair), I am interested in that of proximity (or the suggestion thereof). Second, and secondarily, the author assumes that only two of the there spheres of the political, the public and popular and, finally, of the private, can overlap at a time (2000, p. 392). My case study demonstrates that they do coexist in the figure of the GA.

Figure 46 – Jolie speaks with a group of women and children earthquake survivors in the Garhi Habibullah camp in Pakistan (2005).

Jolie often appears to the western viewers in images showing her among groups of women and children. In this photograph taken at the Garhi Habibullah camp in Pakistan, in 2005 (figure 46), she is also seen in a position that expresses her attention toward what the women have to say. As in most photographs of her visits, Jolie is presented once again holding a pen and a notebook, communicating a rhetoric of authenticity that points to the personal reflections that constitute her journals or to factual note-taking. This is also evident in the absence of any signs of identification of her association with the UN, which suggest that the act of taking notes and her own role (a non-salaried, non-technical element) may give her an added layer of legitimacy in the eyes of those who tell her their individual stories as a privileged means of getting heard beyond the limits of the refugee camps.

Equally, the way in which Jolie is dressed – a dark veil, that is, in a similar way to the women who surround her – and her display of attention toward the woman who is speaking, suggest a redoubled attempt to sustain proximity, even if the jeans point to her western origins. The same can be said of the way in which she is positioned: sat within a circle structure that presents Jolie as visible to, and addressable by, all of the women and suggests a seemingly egalitarian conversation (echoing my discussion of the Security Council in Chapter 3).

Interestingly, however, this suggested intention is in sharp contrast with the way in which the photograph was framed in view of its future global media dissemination: instead, it is centred and focused on the actress. A significant difference emerges, then, between what happens in the photograph and during its distribution. As a result of this, the photograph makes visible the tension between, on the one hand, Jolie's visible attempt to appear approachable and, on the other hand, the way in which the images portraying the conversation are constructed for their western viewers – that is, for forms of reception and interpretation that will be at least partially structured by categories such as 'celebrity', 'refugees', 'us', 'they', 'white', 'non-white', thereby suggesting and reproducing a misguided understanding of these terms as stable.[73]

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[73] However, in this context, I should mention that the cultural theorist Paul Gilroy, among others, has argued that race, a category that is traditionally understood in the literature as segregative, may also be understood as generative of reflexivity and, consequently, of the development of utopian, humanitarian projects (2000). The same point could be made of all the categories that I mention in my analysis.

Figure 47 – Jolie speaking with refugees and UNHCR staff on a mission in Afghanistan (2008).

The above image reveals an analogous visual construction (figure 47). Here, Jolie is shown surrounded by a group of local men while also listening to a UN worker (who can be identified by the white vest that he is wearing, on which a UNHCR logo can be easily identified). Additionally, the circle is once again gendered (all participants being male with the exception of Jolie) and turned to the UN worker. However, the photograph is constructed in a way that directs the gaze of the viewer toward the actress: she is the only individual facing the spectator. Moreover, although the image likely presents a visit of Jolie to a refugee camp whose life she momentarily interrupted, the image suggests that the opposite was the case, that is, that the individuals who surrounded her had come to see her. As a result of this, the viewer is forced to make sense of the image in relation to Jolie's presence in the frame – only after seeing her does one follow her sightline to the UN expert and acknowledge the other men dressed in traditional Afghan male clothing, and a group of people in the background. Consequently, the image can be seen as reiterating the tension between Jolie's attempt to listen to what someone else (in this case, a UN expert) has to say about the conditions of life in the camp, and the image that is taken of the encounter for global distribution, which emerges as a form of presentation of the UN.

Interestingly, her closeness to the UN worker also suggests the institutional background that frames her action as a Goodwill Ambassador, contradicting the representation of her field trips as solely motivated by Jolie's compassion (which one could deduce from the previous photographs).

Figure 48 – Jolie, UNHCR chief Guterres and asylum-seekers in Malta (2011).

The photograph above represents a trip made by Jolie and the High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres, to Lampedusa, Italy, and to Malta in 2011, during which they met asylum-seekers who had reached the islands by boat, fleeing North Africa. Specifically, Guterres and Jolie are seen in the Lyster Barracks, a former British Royal Air Force base in Malta transformed into a detention center for asylum-seekers. A significant number of these people had fled violence in Libya. While Guterres talks to the asylum-seekers, Jolie is presented listening and holding her notebook, suggesting their attention toward what the refugees have to say. In this sense, she is modelling the position that is expected of the viewers of these images: an attentive witness.

In the background, several men, either in civil or in military clothes (notice the beret in the top right corner of the image), observe the encounter. Additionally, also on the top right corner of the image, one can identify someone, perhaps a journalist, holding a camera. The result is an image that appears like a microcosm, suggesting yet again a tension between the attempt made by Jolie, Guterres and the man sitting next to him to pay attention to what the refugees have to say and the way in which such an attempt is necessarily structured around the opposition between the interlocutors. The result is an image reproducing a common arrangement for holding a conversation and yet one that, at the same time, portrays the North African refugees and the UN representatives on opposing sides.

Additionally, neither Guterres nor Jolie are directly elected to their roles, pointing to the tension between the cosmopolitan aspirations and values on the one hand, and its fragile relation to democratic accountability (which is connected with the nation state and other localised communities, as I discussed in Chapters 2 and 3) on the other.[74] There is an additional, yet overlapping tension that is made visible by this photograph: that tension between life as a national citizen and as bare life. Although it is visible in all images, figure 48 foregrounds it particularly well. Following the conversation depicted in the image, in which the men had been

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[74]   It is important to note that Jolie's presence in Lampedusa is made possible by a combination of her American citizenship (which allows her to move virtually freely around the globe), her international recognition (which allows her to enter places which she would be otherwise unable to enter) and her wealth (which allows her to work with the UN, paying for her travel costs herself). In this sense, although Jolie seems to enact a perfect cosmopolitan lifestyle, her case also reveals how the latter can only be afforded by particularly wealthy individuals.

asked about the conditions in the detention centre and spoken about their individual stories, Guterres went on record arguing that the European Union should open its borders for political refugees. The photograph represents a situation that allowed, then, for a critique of the European policy vis-à-vis refugees to arise from within one of its most emblematic sites. That is, although Guterres and Jolie address these men as individuals (to be respected, one infers, on the basis of their humanity) the image also makes visible, as we saw, the tension between those that are excluded by national borders, and the privilege of freedom of movement that Guterres and Jolie are afforded: a pan-global freedom of movement which mirrors the circulation of this very photograph in the press.

Indeed, it is important to stress the malleability of Jolie's position – derived from her international recognition and wealth, which allows her to overcome the geographical dependance of the average American. In this sense, Jolie's image can be understood as a quasi free-floating signifier – able to travel to completely different contexts and, in this particular case, to represent the relation of western citizens with disenfranchised populations (instead of, exclusively, that of white, privileged women, such as her, with such individuals). However, at the same time, as I have suggested above, Jolie's photographed presence, which is often easily remarked, makes clear the opposition between, on the one hand, her freedom of physical movement and, on the other hand, those with whom she is photographed, who are not mostly constrained to a particular geographical area and socioeconomic position – a tension related to what the journalist Arosa Araxia Abrahamianas describes in *The Cosmopolites* as 'the arbitrariness of the concept of belonging to a nation to begin with' (2015).

As such, this image can be seen as a metapicture of the relation between the GA and the refugees. Indeed, as Mitchell describes in *What do Pictures Want?* (2005) as the 'lives' of images, metapictures 'introduce new forms of value into the world, contesting our criteria' (2005, pp. 92–93) – in this case, it could be seen as contesting the traditional separation of discussions around celebrity ambassadorships and humanitarianism, cosmopolitanism, and citizenship. Indeed, metapictures are images that make possible new forms of reflection on their subject matter (2005, p. 210). In an interview published in the online magazine *Image & Narrative,* Mitchell explains further his concept:

the aim of the metapicture is to create a critical space in which images could function […] as 'cases' that to some extent […] might transform or deconstruct the method that is brought to them (Mitchell, Grønstad and Vågne, 2006).

Before moving to the analysis of the rhetorical effect of this material, it is important to summarise the main rhetorical arguments that I have identified in the previous pages. To begin, some arguments reiterate the aspiration for connectedness that I identified and discussed in Chapter 2:

- the images suggest a portrait of an encounter between individuals – reiterated by Jolie's display of attention toward those that she meets;
- there are often no signs of direct identification of Jolie's association with the UN;
- Jolie is often photographed in a circle structure, making her addressable by all, which suggests an egalitarian conversation;
- Jolie speaks to UN refugees as someone that is equal to them, which echoes the simultaneous performance of ordinariness and extraordinariness identified by Drake and Higgins, 2012.

At the same time, however, there is a set of rhetorical arguments that is specific to this figure, through which she emerges as the facilitator of a network of encounters. Indeed:

- the photographs direct the gaze of the viewer toward the actress – as such, the viewer is forced to make sense of the image in relation to Jolie;
- despite the absence of signs that would identify her official position, her closeness to the UN worker suggests nonetheless the institutional background that frames her action, opposing the idea that her trips are only motivated by individual compassion;
- she is often photographed carrying a notebook, which suggests that her role is that of a witness.

Crucially, these rhetorical arguments are simultaneous to those that suggest proximity. This is why I will now be arguing that the figure performs a rhetorical effect to which I will refer as the performance of a network of proximity.

c) Effect: Performing a Network of Proximity

I am now going to discuss the rhetorical effect that I have identified as being at play in this mode of presentation of the UN: the performance of a network of proximity. I will structure my argument into four moments: first, I relate the idea of proximity with discussions around the notion of citizenship and propose that the former negotiates tensions in the UN's position vis-à-vis the latter; second, I relate this discussion to that of the role of the UN in development, which suggests that the GA can be interpreted as an indirect form of support toward a divided UN; third, I consider the networked way in which the figure of the GA functions as a multifocal mediator, a discussion that I relate to issues around representation; fourth, I return to my previous discussion of rhetoric and affect and consider the development of long-term relations between the viewers and those with whom the UN works on the ground (in this case, refugees).

First, as was revealed by the analysis of the rhetorical argument made in the photographs, suggestions of proximity (with the refugees, the UN staff and the viewers) are key in the modes of presentation of this figure. Crucially, the idea of proximity assumes the existence of a form of equality uniting all humans despite the differences that structure their lives. This is particularly important in light of the specificity of my case study – dedicated to the protection of refugees.

To give an example, figure 48, representing Jolie's presence in the detention centre, suggests the denial of an underlining contrast: that between a life lived as a national citizen with its corresponding rights and responsibilities and life reduced to bare life, to use Giorgio Agamben's (1995)[75] terminology. The author presents the latter notion as framed by the collapse of the *ancien régime*, which, he writes, led to the transformation of the subject into a citizen. The hiatus Agamben describes between the individual and the citizen is illustrated by the figure of

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[75] Agamben introduces the notion of the bare life explicitly through the work of Hannah Arendt, particularly the notion of the *homo laborans* and its relation to biological life (1958), and that of Foucault on biopower and biopolitics (1976).

the refugee. This is because, as he writes, 'breaking the continuity between man and citizen, nativity and nationality, they [refugees] put the originary fiction of modern sovereignty in crisis' (1998, p. 79). Fundamentally, the author writes, the notion of the refugee is 'a limit concept that radically calls into question the fundamental categories of the nation-state' (1995, p. 79). This said, it should be noted that Agamben makes clear in his argument the similar conditions of the illegal migrant and of the stateless person.

The notion of bare life helps me understand the rhetorical effect of this mode of presentation of the UN in that it highlights the assumption within the idea of citizenship (as a form of belonging to the world and as the basis of a set of rights and obligations) that the nation state is the pillar of international relations. However, this is increasingly problematic in light of the intensification of a set of new, transnational problems, such as what some authors see as the emergence of a permanent refugee crisis caused by the accentuation of climate change – rather that by temporary civil wars or international conflicts (The Guardian, 2016). This reveals the limits of Kantian cosmopolitanism (discussed in Chapter 2 and mentioned above). Additionally, Agamben's argument includes a critique of the instrumentalisation of the notion of human rights itself (or 'rights of man') into achieving the exact opposite of that which it aims at achieving – separation instead of commonality. It is in this light that he identifies what he sees as the inability of both the League of Nations and the UN to fundamentally solve the problem of refugees. The author writes that

> the very rights of man that once made sense as the presupposition of the rights of the citizen are now progressively separated from and used outside the context of citizenship (1995, p. 79).

Jolie's visible search for or demonstration of proximity can be interpreted as stressing the continued relevance of the UN despite this changing landscape. This analysis goes in the direction of what the philosopher Étienne Balibar discusses in 'A Hyperbolic Proposition' (2016) as the difference between symbolic and formal equality:

either equality is "symbolic," which means that each individual, whatever his [sic] strengths, his power, and his property, is reputed to be equivalent to every individual in his capacity as citizen […]. Or equality is "real," which means that citizenship will not exist unless the conditions of all individuals are equal (Balibar, 2016).

This is why I must also consider, even if very briefly, the GA's rhetorical effect from the point of view of the link between hospitality and the status of the refugee. Derrida addresses the possibilities of hospitality in his analysis of Immanuel Kant's 'Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch' (1795), which proposes that 'hospitality (hospitableness) means the right of an alien not to be treated as an enemy upon his arrival in another country' (Kant, 1795), p. 118). Derrida's work on hospitality addresses, then, the tension between state sovereignty and refugee protection. The argument, which the philosopher develops in his later work (and that I have mentioned earlier), is that genuine hospitality is impossible by definition – the altruism that guides it presupposes, paradoxically, that the host is the master of a place or a community, thereby establishing a claim to ownership and holding the power over those who are to be hosted (see the essay 'Hostipitality', 2000). This argument clearly mirrors the aporia of forgiveness. In light of this analysis, and in an analogous manner, one can also see Jolie's presence in refugee camps as highlighting the UN's role in sustaining the global order (based on nation states, the hosts) that creates the crises that create refugees (which the UNHCR represents).

More broadly, and to return explicitly to the analysis of the rhetorical effect of Jolie's visible search for or demonstration of proximity with those that the UNHCR represents on the ground, such an effect becomes clearer if one reads Charteris-Black, mentioned earlier, who writes that 'persuasion either seeks to *confirm* or to *challenge* existing beliefs, attitudes and behaviours – persuasion is never devoid of intention' (2005, p. 10; [original emphasis]). Although my focus lies on the effects of the visual rhetoric of this mode of presentation of the UN rather than on the intentions that originate it, Charteris-Black's point highlights nonetheless the need to consider the success of these images within wider structures such as the legal frameworks that organise international affairs or even broad affective relations (as I will do later in this chapter). To continue the analysis that I have just developed, this leads me to the idea that is the UN's modus

operandi itself (structured around the nation state as the bearer of rights and responsibilities despite emerging debates about sovereignty that question the latter's centrality; see Chapter 2) that creates the conditions for a limited response to the refugee crisis. The rhetorical effect of the figure of the GA can then be seen as joining yet also extending the analysis developed in Chapter 3: it emerges as the negotiator of the tension between the UN as the representative of all individuals on the one hand, and as a membership organisation that only does so via their nation states on the other hand, a fact that cannot be separated from the UNHCR's mission and relevance.

This conclusion leads me to the second point in this section, which considers the rhetorical effect of the GA in light of the internal division of the UN. Indeed, my emerging analysis is also confirmed by recent discussions in the field of human rights, which were summarised by the anthropologist and legal theorist Marie-Bénédicte Dembour. In *Who Believes in Human Rights?* (2006), the author reviews and comments on selected case law of the European Court of Human Rights, leading to a definition of human rights as a concept that can be understood in at least four ways: as given (according to the natural school), agreed upon (according to the deliberative school), fought for (according to the protest school) or talked about (according to the discourse school). This analysis is further developed in an article entitled 'What Are Human Rights? Four Schools of Thought' (2010), in which Dembour argues that one can recognise the increasing emergence of deliberative orthodoxy in these debates. This brief summary highlights the fact that placing deliberation (one of the key principles of the UN) at its core has consequences regarding its ability to fulfil its other functions (such as representing its global citizens and upholding their rights – which would see them as fought for) and, subsequently, that some of the goals of the UN are at least partly incompatible.

The scholar of Germanic studies William Rasch also seems to share Dembour's conclusion. In *Sovereignty and its Discontents: On the Primacy of Conflict and the Structure of the Political* (2004) he opposes the discursive and deliberative understanding of the ontology of human rights as present in the work of the philosophers Jürgen Habermas (1992), Seyla Benhabib (2004, 2008) and John Rawls (1971), among others. Rather, following the thought of Chantal Mouffe (2000), Ernesto Laclau (with Mouffe, 1985) and others, Rasch emphasises the centrality

of conflict in the notion of the political, and thus the ontological primacy of violence over peace – arguing that such centrality isn't widely recognised by human rights experts. Although compelling, this analysis is oblivious to the eminently political divisions that characterise the implementation of human rights decisions behind the scenes (as has been noted, again, by Forsythe, 2012).

Indeed, the coexistence of a deliberative framework at the diplomatic level with the more invisible work that Dembour would likely describe as framed by the protest school is evident in light of debates on the changing role, action and approach of the UN regarding development. This is made clear by Richard Jolly et al. in *UN Contributions to Development Thinking and Practice* (2004), which stresses that the UN's understanding of development has expanded from a strictly economic approach to also include a concern with issues such as poverty reduction, redistribution of growth benefits, social justice, as well as equality of men and women, among other issues that overlap with the main causes of refugee crises. Crucially, although some authors are positive in their evaluation of the UN's work in this regard (for example, regarding the achievement of the Global Development Goals – see 'Global Development Goals: the United Nations experience', 2004, in which the economist Richard Jolly argues that many of the quantitative goals set by the UN have either been achieved or led to subsequent action by the member states), most analyses of the UN's action regarding development are at least partially critical of it. To give one example, Silke Weinlich highlights in 'Reforming Development Cooperation at the United Nations: An analysis of policy position and actions of key states on reform options' (2011) the increasing disagreement regarding the strategies that are used by global governmental and nongovernmental development actors, i.e. not only the UN but also the World Bank and the EU. She writes that

> while developing countries and emerging powers want to expand the UN's role in the field of economics and finances and deal with development accordingly, industrial countries continue to want to marginalize the UN in economic issues outside of development policy (Weinlich , 2011, pp. 4-5).

To be clear, the disagreements that arise in this context are often symptomatic of wider disputes – in this case, regarding whether development is a strategy that is compatible (or not) with the existing global order. This joins the analysis of foreign policy experts David Malone and Lotta Hagman in 'The North-south Divide at the United Nations: Fading at Last?' (2002), who state that decolonisation has led to the replacement of western domination in key UN decisions (such as the financing of development) by a North-South divide. This analysis is confirmed by Andrew Hurrell and Sandeep Sengupta in 'Emerging powers, North–South relations and global climate politics', published in *International Affairs* (2012), which also confirms this shift of power toward emerging and regional powers in the field of climate politics.

This short summary of these debates makes clear that the work of the UN is characterised by key disagreements, opposing Rasch's assumption (2004). Additionally, although my short discussion of human rights literature and the notion of the refugee is mostly applicable to my case study, it is likely that similar tensions are reflected in images of other GAs. That is, I believe that the emergence and growth in importance of the figure of the Goodwill Ambassador as a mode of presentation of the UN must be seen in the context of a divided UN, split between not only competing nation states but also, and increasingly, different understandings of what its core mission entails in practice. In this context, the GA can be seen as a form of indirect support toward the mission, goals, values and multiple understandings of the UN: for example, as an institution that cares for the dispossessed but also as a political actor and as an organisation whose action is evidence-based (i.e. as an expert) – an analysis that echoes my discussion of Colin Powell's address to the Security Council in Chapter 3.

Additionally, and to return to Derrida's discussion of forgiveness (2001), I see the GA's position vis-à-vis those that she represents and meets as aporetic. With this statement I am referring to the fact that Jolie balances a search for or demonstration of authenticity and proximity within the context that both justifies and makes those encounters possible (that is, the international order and its failures, the specificities of the refugee crisis, and the wealth disparities between the actress and those that were born in other contexts).

To be more precise, on the one hand, the photographs discussed above clearly demonstrate Jolie's desire to listen to what the refugees have to say. However, on the other side, the GA's rhetorical effect can be understood in the context of a history of colonisation and continued economic dependence of nation states from countries such as the USA, from which Jolie originates, echoing Malone and Hagman's analysis (2002). In this reading, Jolie's act of listening suggests a demand for (impossible) forgiveness by the refugees regarding the western world, which is mostly responsible for the current international order and its failures, including those of the UN. Nonetheless, I believe that it would be an oversimplification to see the GA as depoliticising humanitarian crisis as a-historical emergencies in which the western, economically-privileged countries are not implicated (Tester, 2010).[76] Rather, as I suggested earlier, the rhetorical effect of this mode of presentation of the UN is more complex. Indeed, I will now suggest that the GA takes the position of a mediator, i.e. of the organising node of a network of overlapping affective relations of affinity and difference – which leads me to the third point of this section.

In several interviews (which I don't discuss in detail due to space constraints as well as their strong overlap with the material that I have already described), Jolie speaks directly to the international media viewers. At the same time, she also engaging during her missions with UN workers, refugees and political representatives (figure 47). Finally, she encounters and speaks directly to refugees (figures 46 and 48). As a result of this, she is involved in a complex mediation – calling the attention of the viewers toward specific issues and, at the same time, asking questions that the viewers themselves might ask if they were on the ground, thus leading to the identification of the viewers, too, with Jolie (as in the case of figure 45). That is, not only do the images that represent her work as a Goodwill Ambassador point to Jolie as a witness (as I suggested earlier) but, through them, the viewers also take on a similar role, albeit in a mediated way. That is, although the figure of the Goodwill Ambassador is defined officially as dedicated to fundraising and activities of public advocacy and public awareness, it sustains multiple positions of address in a way comparable to what Lilie Chouliaraki (a cultural theorist whose research focuses on the nature of mediated public discourse) refers to in the recently published

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[76]   Even if, of course, although the diaries aim to provide an unmediated line to Jolie's feelings, they are also edited and constructed.

The Ironic Spectator: Solidarity in the Age of Post-humanitarianism (2013, pp. 78–80) as the 'multi-vocality' of the 'expert performer'. I will return to Chouliaraki's work later in this chapter.

However, it is important not to associate the idea of the witness with a position of neutrality. Rather, and crucially, as John Durham Peters (a theorist of communication and media studies) argues in a piece concerning the mediation that is inherent to witnessing, the term 'witness' is also multilayered. The author stresses that this notion emerges from three sources – law, theology and issues surrounding atrocity – which thus points to the experience of media as an 'intensely tangled practice' (Peters, 2001, p. 23). His argument is particularly pertinent to the case of the celebrity ambassador, who embodies both the position of expert or official and that of 'regular' spectator. This combination also illustrates what Menahem Blondheim and Tamar Liebes (communication theorists interested in the role of journalism in a context of war, among other issues) have demonstrated is the importation into the media of a notion of witnessing which has its roots in giving evidence in a court of law (2009).

Furthermore, as the communication theorists Tamar Ashuri and Amit Pinchevski highlight, inspired by Bourdieu, witnessing is a site of struggle between agents harbouring conflicting interests over the trust of the viewer or listener (2009, p. 135). This complexity itself is at play even if the Goodwill Ambassador aims to highlight the urgency of humanitarian action. In light of Ashuri and Pinchevski's point, I must expand the previous analysis of the effect of Jolie's rhetoric of proximity – which now also emerges as playing a role within the competition for attention and trust of the viewers.

In this view, the simple vocabulary that Jolie uses in her writing and her own clothing and body language are a significant part of the actress' rhetorical success in this role. This is reiterated by her position as a listener and a note-taker in the photographs discussed earlier. That is, eschewing technical jargon allows Jolie to address several kinds of audiences at the same time,

including the refugees but also media consumers (i.e. those who access these images as media consumers but also potential donors[77]), politicians, diplomats and experts.

I would like to propose to expand this finding with an analysis focused on issues surrounding the mediated encounter of the viewer with the Other – in this case, the refugees that Jolie meets. Doing so will lead me to two different yet overlapping conclusions. Indeed, on the one hand it can be argued that the lives, mode of selection of the celebrities, and their international recognition places the western spectators closer to the GA than to those that the celebrities visit and represent. This analysis could follow from the discussion of the images that portray Jolie: as I have highlighted, her skin is fairer than that of those she meets and, even if veiled, the fact that she wears jeans (for example) points to her western habits and culture. This conclusion is reiterated by the analysis of Chouliaraki in 'Improper distance: towards a critical account of solidarity as irony' (2011), an essay that I find relevant due to its (in my view, limited) use of Roger Silverstone's notion of 'proper distance'[78] (Silverstone, 2003), which refers to the existence of a spatial metaphor in the mediated access of the vulnerable other (2011, p. 1). I see this notion, to which I will return later, as a clear articulation of the fact that proximity and distance are not mutually exclusive (and hence, as a dualism, which is how Chouliaraki approaches them) but are rather organised in an overlapping form of relation (i.e. as aporetic).

Specifically, Chouliaraki has studied what she refers to as the textualities of forms of mediated engagement with the Other through three emerging genres: celebrity advocacy, new media journalism and NGO-branding appeals. Concerning celebrity advocacy, she argues that contemporary UN policy tends to privilege a 'confessional' communicative structure of humanitarianism, which 'rests upon "intimacy at a distance", a key feature of our popular

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[77]   Jolie often asks for the viewers of interviews to the international media to make a monetary contribution to the UNHCR. Some of these videos are accessible in the UNHCR website, while others can only be accessed on youtube. There are also special events occasions organised by the UN for fundraising or other purposes during which she makes appeals for donations, which are then disseminated by the global media.

[78]   The media scholar Roger Silverstone introduced this notion in an article that discussed the ethics of cyberspace (2003), later extended to *Media and Morality: On the Rise of the Mediapolis (2006)*. His argument opposes interpretations of the internet as providing more authentic forms of social relationships and is based on the work of Emmanuel Lévinas (1969).

culture that refers to our non-reciprocal intimate knowledge of celebrities, rendering the private life of the latter an inherent aspect of their public personae' (2011, p. 366).[79]

In this context, the author argues that the public is asked to identify with the intimate emotion of the celebrity rather than with the suffering of the individuals that the celebrity encounters. This criticism could potentially be applied to figures 46 and 48. Indeed, in *The Ironic Spectator* (2013), which extends Chouliaraki's article on Silverstone's work into a book, the former author refers explicitly to Jolie's work and reaches similarly critical conclusions, viewing it as framed by such a 'confessional approach' (2013, p. 102). Specifically, describing Jolie's visible emotions – both when talking to refugees and when being interviewed about her work as a Goodwill Ambassador by international journalists – the author writes that

> Jolie's personification of suffering appears to fuse factual description with the spontaneous expression of emotion […]. [This] 'unmediated' emotion [intensifies] the gap between distant suffering, continuous and inescapable for those who endure it, and the confessional celebrity, whose emotion is ultimately discontinuous (2013, pp. 98–103).

This quote makes clear that the tension between affinity and difference, which emerged in my analysis of the rhetorical arguments made by the material, is a theme running through Chouliaraki's arguments around news reporting on disasters. However, the author sees the tension not as a continuum (which is how I am proposing to approach it) but, rather, as a clear dualism structured around a conflict around the power to be heard. The author uses the example of US media reporting on the effects of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti to demonstrate that even when victims of the disaster are given a voice by the western media they come to 'speak, in fact, to a western sphere of compassionate addressees that […] places its own emotions about their suffering at the centre of its rituals of communication' (2011, pp. 367–8).

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[79]   A similar idea is presented by the sociologist Zine Magubane (2008), who discusses the Product Red Campaign and concludes that the rhetoric used, for example, by Bono (who invokes the history of Irish colonial dispossession but mainly justifies the purchase of RED products with a combination of religiosity and consumer self-interest) doesn't consider the structural conditions that produced his position.

If one applied this analysis to the GA as a mode of presentation of the UN (i.e. rather than the aporetic framework that I have proposed), the performance of proximity and hence the relevance of the work of the UN on the ground would emerge as contributing to sustaining a geopolitical narrative that would naturalise wealth and power imbalances as ahistorical, and in which the United Nations would be complicit. That is, according to this framework, the figure of the Goodwill Ambassador could be interpreted as sustaining trust in a geopolitical order that is characterised by the absence of an acknowledgement by the western world of its role vis-à-vis the wider causes of the global problems that the UN manages on the ground (such as the increasing numbers of refugees). This would lead, in turn, to the neutralisation of the complicity of the viewers of these images with the asymmetric distribution of global wealth. In this view, and finally, the figure of the Goodwill Ambassador would fulfil a strategy that is often used in commercial advertising, which

> blurs the boundary relations between private and public life, making them appear indistinguishable […]. By isolating intensely personal and subjective moments, they appear to have no ideological dimension whatsoever (Goldman and Papson, 1996, pp. 250–251).

However, while western viewers may indeed identify with the celebrities more than they do with the refugees that surround them (or with any other individuals supported by the UN and its agencies), as I demonstrated earlier this figure establishes a much more complex network than the framework that is suggested by Chouliaraki and, hence, that is assumed by this relevant yet profoundly incomplete analysis.

To situate the specific point of disaccord between Chouliaraki's work and the analysis that I am proposing, it is useful to briefly return to my discussion of meaning and representation. In the introduction to her earlier book *The Spectatorship of Suffering* (2006), Chouliaraki explains that Derrida's work on the sign (specifically, his analysis of the complex relationship between orality and visuality as central to meaning-making, 1967) is a central theoretical source informing her research. However, I believe that the consequences that Chouliaraki draws from acknowledging

the iterability of the mark, that is, from its capacity to repeat and simultaneously change itself according to the context, are limited.

Specifically, the author interprets the representation of suffering as constructed, concluding that 'regimes of pity do not coincide with the specific image or language we watch on screen' (2006, p. 74). However, this idea coexists problematically with a point that the author makes in a footnote, quoting an argument made by Derrida and Stiegler, who assert that 'attention to process should not efface the event […]. It happens, and no process, no logic of the simulacrum can make us forget this' (Derrida and Stiegler, 1996, p. 77 cit. in Chouliaraki, 2006, p. 69).

To be clear, despite making this reference, I believe that Chouliaraki's analysis of the effects of the figure of the Goodwill Ambassador doesn't preserve the complex understanding of 'factuality' that is proposed by Derrida (see Simon Morgan Wortham, 2010, pp. 19-20). By only focusing on how the work of celebrity ambassadors reiterate broader power relations, Chouliaraki fails to take her own statement (regarding the mismatch between 'regimes of pity', 2006, p. 74, and the images that represent them, as I mentioned above) and her theoretical sources to their logical conclusion: the images of celebrity ambassadors do not 'efface the event' (Derrida and Stiegler, 1996, p. 77 cit. in Chouliaraki, 2006, p. 69 – see full quote above) of suffering and destitution. This is connected with my earlier suggestion: this mode of presentation competes for the attention of the viewers in multiple ways, which reiterates the relevance not only of the GA but also of the UN – including by, with the help of the GA's celebrity status, expanding the presence of discussions of ongoing refugee crises in international media.

This leads me to a brief discussion of the role of affect in the rhetorical effect of the GA – the fourth and final part of this section. As I mentioned earlier, images such as figure 45, in which a veiled Jolie is shown sitting and smiling next to a child, point to an understanding of the role of the Goodwill Ambassadors as to accompany those in need – and, if one interprets the image as referring to the iconology of mother figures, to provide them security and hope. That is, the image reminds us of many similar photographs that we encounter as media consumers and can hence be understood as referring to common media tropes.

However, following my reference to Derrida's notion of 'factuality' and my previous discussion of representation, I must stress that the image is not a cliché. It is helpful to quote Christopher Douglas's *Reciting America: Culture and Cliché in Contemporary U.S. Fiction* (2001), in which he offers a linguistic theory of ideology through the paradigmatic case of American subjectivity, to understand why that is the case. Douglas writes that 'the problem with the cliché is that […] the sign is without a proper relation to the reference […]. The space of the referent is occupied, erroneously, by the sign itself' (2001, pp. 163–164).This (reductive, as I explain in Chapter 1, via Hoel, 2012) reading of the Peircean framework fails to consider the performative aspect of these images.

That is why, and rather, I believe that the role of affect in the rhetoric effect of the GA as a mode of presentation of the UN can be better understood in light of Silverstone's notion of 'proper distance', mentioned earlier – an idea that, as both Chouliaraki and Shani Orgad make clear in their joint editorial of the issue of the *International Journal of Cultural Studies* (2011, p. 4), articulates issues of mediation, otherness and ethics' (2011, p. 341). Indeed, such a complex system of relations runs through Silverstone's work, not least because of his recourse to the philosophy of Emmanuel Lévinas (for example, *Totality and Infinity: an Essay on Exteriority,* 1969, who – as is well known – posits that the constitution of subjectivity arises from the encounter with the Other). Lévinas rejects the ontological centrality of *Dasein* (or being-there) proposed by Heidegger (1927) and, instead, suggests in its place the *Mitsein* (being-with). Concurrently, Lévinas's ethics asserts the unknowability of the Other, an encounter that is characterised by both proximity and distance.

Recent work by the communications scholar Paul Frosh, particularly a 2011 article in which he argues for the relevance of 'phatic morality', is especially important for my analysis as it expands not only Silverstone's notion of 'proper distance' to consider issues of affect but also, in doing so, allows me to develop a more nuanced understanding of the role of the GA than the one that I presented in the previous section.

Frosh's focus on 'phatic morality' relates to the 'long-term, habitual, ambient forms of mediated connectivity rather than the attentive engagement of viewers with particular texts' (2011, p. 383) and the role of such a repeated experience in sustaining a specific moral framework in our engagement with distant others. Fully understanding this configuration requires, Frosh argues, and first, a movement away from an interpretation of the non-reciprocity between viewers and viewed as a form of ethical insulation of the former – which joins my discussion of social integration in Chapter 3. Second, it presupposes that the scholar's object of attention is 'the incessant temporal flow of images, sounds and texts that characterizes televisual connectivity' (Frosh, 2011, p. 390) – which reiterates my interest in the inter-images and in an expanded understanding of rhetoric, following Rice (2005). Third, and in what brings me directly to the issue of affect, acknowledging phatic morality requires distinguishing between ethics and morality – a point that leads Frosh to argues that 'phatic connectivity in the era of the diffused audience multiplies every individual's thin relations to a constantly shifting variety of far-flung, unknown strangers' (2011, p. 394). The author is here denying the idea that routinisation has negative or inexistent consequences; rather, low-intensity encounters have wider sociopolitical consequences.

Applying this framework to the analysis of the photographs of the GA expands my previous point: the figure functions not only as a complex mediator but also as a catalyst. That is, rather than supporting Chouliaraki's idea of 'intimacy at a distance' (2011, p. 366), which stresses the absence of full reciprocity between celebrities and the viewers, following Frosh I also see the GA as a catalyst for long-term and low-intensity affective relations between unknown strangers (the viewers, those whom the UN represents and indirectly makes visible through this mode of presentation, and the UN staff and representatives). This provides a further example of the relevance of Couldry's discussion of social integration (2003) to the analysis of my material. Couldry himself suggests so in the book in which he proposes this term: the relation between celebrities and media consumers should be seen as an example of the interaction between strangers 'in symbolically unequal yet naturalized ways in which they experience a shared set of values' (2003, pp. 26–7). That is, when analysing the long-term rhetorical effect of this figure (and to return to the beginning of my analysis), it is important not to see affect as being mobilised by the GA exclusively to produce a story that resonates with the viewers (or the

refugees) and that captures their attention. Rather, affect is also key to the position of the GA and, in doing so, as I suggested earlier, helps sustain the legitimacy of the organisation.

I want to conclude this chapter with a few words about the performative character of this rhetorical effect. As I have suggested, Jolie's search for or demonstration of proximity is not only a form of communication (i.e. of asking questions, of listening, of taking notes, of addressing the audience…) but also a rhetorical gesture that performs the proximity to those that it (and hence the UN) meets on the grounds. However, I believe that this figure has broader performative consequences. Briefly returning to the discussion of the performative should make this clear. Indeed, in the context of an analysis of news images of men who engaged in acts of destruction of Mijalic during the Kosovo war, Thomas Keenan (mentioned in Part One) writes in 'Mobilizing Shame' (2004) that

> Waving to the cameras is never just for the cameras but for the others, for the public, for elsewhere, for the future and many futures […]. The wave announces— it performs, it enacts (2004, p. 446).

If I read my material in light of Keenan's quote, the decision to be photographed as equals, taken not only by Jolie but also – and crucially – by the refugees that she meets now appears as a performance. That is, they acknowledge in their behaviour in front of the cameras their awareness of the potential future viewers of the image, whom they address (via Jolie) as equals, i.e. as able to understand and empathise with human suffering.

To summarise my argument, I have proposed to see the GA as a form of presentation of the UN that: performs the proximity to those that it meets on the grounds, negotiating the tension between humanity and citizenship; combines multi-vocality and a complex form of witnessing, which allows it to navigate the multiple inner conflicts that characterise the UN; and, finally, that contributes to the establishment of long-term affective relations between the viewers and those that it represents on the ground. The result is a performance of proximity that establishes a network of overlapping relations of affinity and difference.

Part III. Art Practices and the UN

Chapter 5: Modes of Approximation – Enacting Politics?

While Part II of this thesis examined the rhetorical arguments and effects of the main modes of presentation of the UN, I will now discuss two contemporary artworks that have engaged with the organisation. My aim is to understand what it is that an artistic engagement with the official modes of presentation of the UN, as exemplified via these works, reveals with regard to the specific viewing position that is demanded by that material (and that is characterised, as I have said before, by the tension between the aim of increased visibility that such images serve and the limited modes of engagement afforded by the institution to their viewers).

Before discussing the artworks, I should first make clear the process that led me to them. I began by perusing several websites, databases and catalogues. This search demonstrated that the involvement of artists with the UN is only occasional and mostly indirect. In fact, the number of artworks that I found dealing explicitly with the UN was very low – which reflects the elusiveness of the organisation.[80]

The artworks which I will be examining are Pedro Reyes' *The People's United Nations* (henceforth referred to as *pUN,* 2013–2014) and Goshka Macuga's *The Nature of the Beast* (2009–2010), which share several characteristics: first, they are multidimensional installations (as well as a performance, in the case of *pUN)*, which allows them to reflect upon the UN as a complex organisation composed of multiple elements; second, they do not originate from a position of straightforward opposition or critique but rather aim to foreground the complicity of the viewer in sustaining the power of the UN and in perpetuating its modus operandi. This said, despite their similarities, each work is concerned with different parts of the institution (Reyes mostly considers the General Assembly while Macuga focuses on the Security Council) and different aspects of the visual rhetoric of the UN.

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[80]   For example, the visual culture scholar Gavin Grindon (2010) analyses the attempt by Copenhagen's cultural institutions to engage with the United Nations 2009 Climate Change Summit. Grindon concludes that it 'revealed another crisis in contemporary art's capacity to tackle issues of social change […]. Instead, the art which most successfully engaged with the issues of climate change was that which had more affinity with extra-institutional activist practices' (Grindon, 2010, pp. 10-11).

a) *The People's United Nations (pUN)*

Figure 49 – *Pedro Reyes, The People's United Nations*, 2013–2014. Exhibition view.

Figure 50 – Pedro Reyes, Official emblem of *The People's United Nations* (2013–2014).

Figure 51 – Pedro Reyes, Exhibition view of *The People's United Nations* (2013–2014).
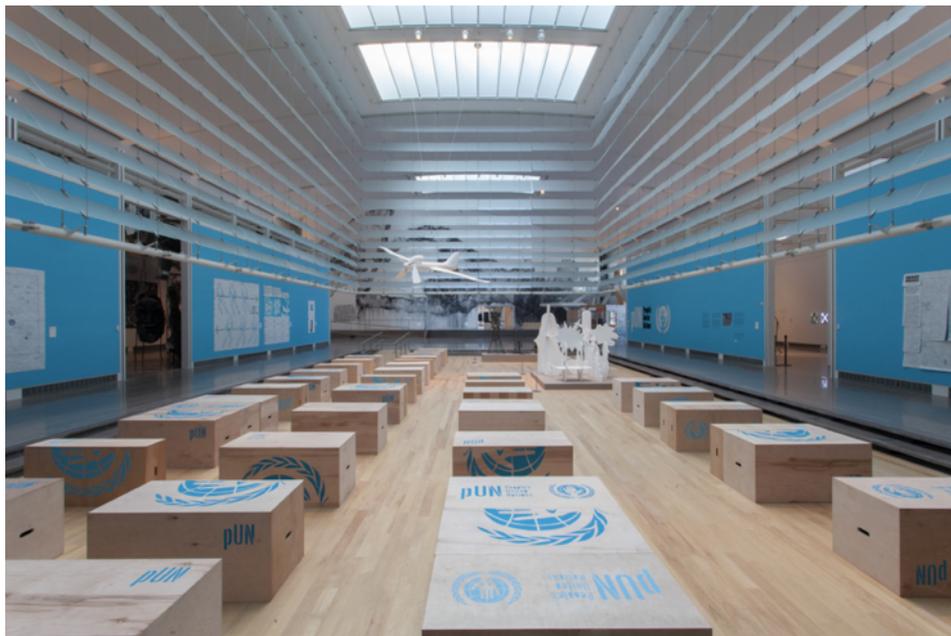
Figure 52 – Pedro Reyes, Exhibition view of *The People's United Nations* (2013–2014).

Figure 53 – Pedro Reyes, Exhibition view of *The People's United Nations* (2013–2014).

Figure 54 – Pedro Reyes, Exhibition view of *The People's United Nations* (2013–2014).

Figure 55 – Pedro Reyes, Performance view of *The People's United Nations* (2013–2014).

Figure 56 – Pedro Reyes, Performance view of *The People's United Nations* (2013–2014).

My analysis of the project will be structured into two moments: first, a description of *pUN*; second, an analysis of the ways how it instigates a reflection on the modes of presentation of the UN and the viewing position that they demand (a reflection to which I return in the final section of this chapter).

To begin, *The People's United Nations* (*pUN*), developed by the Mexican artist Pedro Reyes, was presented at Performa 13, a biannual performance art festival staged in the Queens Museum, New York. It comprised an exhibition (on view from 9 November, 2013 to 30 March, 2014) and a performance (taking place at midday 23–24 November, 2013). Reyes, born in 1972, lives and works in Mexico, and has participated in group exhibitions such as dOCUMENTA(13) (Kassel, 2013). He has risen to international attention with projects such as *Palas por Pistolas* (Guns for Shovels) (2008), in which the artist took guns from the Mexican drugs war, melted them down and re-cast the metal as shovels.

The project originated from an invitation from Larissa Harris, curator of the Queens Museum, and marked the reopening of the building following extensive renovation. Two important facts about the museum informed the work. First, it had housed the UN General Assembly from 1946 to 1950 (before the move to the purpose-built UN headquarters). Second, the New York district of Queens, where the museum is situated, is one of the neighbourhoods in the world with the highest diversity per square mile. This led to the idea of developing two performances with a 193-member mock delegation comprised of New York immigrants and their family members: all were either immigrants from the 195 members and observer states that currently make up the UN or had family connections to them. Under the official motto of the project – 'hands-on with a vision' (figures 55 and 56) – the participants discussed issues ranging from gun controls to climate change. In fact, as is stated in the *pUN Workbook*:

> The seal of pUN is inspired by the hamsa (literally, "five" in Arabic). This open right hand with an eye at the center of the palm has been a symbol of protection across cultures and millennia. Originating in Africa, the hamsa predates Christianity and Islam. Workers' and peoples' movements have often been represented by a hand, sometimes holding a tool or closed in a fist. Here, the hand

is open […]. This benignant hand placed over an orb is meant to signal our mission to protect the planet. And here, its five fingers represent the world's five populated continents (Reyes et al., 2013, p. 3).

Drawing on a wide variety of conflict resolution techniques – including the Theatre of the Oppressed, a technique used for conflict resolution developed in the 1960s by Augusto Boal, a Brazilian stage-director; Force Field Analysis, a social science technique developed by Kurt Lewin; and techniques from couples therapy, to name but three – *pUN* sought alternative ways of confronting, discussing and resolving problems such as poverty, food scarcity, drone attacks and weapons proliferation. Organised according to the structure of speed dating events (figure 62), a bell rang to signal the delegates that they should move to the next table and discuss a different subject. The programme of events also included lectures by experts, which were followed by a vote from the delegates. Provocatively, the project suggested that these techniques are potentially more productive than the deliberation methods employed by the UN, a forceful criticism of the effectiveness (or lack thereof) of traditional global diplomacy.

Mirroring what takes place in the UN's headquarters, museum visitors could experience the *pUN* activities through half-hour guided tours which included attendance of the sessions, the history of the UN and a tour of Reyes' exhibition inspired by the *pUN*'s underlying themes of dialogue and peace. *PUN also* overlapped with an event in which Peter Launsky-Tieffenthal, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Communication and Public information, unveiled a plaque at the Museum with the following text engraved: 'On this site, from 1946 to 1950, The United Nations General Assembly convened' (UN Blogs 2013). At this unveiling, Reyes presented Launsky-Tieffenthal with a petition from the General Assembly of *pUN* demanding arms disarmament on a global scale.

The *pUN* meetings and tours took place within an exhibition, which was composed of several sculptures created by Reyes for the atrium of the museum (figures 51, 52, 53 and 54): first, a miniature cityscape composed of seating cubes (figures 51, 52, 55, 56); second, the *Drone Dove* (figure 51) – merging the forms of a drone and a dove of peace and described as resembling

both the United States Air Force Predator Drone, currently used for drone attacks, as well as the simple beauty of modern sculptures that depict doves in the postwar twentieth century, as seen in the work of Pablo Picasso and Isamu Noguchi. As a symbol, Drone Dove is a silent protest urging all governments to stop the use of unmanned vehicles in warfare (Reyes, 2013, p. 266).

The atrium also included, third, the *Colloquium,* a white sculpture of interlocking marble panels shaped like a blank cartoon speech-bubble (figure 53); and fourth, *Disarm/Clock*, a weapon-clock made from gun parts which made a sound every quarter hour, which Reyes had made earlier in the context of the project *Disarm* (2012) (figure 54). These elements remained in the atrium of the museum until March 30, 2014. The sculptures were described on the website of the Queens Museum in the following way:

> with their frank embrace of symbolism, these sculptures provide a poetic and inspiring backdrop for the *pUN* convening and representing its sincere optimism, serious and playful at once, to the Museum visitor after the event is over (Queens Museum, 2013).

However, by no means should this playfulness be seen as denying the seriousness of the issues discussed by the project. Rather, as the artist himself explained in an interview, 'it is precisely the lighthearted spirit of play that allows the participants to engage in subjects whose magnitude would otherwise overwhelm us' (UN News Centre, 2013). The difference between playing a game and the spirit of play was fundamental in this context. The performance functioned not as a self-contained game, in which only one participant can win to the detriment of his opponents, but as a playful platform. This allowed the participants to identify, even if provocatively, with the representatives of their nation state at the UN as well as to speculate on the form that the UN would take if it served its mission without being influenced by politics and other constraints. As the artist stated,

> one of the main differences between *pUN* and the UN is that delegates at the UN represent their government. And governments have an agenda which is first, their

national interest; second, the interest of the [sic] their people; and third, the interest of the planet. In *pUN*, I think that the delegates are not concerned with representing their governments -- they represent their nation-states, their people […]. So they can take a stand with [sic] having a more global perspective. But I don't think *pUN* is in itself a critique of the UN (Brooks and Reyes, 2013).

This leads me to the second part of this section. I will now argue that *pUN* can be seen as reflecting upon the tension between the rhetoric of deliberation and universality of the UN and its modus operandi – an argument that returns to me to Balibar's discussion of equality, takes me through Rancière's work on aesthetics and spectatorship and closes with a discussion of the piece as inhabiting the rhetoric of the UN's modes of presentation (and, hence, highlighting its inner tensions).

To begin, the performance implicitly referred to the modus operandi of the General Assembly as its main inspiration, although the modular structure of the cubes in which the participants sat (which could be rearranged whenever necessary) brought to mind the circular structure of the Security Council table. This said, the flexibility of the cubes highlighted the rigidity of the Council's membership structure (that is, its five permanent members, hence reproducing the geopolitical order of the post-war period). Additionally, the sculpture *Drone Dove*, combining references to the UN's mission (to maintain and sustain understanding among different peoples) and to new and yet to be regulated forms of warfare (the reference to the drone) suggested the shortcomings of the organisation. Finally, I must mention the redesigned UN flag, which implicitly opposed the focus on the northern hemisphere of the official image.

This is why, despite the artist's statement, it is difficult not to see Reyes' decision to combine traditional and experimental decision-making techniques as an indirect criticism of the UN. Indeed, the performance implicitly asked a question about the ideal form that the organisation would take if it were explicitly designed to fulfil its mission: building understanding and responding to global challenges in light of the long-term interests of the global population.

Additionally, I see the opposition between the rigidity of the UN and the difficulty of accessing its fora on the one hand, and the open call for participants on the other hand, as highlighting the limits of the rhetorical claims of the UN – that is, the tension between its promise (to represent all individuals – 'We, the People'), and its structures (an organisation in which the member states are represented by individuals who are politically nominated, not elected – leading to debates that, like the blank speech-bubbles, are not always characterised by the exchange of ideas). In doing so, the installation also stressed the habitual position of the viewer vis-à-vis the UN: her lack of involvement.

In this context, it is crucial to stress that the performance included individuals who, whether in representation of the countries from which they had immigrated or with family connections to the member state that they represented within *pUN*, lived in New York. This suggests that some of them had American citizenship. In any case, the participants (most of whom lived beyond the countries that had originally provided them with citizenship) demonstrate the insufficiency of the framework of the nation state to reflect global changes to mobility and the increasing number of individuals who may feel equally at home in several countries.

This tension leads me back to the essay by Balibar (2016) that I mentioned in Chapter Four, and in which the philosopher argues, influenced by Derrida, that the figure of the citizen is instituted in her naming as such. Specifically, the former writes that 'civic equality is indissociable from universality but separates it from community' (Balibar, 2016). This leads to a problem with representative politics itself, which not only is in tension with the idea of citizenship as a universal promise (as he suggests) but also, as I have just proposed, hasn't sufficiently expanded to reflect global changes in mobility and lifestyle. Additionally, and most crucially, this issue brings me back to the tension between the UN's promise of equality and the separation of the global population according to political entities through which it acquires its rights. As the philosopher writes, 'equality in fact cannot be limited […]. In order to speak of "all citizens," it is necessary that somebody not be a citizen of said polity' (Balibar, 2016). In light of this analysis, it becomes clear that, in exchange for being given a voice in *pUN*'s performance, the participants had to represent only one UN member state, which may have come at a symbolic

cost to some of them – which highlights the tension between the cosmopolitan values and aspirations of the UN and its modus operandi.

This leads me to the relation between *pUN*'s form and subject. As an exhibition and a participatory, cheerful practice that aimed to highlight, in a playful manner, possible universes (Bourriaud, 1998, p. 13), *pUN* was similar to the type of practices that are described by Nicolas Bourriaud in *Relational Aesthetics* (1998). However, central to the latter is also the aim to elaborate meaning 'collectively rather than in the privatised space of individual consumption' (Bishop, 2005, p. 116) as a way to respond to the Marxist critique of the reproduction of hegemonic ideology. That is, underlying Bourriaud's theory lies a belief in the emancipatory power of art as a site of (seemingly) equal, democratic relations. On the contrary, *pUN* is not emancipatory. Rather, it aims to playfully expand the political space (that is, the debates that take place within the UN and its institutional framework – with which it experiments), which it does by stressing that which they usually exclude. This said, despite this fundamental difference, both Bourriaud and Reyes aim to nurture the transition between the individual visitor and a shared symbolic space (a concern that is also key in Macuga's installation, as I will later demonstrate).

In this context, it is helpful to consider in more detail the significance of *pUN*'s appropriation of the emblem/flag of the UN. I will do so through a brief comparative discussion of the reception of Reyes' work and Dread Scott's *What is the Proper Way to Display a US Flag?* (1989). Doing so reveals that, although seemingly unremarkable, the absence of an overly negative reception to *pUN*'s appropriation of the UN flag is revealing of a crucial difference between its symbolic power and that of the flags of nation states.

Scott's installation (1989) consisted of a shelf with an open book in which the visitors were invited to write, a montage of photographs of American flags draping the coffins of military personnel combined with protestors burning an American flag in response to the Vietnam War, and another flag in which the viewers could stand as they expressed their thoughts. Its reception was characterised by widespread criticism (see Scott, no date). The fact that the appropriation of one of the key symbols of the UN by Reyes was uncontested (to the best of my knowledge) is

significant to an extent that cannot be explained by the difference between standing on or modifying a flag. Indeed, one can induce that a similar appropriation of the UN flag would have been unlikely to lead to the same level of criticism as Scott's. Conversely, one can imagine that an art piece based on a similar formal strategy to that of *pUN* but, rather, about the American democratic system would be the topic of public debate. This analysis is confirmed by the widespread media coverage (Kennedy, 2016; Rayner, 2016) received by Reyes' subsequent project: *Doomocracy* (2016), an immersive installation in an abandoned terminal that asked the viewers to reflect on the state of American politics. Altogether, this suggests the low-intensity symbolic (and affective) engagement of the viewers with the UN (Chapters 2 and 4).

This said, the work of Jacques Rancière reveals that the two interventions have something in common. As is well known, Rancière's attempt to identify the fundamental modes of articulation between the political and the aesthetic in *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible* (2000) leads him to conceive the distribution of the sensible as both the organisation of what can be said, seen, thought or heard, and as a distribution of images and places. In light of this statement, both Reyes' and Scott's interventions emerge as interested in expanding public conversations about the overlaps and disjunctions between the positions of the visitor of art museums, the citizen, the protester, the artist and, more broadly, of the politics of representation within the cultural and the political sectors.

Additionally, both artworks are framed by the conditions of what Rancière identifies as the aesthetic regime of art (which is characterised by the abolishment of the hierarchy that isolated art from other cultural forms). However, as Scott's piece demonstrates, this regime is also structured by a contradiction: although art is recognised in itself, its distinction from other activities within this egalitarian regime of the sensible is increasingly questioned (an argument expanded by Rancière to consider the relation between fiction and the documentary in *The Future of the Image,* 2007).

There is another dimension of *pUN* that is also illuminated by Rancière's work: the position of the participant in Reyes' performance, which is aligned with the former's understanding of the spectator (evident both in his earlier work, such as in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons*

in Intellectual Emancipation, 1987, mentioned in Part One, and in the argument developed in the well-known essay 'The Emancipated Spectator' (2009) regarding the position of the spectator vis-à-vis the actor). The philosopher writes that

> we have not to turn spectators into actors. We have to acknowledge that any spectator already is an actor of his own story and that the actor also is the spectator of the same kind of story. We have not to turn the ignorant into learned persons, or, according to a mere scheme of overturn, make the student or the ignorant the master of his masters (2009, p. 279).

To be clear, the French author is critical of art that aims to emancipate the participants due to its presupposition of the ignorance of the latter. Rather, he proposes an aesthetics that isn't emancipatory (regarding, for example, the supposed domination of consumerism – an approach that he sees as patronising) but, instead, offers viewers a possibility for active interpretation. At the same time, I must mention that Rancière's proposed model is characterised both by the blurring of the boundaries between looking and doing, and by the fact that the political effects of such practices are not easily predetermined (2009, p. 102).

Reyes' decision to place the participants (without whom there would be no performance) at the centre of his intervention highlights the similarity between Rancière's views on spectatorship and the artist's. This is foregrounded in Reyes' description of the Theatre of the Oppressed as one of his main influences in *pUN Workbook*[81] (2013). As he states,

> theatre of the Oppressed stages situations that contain several social "errors." At a certain point the play stops and you—the spectator—are invited to become an actor, or a "spect-actor." [sic] […] Rather than describing a new situation, the spect-actor [sic] acts it out. There are no experts here – knowledge that results from this experiment will be the best we can attain (2013, p. 10).

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[81]   Which, I must note, mitigates the strong importance of emancipation as the original goal of these theatrical forms.

This 'acting out the situation' is evident in the fact that *pUN*'s events had no script – only broad guidelines such as their time, format and duration. That is, instead of being *about* the UN, the activities that composed the performance were joined by their echoing of the UN's mission and rhetoric: fostering and maintaining peace and understanding among peoples (hence its focus on deliberation, relationship-building and the topics of the debates and other parts of the performance). This is why I see Reyes' approach as fundamentally analogous to that of the artist Mark Wallinger in *Oxymoron* (1996), a flag combining the design of the Union Jack with the colours of the Irish tricolour that the artist proposed as a reminder of the continued sectarianism in Northern Ireland (Reynolds, 2001). As the artist and scholar Dave Beech states in a review of the piece, the artwork is an

> emblem of politicisation not because it takes on one of the sharpest political conflicts of our time, but because it internalises those antagonisms in its very fabric […]. The first task of art's politicisation is to struggle for struggle (Beech, 2001).

That is, both artists engage with political entities through their forms of visual (re)presentation, which they appropriate and combine. Additionally, like Beech suggests, both highlight the inner divisions that characterise those institutions or countries yet are not usually visible in their modes of presentation – an absence that the artists correct. In this view, and considering the piece's focus on the exclusionary character of citizenship (as I discussed in relation to the work of Balibar), *pUN* can be seen as aligned with Laclau and Mouffe's radical understanding of democracy and the political (1985).

The argument developed by Barbara Bolt is particularly relevant to understand the significance of *pUN*'s appropriation of the UN's modes of presentation in this manner. In *Art Beyond Representation: The Performative Power of the Image* (2004), and drawing on Heidegger's counter-representationalist idea of handling first developed in *Being and Time* (1927), Bolt proposes that artistic practice exemplifies a relation of care that brings about a different understanding of the world to that offered by Cartesian representation. In this view, art and world are in a relationship of mutual indebtedness, in which both the artist, the materials and the processes bring forward, together, something into appearance that cannot be predicted fully by

the artist. In particular, Bold discusses Derrida's reading of Heidegger's work, which stresses the existence of movement within the latter (see 'Sending: On Representation', 1982), including the concepts of 'destining' and 'sending' (*envois*). As she writes, 'the process of translation necessarily involves corruption. It is this corruption that produces permutations and brings about metamorphosis […]. Engagement triggers a process of *différance'* (2004, pp. 33-35).

Bolt's argument stresses the fact that *pUN*'s highlighting of the coexistence of contradictory elements within the UN's rhetoric is made possible by its focus on mediation. That is, *pUN* not only uses the UN as its topic; rather, it also considers the organisation's representation, both within it (i.e. in terms of who is represented in it) and as its modes of presentation. In doing so, *pUN* foregrounds the political dimension (understood in light of Rancière's work, that is, as a distribution of words and images, and hence of the sayable and the imaginable, 2000) of representation within and of an international organisation that presents itself as universal. In this context, the performative aspect of the piece is crucial. As Reyes affirms:

> The performative aspect starts with the presence of one person from every country on Earth. […]. But it's important that these activities actually *happen*. […]. It's very playful, but very serious, and that's the kind of ambiguity we want. And that's precisely why it's called pUN. You have these two ideas to interpret. A thin line between being serious and doing pranks (Brooks and Reyes, 2013).

That is, appropriating and performing the UN's imagery and rhetoric, the artwork makes visible the tension between the mission, values and ideas (such as universality) based on which the UN is discursively founded, and its modus operandi, which is exclusionary. *PUN*'s gesture can hence be understood as one not of critique but of criticality, joining my discussion in the introduction (Rogoff, 2003), in that, instead of criticising the UN from an external position, it inhabits its contradictory symbols and rhetoric and uses them as its subject, hence suggesting without prescribing the possibility of institutional reform.

b) *The Nature of the Beast*

Figure 57 – Goshka Macuga, Exhibition view of *Bloomberg Commission: The Nature of the Beast* (2009–2010).

Figure 58 – Goshka Macuga, Exhibition view of *Bloomberg Commission: The Nature of the Beast* (2009–2010).

Figure 59 – Goshka Macuga, Exhibition view of *Bloomberg Commission: The Nature of the Beast* (2009–2010).

Figure 60 – Goshka Macuga, Exhibition view of *Bloomberg Commission: The Nature of the Beast* (2009–2010).

Figure 61 – Goshka Macuga, Exhibition view of *Bloomberg Commission: The Nature of the Beast* (2009–2010).

My analysis of the project will be structured into two moments: first, a description of the installation; second, an analysis of how its combinatory nature encourages a reflection on the mode of spectatorship of the UN, i.e. attention without engagement.

To begin, *Bloomberg Commission: The Nature of the Beast* (2009–2010, and henceforth referred to as *The Nature of the Beast)*, an installation by Polish artist Goshka Macuga (born in 1967), resulted from a commission by London's Whitechapel Gallery, which reopened in 2009 following its extensive refurbishment – i.e. as in the case of Reyes' installation, this artwork was also commissioned to celebrate the opening of an institution. However, the slightly earlier date of this piece vis-à-vis that of *pUN* might explain the different issues addressed by the artworks. For example, *pUN* considers the use of drones, a technology that has only recently become the subject of public discussion. Rather, Macuga took as her starting point a particular moment in the history of the Whitechapel Gallery: the display in 1939 of Picasso's *Guernica* (1937)[82] in support of the Spanish Resistance. The installation reflected on the recent history of *Guernica* itself, as well as on the conflicting roles that visual devices, including this tapestry itself, play as instruments of political rhetoric. Indeed, the installation referred explicitly to the day in 2003 when the tapestry reproduction of the painting (which is displayed in the corridor of the United Nations' Headquarters) was covered during the press conference following Colin Powell's presentation of the Bush administration's case against Iraq (which I briefly discussed in Chapter 3).

Indeed, like all interviews following an address to the Security Council, Powell met the press after his presentation on Iraq in the corridor leading from the Chamber. Hung in the corridor is a tapestry reproducing Picasso's *Guernica*, which has been on loan to the UN since 1985 as a reminder of the atrocities of war. Since then, the tapestry has served as an iconic background to the media interviews following the Security Council's sessions. However, on the day of Powell's presentation, it was covered by a large blue curtain with the UN emblem as a pattern. Despite the contradictory claims as to whose request it had been to have the tapestry covered,

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[82] *Guernica* was painted by Picasso in order to call the world's attention to the bombing of Guernica, a Basque town, during the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) by German bombers in support of the Nationalist forces of General Franco.

the incident quickly became a focus of media attention, being discussed by journalists as a reiteration of Powell's aim to influence the perception of his audience.

As a result of this incident, Powell's presentation became a rich source of inspiration for Macuga's reflection on the programmatic choices of art institutions and their use of images. Indeed, her work is traversed by an interest in institutional critique – perhaps the main reason why London's Whitechapel Gallery decided to commission Macuga to create a piece celebrating its reopening, and certainly the approach which has dominated the critical appraisal of *The Nature of the Beast*.[83] The same interest also explains the artist's decision to focus on a particular moment of the gallery's history. The UN's *Guernica* tapestry was loaned to Macuga for this exhibition, which happened to coincide with some renovation work at the UN headquarters. Around the tapestry the artist placed a mock-up of the Security Council's table and chairs (figures 57 and 61), inside of which was displayed documentation about the exhibition of the painting at the gallery in 1939 and at the Spanish pavilion in the International Exhibition in Paris in 1937 (which included, apart from Picasso's *Guernica*, a fountain by Alexander Calder, a photograph of which Macuga also used in her piece, among other elements – figure 61), as well as objects relating to Powell's address at the UN: a sculpture reproducing the moment when Powell showed a small bottle of what was supposed to represent Anthrax to the members of the Security Council (figures 58 and 59), an Afghan rug depicting Iraq invaded by the United States and, finally, a series of continuously playing documentaries focusing, among other things, on the war in Iraq and on the Spanish Civil War (figure 60). Additionally, the table and chairs within the installation could be used by non-commercial groups as a meeting space (as long as it was booked in advance), hence also making the piece participatory (Whitechapel Gallery, 2010). However, most visitors engaged with it as viewers rather than participants, thus mimicking more closely than *pUN* our habitual ways of dealing with imagery related to the UN.

The range of referents alluded to in the installation and its use of multiple mediums and types of images – two- and three-dimensional, still and moving, original and appropriated – had direct consequences on the ways in which *The Nature of the Beast* addressed its visitors. In particular,

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[83]   See Dieter Roelstraete ('On the Nature of *The Nature of the Beast'*, 2010), for example.

the rolling documentaries, which illustrated the complexities of war on the ground, demanded of the viewers both a political awareness and an ethical sensibility. That is, what started as an interest in the Whitechapel Gallery's institutional history ended as a reflection on the internal functioning of another organisation, the United Nations. The installation drew one's attention to the decision making processes of the UN, its ideological and historical background, its relation to the media, and – through its references to the covering of *Guernica* on the day of Powell's speech – to the sometimes unintended consequences of its actions.

This leads me to the second point of this discussion. Understanding the experience of the individual visitor demands a detailed discussion of the way how this intervention engages with the mode of spectatorship that is demanded by the UN. My argument connects a reading of the piece through the work of Didi-Huberman, its discussion as an atlas rather than an archive, and a response to its interpretation in light of Julian Stallabrass' critique of socially engaged art practices. The following analysis adds to the discussion developed in Part Two in that it foregrounds the potential of the introduction of instability (by highlighting discontinuities between the many narratives that are associated with the same institution) to encourage a reflection on the mode of spectatorship of the UN: attention without engagement.

By placing the rhetorical uses of images for political purposes at the centre of her intervention – and hence of the engagement of the audience with it –, this artwork also exemplifies the potential of artistic practices to provide new modes of activated viewership vis-à-vis international organisations and their visual modes of presentation. The result is a different mode of engagement with the modes of presentation of the UN than the one that is at play in Reyes' piece.

To begin, it is helpful to recapitulate what I briefly presented in Chapter 3. Powell presented a case against Iraq based on an analysis of images and other kinds of material that has since proved to be wrong. However, the material wasn't manipulated, which complicates the traditional opposition between images as bearers of truth or as manipulated in order to serve a false narrative. In an analogous direction, despite the ubiquity of manipulated images (not to mention their frequent instrumentalisation), Georges Didi-Huberman has argued that all images

remain historically and sociologically relevant, not by pointing to a definite meaning but for the ways in which they address the viewer. To understand what he means by this, let us consider Didi-Huberman's response to a discussion of the manipulative effects of media disseminated images: 'what happens is somewhat more complicated, more *dialectic* in reality. […] To stand in front of an image is both to call knowledge into question and to re-evaluate it' (Didi-Huberman et al., 2011, pp. 83–84 [original emphasis]; my own translation).

Didi-Huberman calls this capacity of images to destabilise knowledge 'appearance' or 'emergence' [*surgissement*] (Didi-Huberman et al., 2011, pp. 83–84). Additionally, he argues that the constitutive oscillation between indifference and confrontation is the main reason behind the haunting power of the visual:

> It is not me who oscillates. It is the experience of images itself that could not take place without this oscillation. It is a dialectic, successive rhythm […]. Suddenly – be it in front of *La Joconde* or in front of a detail of a televised story – something appears in front of you (Didi-Huberman in Augé, Didi-Huberman and Eco, 2011, pp. 86–87; my own translation).

That is, Didi-Huberman's argument is twofold: on the one hand, he highlights the dialectic between indifference and confrontation that characterises the viewer's experience; on the other hand, he points to the inherent margin of uncertainty within which images operate (2009, p. 139–228) while also stressing that images, despite their inherent lacunae, cannot be denied as 'instants of veracity' (2003, p. 47)[84].

When we apply this analysis to *The Nature of the Beast,* the latter appears not as reiterating the traditional and seeming opposition of truth or falsity but rather, and precisely, the oscillations and overlaps between both. To be more specific, Macuga created a network of partial overlaps between the multiple elements, which illustrate contradictory, yet equally legitimate, uses of the visual: representations of deliberation and of the horrors of war (the circular table and the

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[84]   We can here return to his discussion of the four photographs of the gas chambers in Auschwitz-Birkenau that were taken in 1944, in relation to which the author identifies a '*double regime* of all images', whereby they combine both 'truth […] and […] obscurity' (2003, p. 48 [original emphasis]).

tapestry in its background) are surrounded by reminders of the inability of the international community to avoid conflict (the rolling documentaries) as well as evidence of the complex relation between art and politics (the documents representing the contents of the Spanish pavilion in 1937) and, more generally, of the political uses of images. As a result of this, the viewer is confronted with a complex network that destabilises the traditional understanding of representation as playing a neutral role when addressing the issues of war and suffering – and fostering, hence, the potential for the appearance of the image, to use Didi-Huberman's term.

But what are the particularities of the role played by the disparity of the elements of the installation in its encouragement of a reflection on the position of spectatorship of the UN? To answer this question, it is important to briefly consider the theoretical issues associated with archival practices. In his editorial introduction to *The Archive* (2006), art historian Charles Merewether notes that although 'archival practices originated within state institutions, their examination and contestation by artists have focused on their potential to fragment and destabilise […] history as written' (Merewether, 2006, p. 10). Other artists engage instead with the fragility of the archive, as discussed by Hal Foster in 'An Archival Impulse' (2004).[85] The art historian is particularly interested in artists who consider the failure of social and political utopian projects as a point of departure from which to identify new affective relations. Although I don't see *The Nature of the Beast* as an archive (a point that I will substantiate later in this section), Macuga's work can nonetheless be seen as sharing this interest in the limits of both political and artistic utopias.

An idea that is crucial in the archive is that of the complexity of its content, which is also central in this installation. For Didi-Huberman, such complexity is particularly manifest in montage, and as I mentioned earlier in this thesis, he has discussed its hermeneutical character in relation to the work of several film-makers, including Jean-Luc Godard and Harun Farocki (see 2003, pp. 151-187; 2011, pp. 68-195; 2012, pp. 45–56). With regard to Pasolini, for example, Didi-Huberman argues that montage allows the director to establish 'conflicts, fractures, passages' between different elements and 'expressive dimensions' (Didi-Huberman, 2003). This idea

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[85]   The art historian discusses changes to those archival practices in the West from 1850 to 1950 and examines the role of museums and other art institutions in the co-production of a 'memory-structure' characterised by a 'dialectic of seeing'.

illuminates the fact that the elements that compose *The Nature of the Beast* relate to each other by means of conflicts, hence making visible the existence of contradictions in the multiple dimensions of the UN.

To be more specific, by combining images that represent partly overlapping, partly conflicting viewpoints and understandings of the UN, the installation can be seen as highlighting the inconsistencies between the UN's mission, its modus operandi, and some of the consequences of its action. This clearly places the installation in opposition to the broad rhetorical effect of the modes of presentation of the UN that I identified in Part Two of the thesis, that is, their contribution to sustaining the idea that the organisation is relevant (which they do by means of a criss-cross of rhetorical aspirations, which they perform).

Indeed, as I argued in Part One, although montage is a technique usually associated with time-based visual work, its relevance can be extended beyond this original framework – a possibility highlighted by Didi-Huberman's recent interest in the work of Aby Warburg (2002 and 2010a). Besides creating a unique library, Warburg also conceived the unfinished *Mnemosyne Atlas*, composed of circa one thousand pictures, flexibly organised on several large-scale plates, which aimed at demonstrating the influence of antiquity in later imagery, from the Renaissance to the early twentieth century. Didi-Huberman argues that this spatial arrangement is also a work of montage as it reveals 'the conflicts, the paradoxes, the reciprocal shocks from which all history is made […]. Things only appear by taking a position and they only reveal themselves after being disassembled' (2010b, p. 129–131; my own translation).

I would agree with Didi-Huberman that the process of inter-imaging can indeed be understood as structurally similar to cinematic montage. To return to my own chosen example, Macuga's decision to relocate and recombine the visual materials that constituted *The Nature of the Beast* clarified their different positions in terms of their conflicting roles in the construction and the dismantling of political narratives. Additionally, by selecting Powell's narrative as one among the many that composed the installation, Macuga's intervention dissected the seemingly unquestionable authority that grounded his presentation. In this context, it exemplifies how it is precisely the intermediate position of the art world – its partial independence from other social

fields, evident in art's capacity to select and recombine its reference points, as argued by Rancière (2000, see above) – that underwrites art's capacity to be critically inquisitive.

Nonetheless, it would be wrong to suggest that *The Nature of the Beast* offers a structured narrative to its viewer. Instead, returning to Didi-Huberman's vocabulary, it can be better grasped as an 'atlas' – a notion that, as I mentioned earlier, the author has examined in the Warburg-inspired exhibition which he curated in 2010a (*Atlas – How to Carry the World on One's Back?*). While the term originally referred to a collection of maps, in the eighteenth century it began to be used to refer to collections of images in disciplines such as medicine and astronomy – the term's association with exhaustive comprehensiveness making it a suitable part of the emerging lexicon of scientific objectivity (Daston and Galison, *Objectivity*, 2010, p. 27–34). Didi-Huberman expands the notion of the atlas to suggest that it has been used in the past and is still used today as a methodological tool by writers (Arthur Rimbaud and Jorge Luis Borges), artists (Marcel Broodthaers, Sol Le Witt), filmmakers (Harun Farocki) as well as art historians and theorists (Guy Debord, Aby Warburg, Walter Benjamin) (Didi-Huberman, 2010a). His argument is that the atlas can also be understood as a form of montage: it assembles disparate materials, reveals affinities and points to heuristic gaps without aiming at completeness.

By proposing that Macuga's installation gains from being understood in terms of an atlas, I am following Didi-Huberman in arguing that its intentions should be distinguished from those of an archive, which is traditionally conceived as aiming to provide an ordered and all-encompassing categorisation. Further, I am invoking the heuristic potential of the atlas as a a visual tool, understood in Warburgian terms: 'the atlas offers us *panoramic tables* where the archive forces us first of all to get lost among the *boxes*' (2010a, p. 187 [original emphasis]).

As an atlas, the decision to foreground the uncertainty of historical narration, if not of mediation itself, becomes productive – an idea that can be understood by turning briefly to the work of Marie-José Mondzain. Following philosopher and political theorist Hannah Arendt, Mondzain comments in *Homo Spectator* (2007) on the shared etymology of 'author' and 'authority' to assert that the work of artists and cinema directors articulates the difference between authority

and power (2007, p. 247–270). Indeed, according to Arendt, authority is a specific source of power, representing that which is vested in offices, for example. Against the political instrumentalisation of the visual as a form of social control, the creations of image makers make it possible to criticise and re-imagine the present, thereby stressing, Mondzain writes, the spectator's agency as an historical actor. This conclusion joins the final thoughts of Hal Foster in the essay 'Archival Impulse' (2004), who writes that the 'move to turn "excavation sites" into "construction sites"[…] suggests a shift away from a melancholic culture that views the historical as little more than the traumatic' (2004, p. 22).

Key in this regard is the centrality of the combination of, on the one hand, the reproduction of the Security Council table (which suggests the potential of participation, i.e. of the appropriation of the installation by the visitor) and, on the other, the *Guernica* tapestry. This structures the installation around a clear tension: that between the inaugural promise of the UN (to avoid the horrors of the Second World War) and its repeated failure to prevent war and genocide. This has two consequences. First, in an analogous manner to *pUN*, Macuga's intervention highlights the existence of a gap between those who speak for the UN and participate in its fora and those whom the UN represents (the global population) – and hence the hiatus between the rhetoric and the mission of the UN on the one hand, and its action and structure on the other hand. In doing so, the intervention also foregrounds the institutional arrangements of the UN, i.e. its lack of openness toward forms of democratic participation.

Crucially, however, this is more likely to become apparent if one engages with the installation not as a viewer but as a participant that sits at the table. This stresses the continuum that characterises the potential transition from an individual but partly limited experience of The *Nature of the Beast* to the collective appropriation of the installation and, hence, between the activation of the individual viewer and the social dimension of participation (although the literature on this topic often sees them as opposed or incompatible – see Bishop, 2005 and 2006). That said, it would be wrong to evaluate Macuga's intervention as fundamentally participatory – a rejection that amplifies its strength. Indeed, although the intervention is structured around the possibility of its appropriation through the use of the Security Council

table, that can only happen in the name of a group and if booked in advance. Consequently, it has a *potentially* participatory dimension, which it suggests but does not demand nor require.

Art historian Julian Stallabrass would probably respond to my analysis by stating that it is overly optimistic to consider that an installation can 'catalyze emancipatory insights' (2004, p. 69 [original emphasis]) that are productive of knowledge. Additionally, he would be likely to add a comment similar to the following statement (which he wrote in relation to dialogical practices such as those discussed by Grant Kester in C*onversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*, 2004):

> in these temporary utopian bubbles, no substantial politics can be arrived at, not least because even among those who do attend, real differences and conflicts of interest are temporarily denied or forgotten. A merely gestural politics is the likely result (Stallabrass, 2006, p. 123).

It is true that *The Nature of the Beast* mostly presupposes an individual viewer and that the groups who meet within it preexist it (i.e. it doesn't encourage political exchanges between individuals with different identities and political stances). However, the installation can nonetheless escape this critique. First, I must stress that Didi-Huberman does not see images as being able to *produce* completely new knowledge – rather, they make visible existing but not yet acknowledged trends and discontinuities. This leads me to the second effect of the centrality of the tension between the *Guernica* tapestry and the Security Council table. *The Nature of the Beast* suggests that the UN's failure to fulfil its mission cannot be overcome by replacing those who speak for it or sit at the Security Council's table. Rather, doing so requires transforming the criteria according to which those individuals are selected. This points to the limits of the piece (and, crucially, of the art world) to achieve what it implies: the possibility of organised action demanding institutional reform of the UN.

This is why, although I agree with Stallabrass regarding the need to avoid forms of 'gestural politics' (2006, p. 123), I do not think that this criticism applies to this installation. While it is true that only preexisting working groups fully participated in the installation by appropriating

the reproduction of the Security Council table, one must not forget a key element of Macuga's installation. As I stressed earlier, *The Nature of The Beast* is not primarily a participatory piece – rather, it is the *suggestion* of such appropriation and participation that lies at its core. Paradoxically, its own impotence (i.e. its inability to effect institutional change in the UN) is precisely what allows the installation to avoid failure as a political intervention. Although it suggests the transition from the realm of individual spectatorship of the UN to that of collective action with political and institutional impact, the installation acknowledges that such action can only happen when the visitor leaves the museum. By implicitly acknowledging the limits of the art world, *The Nature of the Beast* stresses the autonomy and the power of the visitor to achieve, as a citizen, what the art world can only suggest or reflect upon.

c) Foregrounding the Instability Within

This leads me to the final section of this chapter, in which I briefly discuss the commonalities between the two artworks. My argument in this section is organised into two steps: first, I return to the discussion of the public; second, I argue that the artworks avoid conflating dialogue and equality; third, I discuss the artists' decision to foreground the complexity of mediation.

To begin, both artworks reveal the impotence of the artistic realm – the latter can criticise the political sphere (here understood in a strict sense) but it cannot enact such ideas. This said, it is crucial to make them. This becomes clear when we return to Livingstone's argument (2005), which I discussed in Chapter Three. In 'On the relation between audiences and publics' (2005), the media scholar argues that 'we need an account of the formation of public opinion and of citizens – early expressions of interest, exploration of experience, tentative trying out of viewpoints' (Livingstone, 2005, p. 29). She suggests developing such an account by focusing on the realm of the civic, which rejects a normative understanding of the public sphere. Crucially in the context of my analysis, Livingstone understands the civic as a process that is required by political behaviour without, however, necessarily leading to the latter. This is why the civic demands an expanded understanding of citizenship – one that includes those moments in which one is confused and unsure of where one stands on specific political issues, i.e. 'a domain of

pre-political consideration, of unease with states of being, rather than as a monument to specific rights, duties or identities' (Hermes and Stello, 2000, p. 219 cit in Livingstone, 2005, p. 35).

I read Livingstone's understanding of the civic as being aligned with Rice's reconsideration of rhetoric as a fluid network. As the latter writes, 'the rhetorical situation too often imagines an audience as a "conglomeration of subjects whose identity is fixed prior to the rhetorical event itself"' (2005, p. 21). Rather, she proposes a redefinition of the notion of public as 'an ongoing space of encounter for discourse […], a context of interaction' (2005, p. 62). I see both *pUN* and *The Nature of the Beast* as exemplifying the potential of art practices to embody such spaces of civic interaction and pre-political encounters.

In doing so – and this leads me to the second point in this section – the interventions also avoid the erroneous conflation of dialogue and equality that Bishop identifies at being at play, for example, in the work of Rirkrit Tiravanija, in which 'relations of conflict are erased rather than sustained' (2005, p. 119). On the contrary, pUN and *The Nature of the Beast* appropriate and displace the rhetoric and the modes of self-presentation of the UN in a way that embodies the internal disjunctions and exclusions of both the UN and its modes of presentation. This is particularly evident in the case of *pUN*, which suggests the limited enactment of the Habermasian discourse theory of deliberative democracy (1984, 1992; mentioned in Chapter 3) within the UN's General Assembly. Additionally, *pUN* stresses the difference between the People (referring to the category through which one becomes a citizen and acquires rights) on the one hand, and the more mobile experience of western populations (and hence viewers – which resonates with Livingston's discussion of the public in Chapter 3) on the other. To give an example, the participants in *pUN*'s performance live in New York, but they don't necessarily share a history or political identity – rather, their city is what connects them.

This is why I see *pUN* as exemplifying the two ways how, according to Grant Kester, dialogical art practices are able to '[retain the] power of aesthetic dialogue without recourse to a universalising philosophical framework' (2004, p. 14) such as that of Habermas. On the one hand, Kester writes, they reject claims of universality. That is, such practices are

based on the generation of a local consensual knowledge that is only provisionally binding […]. It is possible to engage in communicative interaction across boundaries of difference without the legitimating framework of a universal discursive system because the necessary framework is established through the interaction itself (Kester, 2004, p. 112).

Second, the art historian writes, dialogical practices assume that 'subjectivity is formed *through* discourse and intersubjective exchange itself. Discourse […] is itself intended to model subjectivity' (Kester, 2004, p. 112). This idea – that is, of the modelling of subjectivity as key in avoiding the assumption and the reinforcement of preexisting identities – leads me to the third and final point of this section: the centrality of mediation in the two interventions. To be specific, I see *pUN* and *The Nature of the Beast* as – through their inhabitation of the values, the complexity, and the rhetoric of the UN – modelling the spectatorship that the organisation's modes of presentation demand.

It is helpful to briefly return to Derrida to clarify this movement. As I discussed in Parts One and Two, Derrida argues that both representation and meaning are made possible by – and emerge through – *différance*, a process of continuous iteration that reinscribes and alters the original as trace. Specifically, in 'The Parergon' (1978), the philosopher engages with a painting by Van Gogh, questioning the assumption developed by Kant in *Critique of Judgment* (1790) regarding the existence of an *a priori* essence of beauty. Particularly important is Derrida's citation of a footnote in the third *Critique* – in which Kant defines the 'parerga' as that which lies outside the artistic work. While Kant defines it as an 'ornament', i.e. as a supplement to the 'ergon' (the work) (Kant, 1987, p. 226), Derrida discusses the term as a 'frame' or 'edge' (Derrida, 1978), i.e. as a supplement that is both outside and inside the work itself. In short, Derrida concludes that there is always an excess of meaning within any representational attempt. In this view, painting (and arguably all other artistic mediums) emerge as a manifestation of the notion of iterability or repetition with a difference.

I see the two interventions as not only appropriating such an excess, but as also doing so in a way that stresses that which the rhetoric of the UN rejects: its lack of internal coherence, its

exclusions, the tension between its cosmopolitan aspirations and the centrality of the nation state within it. To put it briefly, the UN's edge (to use Derrida's term) – is, in fact, internal to the organisation. This is why it is so significant that *pUN* doesn't reject the centrality of the nation state within the UN's modus operandi – rather, it foregrounds it as a process of exclusion. By opposing the rhetorical argument that states that the UN is coherent (made by its modes of presentation, as I argued in Part Two), Macuga's piece also shares such an anti-exclusionary gesture.

That is, it is precisely because they place at their centre the instability of the modes of self-presentation of the UN that the artworks are able to suggest a conversation regarding the mission and the modus operandi of the UN. Specifically, the two interventions do more than simply manifesting the complexity of the rhetoric of the UN, which they appropriate or to which they refer – rather, they inhabit it. The artworks can thus be seen as illustrating the movement that is described by Georges Didi-Huberman in 'Returning an image' (2012), in which he reminds us of the Greek origins of the word image as a form of restitution.

> In its ancient meaning […] the *imago* […] poses the question of its *taking* and that of its *restitution*. The plaster 'takes' a mold from the face of the dead […] as the object of the *private body* […] given back to the sphere of *public law* […]. One […] must go and *take* from the institutions what they do not want to show […] in order to *restore* them […] to the community of citizens (2012, pp. 73–75 [original emphasis]).

Images – as Butler argues in *Frames of War* (which I mentioned in Chapters 1 and 3), constrain our forms of perception of the world (2009). By inhabiting the rhetoric of the UN, Reyes and Macuga highlight the potentially dialectical character of mediation that is identified by Silverstone (2002; see Chapter 1) and hence foreground possible forms of – not emancipated, but, rather – *activated* viewership vis-à-vis the UN.

Conclusion

This thesis aimed to explore the modes of presentation of the United Nations, understood as a visual network, while also contributing to strengthening the relation between ongoing discussions in visual culture and in rhetoric. Specifically, I aimed to examine to what extent such modes of self-presentation allow the UN to navigate some of its key institutional tensions. However, and albeit secondarily, my analysis also paid attention to the specific forms of viewership that are demanded by those images.

a) Research Questions

The existing literature on this topic is not only sparse but also mostly organised according to disciplinary distinctions. Opposing such a restricted scope, the thesis sought interdisciplinary answers to two questions, drawing on and combining, in particular, sources from the fields of visual cultures, rhetoric and UN studies but also image studies, political theory and international relations.

- Main question: What are the central characteristics of the modes of visual presentation of the UN?
- Secondary question: What do these modes of visual presentation reveal with regard to the spectatorship of the UN?

I began by presenting in Part One ('Theories of the Image and of Spectating') the central conceptual resources and discussions framing my analysis of the visual material in the context of an internally divided UN (Weiss et al., 2010), as well as the structure that subsequently organised their analysis. Following Alan Finlayson (2007), I decided to focus on the rhetorical arguments made by the material and to structure my analysis according to James Martin's (2015b) distinction between context, argument and effect. However, rather than aligning myself with a merely situational understand of rhetoric (which would translate, in this case, to the idea that its context, i.e. an internally divided UN, would mostly or fully explain the rhetorical effects of its modes of presentation) or with one in which the rhetors (or, as is the case, the modes of presentation of the UN) are mostly responsible for the rhetorical effects of a given

situation, I contributed to the development of a Derridean understanding of rhetoric (based on Biesecker, 1989), which allowed me to focus on the interaction between the institutional context on the one hand and the specific modes of presentation on the other. The idea of performativity was key in this regard. That is, although Finlayson and Martin are also interested in the creative aspects of rhetoric, they do not foreground the role of the performative as clearly as I do.

Specifically, I discussed in Part Two ('The United Nations as a Visual Entity') the origins (and, when applicable, the evolution) as well as the uses of the selected modes of presentation of the UN, and their rhetorical arguments (based on the identification of their present and suggested elements, inspired by Sonja Foss, 2004) and effects. My analysis of the material was strongly influenced by W. J. T. Mitchell (2005 and 2007, for example) and, in the case of the visual network that it forms, by George Didi-Huberman (2010a, for example). While Part Two argued that the visual material contributes, through partially overlapping forms of visual performance, to legitimise the existence of the UN despite its inner divisions and ongoing failures, Part Three ('Art Practices and the UN') sought to begin a reflection on the ways how the appropriation of those modes of presentation might foreground such inner divisions. Additionally, although the two art installations suggested the possibility of a more active involvement of the viewers with the UN, they also highlighted the limited institutional possibilities for engagement that are indeed available to them and the limits of the art world in this regard.

b) Main Findings

b.1. Chapter 2: The UN Flag – Performing the Space and the Time of the UN

- Arguments: The colours of the emblem/flag can be seen as representing purity/sacrifice and value in a universal manner. The symbolism of olive tree branches, however, is more geographically specific to the West. That is, the emblem/flag illustrates some of the central issues for which the UN is often criticised, such as the disproportionate American influence within the organisation. Additionally, a close engagement with the emblem/flag

makes evident the double meaning that it contains: a sense of both protection and military risk.

- As for its use on the ground, supranational, international and national iconography coexist in the modes of self-presentation of these military forces. Nonetheless, the blue helmet is more easily perceptible than the national emblems, which suggests the presence of a hierarchical relation between the international/supranational and national iconographies an orders.

- Regarding its use in public addresses, and starting with those within the UN's fora, the inclusion of the emblem has the effect of incorporating the contents of the address within the scope of the UN. This has a significant consequence: visually, the UN emerges as the benchmark against which national representatives or individual speakers are evaluated, i.e. the supranational/international order is naturalised. Additionally, the presence of the flag behind the speaker establishes a framework that not only explains the situation to the viewer (the representative of one of the countries present at the UN hence speaks *for* the organisation) but also performs the international, universal claims of the UN (speaking *as* the UN). However, the UN emblem/flag doesn't provide an overarching narrative that would frame the interpretation of the relation between the UN and the nation states as stable. Rather, this relation emerges as in flux.

- Effects: The rhetorical arguments of the emblem/flag highlight the fluidity of the relations between national and supranational sovereignty (as discussed by Slaughter, 2005, Raustiala, 2003, Archibugi and Held, 1995 and others), which contributes to overcoming an understanding of the two orders as in a zero-sum competition. That is, the emblem/flag legitimises an understanding of the international order as a site of decision-making

that requires the partial relinquishing of national control, and hence as performing the space of the UN.

- Additionally, I identify a second rhetorical effect of the emblem/flag and its uses. Specifically, I connect Finlayson analysis of the rhetorical organisation of ideas (2007), with Martin's identification of the rhetorical consequences of affect (2015b) and his interest in rhetoric as a process that discards incoherence (Martin, 2008). This leads me to argue that the central tension that is at play within the emblem/flag of the UN (and the ambivalent affective dimension that it reveals) reiterates an aspiration for connectedness and, in doing so, performs the aporetic temporality of the UN.

b.2. Chapter 3: The Publicness of the General Assembly and the Security Council – Performing Inclusion

- Arguments: I organised my discoveries of the rhetorical arguments of this mode of presentation into two groups. The first reiterates the rhetorical effect that I identified in Chapter 2, i.e. it conveys the relation between national sovereignty and the international order as fluid. For example, the official flag protocol of the UN headquarters negotiates the relation between national sovereignty and the international order, although it recognises them as independent; additionally, although the Assembly's action as a platform for global governance remains limited by the centrality of the nation states within its modus operandi, its blue chairs suggest unity and a shared commitment to enacting the vision of the UN.

- My analysis also identified a different set of rhetorical arguments. Namely, the tension between the limited number of members of the Security Council and the powers of this organ is visually solved by the circular shape of the table, suggesting, inclusivity and deliberation and that its members focus on the international order; additionally, the

openness of the circle suggests that the Security Council is open not only to those outside of it but also to institutional change; finally, the pages of the UN website that are dedicated to the General Assembly and the Security Council suggest that the UN belongs to the viewer as much as to those who work in it or speak in its name. These rhetorical arguments coalesce around the ideas of openness and inclusion.

- Effect: I analyse the performance of the inclusion of the viewers by this mode of presentation in three main moments: first, I relate an understanding of the UN's branded space to discussions around the frame; second, I consider the publicness of the UN headquarters and the two organs according to the idea of media rituals and their legitimising and integrative consequences; third, I relate the previous discussion to an expanded understanding of rhetoric. Specifically, I combine Couldry's argument regarding the contribution of media practices to validating a coherent narrative about reality (2003) with Rai's (2015) conflictual understanding of political rituals and Rice's view of rhetoric as fluid and networked (2005). This leads me to argue that this mode of presentation of the UN contributes to integrating its viewers into a public, which questions the centrality of the nation state in arranging the affinities of such viewers. In other words, the publicness of the UN contributes to the enactment (or, in other words, the performance) of the idea of a shared international community among the viewers of the UN.

- Colin Powell's Presentation – Effect: Including the viewer: Powell's presentation (in its attempt to legitimise a call to war from within the non-elected Security Council and to do so through the language of objectivity) illustrates the complexity of the position of the viewer of the meetings that take place at the Security Council and the General Assembly. Although the viewers are given some of the evidence based on which the members of the organisation make their decisions, this process is limited.

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b.3. Chapter 4: The Goodwill Ambassador as a Complex Mediator – Performing Proximity

- Arguments: Again, I organised my discoveries into two groups. The first reiterates the rhetorical effects that I identified in Chapters 2 and 3, i.e. the aspiration for connectedness and the performance of inclusion. Namely, the images suggest a portrait of an encounter between individuals and Jolie is often photographed in a circle structure, which suggests an egalitarian conversation.

- At the same time, however, there is a set of rhetorical arguments that is specific to this figure, through which she emerges as the facilitator of a network of encounters. Namely, although some photographs direct the gaze of the viewer toward the actress, others suggest the institutional background that frames her action, and she is often photographed carrying a notebook, which suggests that her role is that of a witness. Crucially, these rhetorical arguments are simultaneous to those that suggest proximity.

- Effect: I structure the GA's performance of a network of proximity into four moments. First, I relate the idea of proximity with discussions around the notion of citizenship and propose that the former negotiates tensions in the UN's position vis-à-vis the latter. Second, I relate this discussion to that of the role of the UN in development, which suggests that the GA can be interpreted as an indirect form of support toward a divided UN. Third, I expand discussions of witnessing as multilayered and a site of conflict (Peters, 2001; Ashuri and Pinchevski, 2009) to consider the networked way in which the figure of the GA functions as a multifocal mediator, which I do by engaging in a discussion with Chouliaraki (2011). Specifically, while she sees proximity and distance as exclusive, my material reveals, yet again, that they are organised in an overlapping form

of relation – i.e. as aporetic. Fourth and finally, I return to my previous discussion of rhetoric and affect and, baed on Frosh (2011), argue that the GA contributes to the development of long-term relations between the viewers and those with whom the UN works on the ground.

b.4. Chapter 5: Modes of Approximation – Enacting Politics?

- Reyes's *pUN* reflects on the tension between the rhetoric of deliberation and universality of the UN and its modus operandi. For example, the performance implicitly refers to the structure of the General Assembly as its main inspiration. However, it also highlights the limits of the rhetorical claims of the UN and the habitual position of the viewer vis-à-vis the organisation, i.e. her lack of involvement. This is possible because, rather than them being *about* the UN, the activities that compose the performance are joined by their echoing of the UN's mission and rhetoric. That is, rather than criticising the UN from an external position, *pUN* inhabits its contradictory symbols and rhetoric and uses them as its subject, hence suggesting without prescribing the possibility of institutional reform.

- Macuga's installation foregrounds the potential of the introduction of instability to encourage a reflection on the mode of spectatorship of the UN. By combining images that represent partly overlapping, partly conflicting viewpoints and understandings of the UN, the installation highlights the inconsistencies between the organisation's mission, modus operandi, and consequences. Key in this regard is the centrality of the combination of the reproduction of the Security Council table and the *Guernica* tapestry. This structures the installation around the tension between the inaugural promise of the UN and its repeated failure to prevent war and genocide. Additionally, *The Nature of the Beast* also suggests that overcoming the UN's failure to fulfil its mission requires more than changing those who sit at the Security Council table. This

points to the limits of the installation (and, crucially, of the art world) to achieve what it implies: the possibility of organised action demanding institutional reform of the UN.

- The final section argues that *pUN* and *The Nature of the Beast* not only appropriate but also inhabit the visual rhetoric of the UN. This stresses its lack of internal coherence and its exclusions, allowing them to foreground possible modes of *activated* viewership vis-à-vis the UN.

c) Implications

Together, these findings make apparent my broader contributions to ongoing discussions in UN studies and visual rhetoric and secondarily, in spectating. For example, the thesis demonstrated that the images with which the UN presents itself perform the space, time and values of the UN, as well as the inclusion of its viewers and a sense of proximity to those that it serves on the ground. However, this argument is only possible – and can only be fully understood – in light of a set of decisions.

To begin, my decision to combine an attention to visual rhetoric with the Finlaysonian understanding of rhetorical analysis has confirmed the relevance of a Derridean approach to rhetoric (Biesecker, 1989). In this view, visual rhetoric is both cause and consequence; an agent and an actor. To give an example, the analysis of the GA highlighted the relevance of an approach to rhetoric that considers not only its context (the rhetorical situation, i.e. the need to disseminate the work of the UNHCR) or the rhetor (that is, the specific rhetorical elements deployed by Jolie as GA, such as her use of a notepad) but also the interrelation between these two dimensions. Doing so revealed that the GA functions not as a mediator but as a witness that engages in a complex, multifaceted form of address.

Additionally, my analysis demonstrates that the modes of presentations of the UN navigate a set of tensions that are inherent to the international organisation (such as that between its member states and the international/supranational order of the UN) in a way that transforms them (i.e.

such modes of presentation) into a form of justification for the continued existence of the organisation. That is, rather than stressing what could be seen as the failure of the organisation to solve them, these tensions highlight the possibility of their potential future realisation, which subsequently reinforces the legitimacy of the organisation. To return to my engagement with rhetorical theory, the visual modes of presentation of the UN function within a specific context (an existing institutional, legal and political framework) but they also function as agents. That is, they reflect the pertinence of the opposing findings of both Bitzer (1968) and Vatz (1973), which are made compatible in Biesecker's account (1989). Therefore, my findings stress the need to develop approaches that reflect the expansion of rhetorical analysis to the visual realm. More work in this direction, both theoretical and empirical, is needed.

The thesis also demonstrated that the modes of presentation function as an active network that is sustained in time. Its engagement with discussions of rhetoric as networked and in circulation (Rice, 2005) and of mediation was crucial in this regard. Mediation emerged as a site of both representation and performance (Debrix and Weber, 2003, but also Silverstone, 2003, 2005), highlighting the active role of the visual material in sustaining the international space, the time and the values of the UN. At the same time, mediation was also discussed as contributing to social integration (Holmes, 2005 and Couldry, 2003). Again, this suggests the need for more work that identifies and analyses the overlap between issues of mediation, discussions of spectatorship and ongoing debates around citizenship. It is also in this context that the relation between my findings and those of Gries around viral circulation (2015) could be further discussed.

My analysis also uncovered the role of the modes of presentation of the UN in sustaining an overlapping network of affective relations. Indeed, the emblem/flag not only reflects the coexistence of hope and frustration towards the UN but also reiterates the organisation's aspiration for connectedness, while the dissemination of the UN's inner work functions as a naturalising frame of perception that also integrates distant viewers into an emerging, non-state based form of community. Additionally, the GA emerged as a rhetorical catalyst for a network of affective encounters, in which proximity and distance overlap. Finally, through the inter-image, the rhetoric of the UN's modes of presentation – including its affective dimension –

emerges as distributed and fluid (Rice, 2005), which downplays the internal conflicts within the UN and the gap between its promises and failures. That is, the political argument regarding the relevance of the UN is made not only discoursively but also visually, not only rationally but also affectively.

This leads me to the two art installations, which examined the visual rhetoric of the UN and the viewing position that it demands. Although both *pUN* and *The Nature of the Beast* aimed to interrupt the model of involvement without interference of the viewers on which the success of the modes of presentation of the UN depends, their examination made evident the inability of the two interventions to deliver the logical consequence of what they suggest: institutional reform of the UN. This analysis joins ongoing discussions regarding the overlaps and disjunctions between art and politics.

d) Recommendations

These discoveries have clear implications. First, my findings reinforce the importance of interdisciplinary work that will continue to strengthen the connections between the disciplines of visual culture and rhetoric. Second, my work suggests an area for continuing scholarly research: revisiting the visual forms of presentation of international organisations while shifting the focus from their intentions as modes of communication and toward their consequences as modes of presentation. This is associated with, third, the need to consider the relations between issues of and around mediation, spectatorship and citizenship. Fourth, my discoveries suggest that the use of different methods to analyse my visual material (such as structured interviews with viewers from different cultural contexts) or the analysis of an alternative data set (such as the modes of presentation of NATO or of the European Union) may add further substance to my conclusions. Fifth, my work suggests interviewing the participants in the meetings of the Security Council and the General Assembly in order to understand to what extent their behaviour is (or has been) influenced by the live diffusion and recording of said meetings. Sixth, the thesis points to the need for further work aimed at understanding how contemporary artworks engaged with international organisations problematise the overlaps and cleavages between the positions of viewership, spectatorship and citizenship.

<u>e) Limitations</u>

As a direct consequence of my methodology, the thesis encountered a number of limitations, which must be acknowledged. The first potential criticism concerns the data that I collected. My thesis could be criticised for only focusing on a few examples of visual presentation rather than on the full range of ways in which the UN presents itself. This idea is connected to a second potential criticism, which would see my engagement with the high number of theoretical resources mentioned throughout the thesis as overly general.

To respond to these potential criticisms, I want to stress that the thesis is testament to the negotiation between, on the one hand, the elusiveness and the complexity of the UN, the multiple dimensions that the material embodies or crosses through, and, on the other hand, the attempt to answer my research questions as thoroughly as possible within the constraints of this project. My decision to focus on only some examples of the modes of self-presentation of the UN as well as on their artistic appropriations aims precisely to bridge the gap between generality and complexity.

<u>f) Final Notes</u>

I believe that the limits of my research are precisely what make its strengths possible. How can one approach the modes of presentation of an organisation as elusive as the UN other than selectively? How can one attempt to understand the ways in which different, interrelated visual modalities work if not by foregrounding their complexity? These questions highlight a central principle reiterated by my work: I consider it impossible to identify an overarching system that would fully explain the ways in which images (and spectatorship) function. Images are multivalent and unruly. If we want to fully understand their power, we must allow ourselves to be seduced – whilst nonetheless remaining alert to their powers and performances.

Appendix I: Glossary and Acronyms

Ambassador

Ambassadors are the highest ranking diplomats. They represent a nation to an international government, sovereign or organisation and have the responsibility to negotiate international issues such as peace-making, trade, war, environmental issues and human rights. Their role is also to arbitrate and negotiate in international disputes. Since the 1970s, this role has also been undertaken unofficially, i.e. by private individuals, in what is called 'Track Two' diplomacy.

Charter

The Charter of the United Nations is its foundational treaty. It was signed on 26 June 1945 in San Francisco, United States, and has been juridically valid since 24 October 1945. The Charter is composed of an Introduction, a preamble and 19 Chapters, each of them constituted by several Articles.

DPI

United Nations Department of Public Information

Extraterritoriality

Extraterritoriality (or extra-territorial exercise of jurisdiction) differs from territorial jurisdiction (according to which the crimes that are committed on a specific territory are judged under that state's criminal law). Extraterritoriality is an exemption to the general territorial principle. In this sense, extraterritorial jurisdiction is an exceptional circumstance in which one State enforces its jurisdiction inside the territory of another State – instances include military bases of foreign countries and offices of the United Nations; offices of foreign heads of state, ambassadors and other diplomatic agents; ships in foreign waters, troops in passage, passengers on war vessels and individuals on mission premises. In some cases, extraterritorial jurisdiction also applies to the ability of a state to try its nationals for crimes that are committed abroad, under the national principle. Finally, it also applies in specific circumstances to the exercise of

jurisdiction over acts committed by foreign nationals in foreign territory when such acts are interpreted as affecting the fundamental interest of a state.

<u>**GA**</u>

Goodwill Ambassador

<u>**G**eneral Assembly</u>

The General Assembly is one of the five bodies of the UN and is composed of one representative from each of the 193 Members of the UN, as well as subsidiary organs and committees and commissions, boards, council panels and working groups. Its composition, functions, powers and procedures are detailed in Chapter IV of the UN Charter. This body meets regularly from September to December of each year, as well as outside of this period for emergency special sessions or to deal with unresolved issues. It is a deliberative organ with the function of overseeing the budget of the United Nations, of annually appointing five of the ten non-permanent members of the Security Council. It also collects reports from other parts of the UN and make recommendations in the form of Resolutions. It elects the members of the UN Economic and Social Council, the UN Industrial Development Organisation, and some members of the UN Trusteeship Council. It appoints the Secretary-General of the UN (following the recommendation of the Security Council) and elects Judges for the International Court of Justice (ICJ). However, its resolutions are merely recommendations, and are not binding. Only if the Security Council fails to fulfil its function to maintain international peace and security as a consequence of disagreements between its members, can the General Assembly intervene by means of an emergency special session.

<u>**I**ntergovernmental</u>

Intergovernmental agreements are forms of cooperation between multiple governments that are based on consent and on the desire to cooperate. This mode of decision making is especially relevant among the members of the European Union, and is used in cases where a form of cooperation that is based on jurisdiction is not deemed necessary or is hard to establish for political reasons (such as issues related to police cooperation and legal cooperation concerning criminal cases).

International Organisations

International organisations are based on the establishment of accords of cooperation between states. These agreements do not effect national sovereignty.

International Court of Justice (ICJ)

The ICJ is the main judicial organ of the UN and is based in The Hague, Netherlands. It was established in 1945 by the UN Charter. Its functions include settling disputes submitted to it by the UN member states and advising on questions submitted to it by the UN General Assembly and other international organs and agencies. According to article 93 of the UN Charter, new UN members are automatically parties to the ICJ statute. However, the validity of its jurisdiction is dependent on consent and on a case-by-case basis. Moreover, the enforcement of its decisions are dependent on the veto power of the permanent members of the Council.

The fifteen judges that compose the ICJ are elected by the General Assembly and the Security Council from a list of nominations made by the national groups. Four of the five permanent members of the Security Council have always had a judge among the fifteen that compose the ICJ, though this is not mandated by the statute.

International Criminal Court (ICC)

The ICC is a permanent tribunal that is legally and functionally independent from the UN. It is based in The Hague, Netherlands, but its proceedings may take place anywhere. In February 2012, 120 states were parties to the ICC. Its jurisdiction is only valid from 1 July 2002, the date on which its founding treaty, the Rome Statute of the ICC (originally signed in Rome on 17 July 1998) became valid.

Article 5 of the Rome Statute defines the ICC's jurisdiction as covering four types of crime: genocide, crime against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression. However, the ICC does not have universal jurisdiction; rather, its jurisdiction can only be exercised under the following circumstances: the accused is a national of a state party or state who has accepted the Court's jurisdiction; the crime was committed on the territory of a state party or state which has

accepted the Court's jurisdiction; if the case has been referred to the Court by the UN Security Council. The ICC is intended as a court of last resort (article 13 of the Rome Statute defines it as complementing national judicial systems), i.e. the responsibility to investigate and to punish crimes is still primarily incumbent on individual states.

League of Nations

The League of Nations was an international organisation created on 25 January 1919. It was founded as a result of the Paris Peace Conference, at which the First World War was officially terminated. It was based in Geneva, Switzerland – a neutral country during the war. The main goal of the League of Nations was to maintain world peace through the establishment of collective security, disarmament, negotiation and the settlement of international disputes. It was also responsible for setting national boundaries and resolving other territorial disputes. In the case of a dispute among its members, the League had the choice between three types of sanction: first, to call the states in dispute to discuss the matter in the League's Assembly, which had the power to set up verbal sanctions. Second, if the states in dispute failed to respect the Assembly's decision, the League had the power to introduce economic sanctions, to be organised by the League's Council. Finally, the League could introduce physical sanctions for which, however, it had no military force at its disposal.

The League had a limited number of members (58 at its apogee). The absence of the United States (which favoured unilateralism at the time), Germany (for its role in the First World War) and Russia (due to its communist regime) also weakened the League. The beginning of the Second World War made clear its failure, which then led to its replacement by the United Nations. Its last meeting was held on 12 April 1946 in Geneva and the last session of its General Assembly took place one week later.

Member State

The UN is composed of several member states (numbers vary between organs, as not all States are members of every organ). In March 2012, the General Assembly was composed of 193 member states and the Security Council had 15 Members (5 of them permanent – China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and the United States – and 10 elected by the

General Assembly for two-year terms). The Economic and Social Council has 54 members (all elected for periods of three years by the General Assembly). The Trusteeship Council was composed of the five permanent members of the Security Council until the suspension of its operations on 1 November 1994, following the independence of Palau, the last remaining UN Trust Territory – though the Council may still meet if necessary. Finally, the International Court of Justice is composed of judges, not members, who are elected by both the General Assembly and the Security Council for terms of nine years.

At the same time, the UN also has non-member states, an informal status for which there are no provisions in the UN Charter. The category originated in 1946 with the case of Switzerland, who has since become a UN Member on 10 September 2002. This status allows countries to be members of one or more specialised UN agencies and to apply for the status of Permanent Observers, which gives them free access to most meetings and relevant UN documentation. The position has been taken by Austria, Finland, Italy and Japan. The Holy See and Palestine are permanent observers at the UN headquarters and have received a standing invitation to become observers in the session and of the work of the General Assembly.

Multilateralism

Multilateralism is a term used in international relations to refer to situations in which multiple countries work together on a given issue. International, intergovernmental and supranational organisations are specific forms of multilateralism. In the discipline of political philosophy, multilateralism is opposed to the doctrine of unilateralism.

Peacekeeping

Peacekeeping operations are aimed at supporting countries in the early phase of the transition from conflict to peace, i.e. the implementation of a ceasefire or peace agreement once fighting has ended. According to the UN, these operations are guided by three principles: consent, impartiality and non-use of force except in self-defence or in defence of the mandate. In March 2012 there were 16 UN peace operations on four continents, each with different priorities: to maintain peace and security, to protect civilians, to support the organisation of

elections, to promote human rights, to assist in restoring the rule of law and to facilitate the political process. In practice, these operations also include activities related to peacebuilding.

Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding refers to the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, an intergovernmental advisory body of the UN that supports peace efforts in countries that are recently emerging from conflict. It was established by the General Assembly and the Security Council's resolution 60/180 and resolution 1645 (2005) on 20 December 2005. It aims to bring together all the actors involved in specific conflicts, both governmental and non-governmental, to organise resources and to advise on post-conflict strategies of resolution and recovery.

Peacemaking

Peacemaking measures are intended to address conflicts that are in progress. They involves diplomatic action combined with nonmilitary tools of coercion, both aimed at bringing the parties involved in a conflict to negotiation and agreement. This may include the involvement of the UN Secretary-General and of envoys, governments, groups of states and regional organisations, unofficial and non-governmental groups, as well as independent prominent personalities. The notion is also considered to include the use of military force, so long as it also aims at achieving a resolution to the conflict.

Peace Enforcement

Peace enforcement must be explicitly authorised by the Security Council. It refers to the application of coercive measures, including military force, with the goal of restoring international peace and security in the case of a breach of international peace or an act of aggression that puts international security at risk, as defined in Chapter VII of the UN Charter.

Secretariat

The Secretariat is the organ of the UN that is composed of the staff working in duty stations globally, who carry out the daily work necessary for all functions of the UN. It supports the other organs of the organisation, administers the programmes and policies upon which they decide, prepares official studies, interprets and translates documents and is responsible for the

organisation's communications. In June 2010, the Secretariat was composed of more than 44000 staff members. Its head is the Secretary-General, who is appointed by the Assembly following the recommendation of the Security Council, for renewable terms of five years.

Security Council

The Security Council is one of the main bodies of the UN. It is composed of five permanent members (China, France, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States) and ten non-permanent members, who are elected by the General Assembly for two-year terms and who are not eligible for immediate re-election. Each Council member has one vote and an affirmative vote of at least nine of the 15 members is needed to pass an action. In the case of fundamental issues, nine votes, including the five of the permanent members, are required for an action to proceed – a condition that is referred to as the 'veto' power.

According to the Charter, the Security Council's main responsibilities concern the maintenance of international peace and security. In this sense, the Council may recommend that opposing parties reach a peaceful agreement, but may also enforce preventive action, such as suspending a member state's membership at the General Assembly or expelling it from the UN. Furthermore, the Security Council has the power to establish peace enforcement operations, including the establishment of international sanctions and the authorisation of military action, enacted through the Security Council resolutions. Of all the organs of the UN, only the Council can take decisions that are enforceable under the Charter.

SPU

Strategic Planning Unit in the Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General

Supranational

Supranational institutions are based on the establishment of accords of cooperation between states that go beyond the authority or jurisdiction of national governments.

UN

The United Nations

UNDP

    United Nations Development Programme

UNEP

    United Nations Environment Programme

UNFPA

    United Nations Population Fund

UNHCR

    Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF

    United Nations Children's Fund

UNIFEM

    United Nations Development Fund for Women

Universal jurisdiction

Universal jurisdiction refers to a principle of public international law according to which states may claim jurisdiction over certain offences recognised by the community of nations as of universal concern, regardless of the nationality and country of residence of the accused and the victim, i.e. even if such individuals do not have a direct relation with the country that wishes to prosecute them. The principle is invoked for crimes categorised as heinous, including crimes against humanity, genocide and war crimes. Since its creation in 2002, the International Criminal Court (ICC) is responsible for judging such crimes.

UNODC

    United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

<u>W</u>estphalian sovereignty

The expression Westphalian sovereignty refers to the Peace of Westphalia, a series of treaties signed in 1648 in Onasbrueck and Muenster, Germany. The treaties emerged from an agreement amongst the major European forces of the time (the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand III, the Kingdoms of Spain and of France, the Swedish Empire, the Dutch Republic and sovereigns of the Free Imperial Cities of the Holy Roman Empire) to respect three principles: the principles of sovereignty of the state and the right of political self-determination; the principle of equality between states; and the principle of non-intervention by any state in the internal affairs of another state. The treaties consolidated the transition from the Middle Ages to an international order of sovereign states (even if France and Spain remained at war for the following 11 years). Recently, the idea of Westphalian sovereignty has been contravened by UN military interventions being made despite no consent being given by the targeted country (such as in Iraq, the former Yugoslavia, Kosovo, Somalia, Rwanda, Haiti, Cambodia and Liberia) and by recent developments in the framework of the European Union.

<u>WFP</u>

World Food Programme

Appendix II: Documents regarding the original proposal,changes and final resolutions pertaining to the emblem and the flag (no date).

General description	Document	Title	Details
Emblem: report on the need for an official seal and emblem	A/107 (1946)	Official seal and emblem of the United Nations	Report of the Secretary-General. 15 Oct. 1946.
Emblem: first revision of the emblem	A/C.6/75 (1946)	Proposed revision of the United Nations emblem	Drawing. 18 Nov. 1946.
Emblem: summary of the meeting of the sixth committee	A/C.6/SR.21 (1946)	Summary records of the 21st meeting: Sixth Committee, held on Wednesday, 20 Nov. 1946, Lake Success, New York.	Issued in GAOR, 1st sess., 2nd pt. Sixth Committee, Summary record of meetings, 2 Nov. to 13 Dec. 1946. p. 100.
Emblem: second revision of the emblem	A/C.6/75/ Rev.1 (1946)	Sixth Committee. Proposed United Nations emblem.	(2nd rev.) Drawing. 26 Nov. 1946.
Emblem: summary	A/C.6/SR. 25(1946)	Summary record of the 25th meeting: Sixth Committee, held on Saturday, 20 Nov. 1946, Lake Success, New York.	Issued in GAOR, 1st sess., 2nd pt. Sixth Committee, Summary record of meetings, 2 Nov. to 13 Dec. 1946. pp. 119–123.
Emblem: report of the sixth committee	A/204 (1946)	Official seal and emblem of the United Nations	Report of the Sixth Committee. 2 Dec. 1946.
Emblem: correction	A/204/ Corr. 1 (1946)	Official seal and emblem of the United Nations	Corrigendum to Report of the Sixth Committee. 4 Dec. 1946.
Emblem: drawing	A/204/ Add. 1 (1946)	Official seal and emblem of the United Nations	Annex to Report of the Sixth Committee. Drawing. 4 Dec. 1946.
Emblem: plenary meetings of the General Assembly	A/PV.50 (1946)	Official Records of the General Assembly, 1st session, 2nd part: 50th plenary meeting, 7 Dec. 1946, New York.	Issued in GAOR, 1st sess., 2nd pt. Plenary meetings of the General Assembly, Verbatim record, 23 Oct. to 16 Dec. 1946. p. 105.

General description	Document	Title	Details
Emblem: General Assembly resolution	A/RES/92(I) (1946)	Official seal and emblem of the United Nations: resolution	Adopted by the General Assembly at its 50th plenary meeting, Lake Success, New York, 7 Dec. 1946. 1p. Issued in A/64/Add.1 (Resolutions adopted by the General Assembly during the second part of its first session from 23 Oct. to 15 Dec. 1946). p. 185–186.
Flag: document describing its necessity	A/342 (1947)	A flag for the United Nations	Memorandum by the Secretary-General. 21 Aug. 1947.
Flag: proposal	A/414 (1947)	United Nations flag	Report of the Sixth Committee. 17 Oct. 1947.
Flag: records of the general assembly	A/PV.96 (1947)	Official seal and emblem of the United Nations Official Records of the General Assembly, 2nd session: 96th plenary meeting, 1947, New York.	Issued in GAOR, 2nd sess. Plenary meetings of the General Assembly, Verbatim record, 16 Sept. to 29 Nov. 1947. Vol.I, 80th to 109th Meetings, 16 Sept. to 13 Nov. pp. 338–339.
Flag: resolution	A/RES/ 167(II) (1947)	United Nations flag: resolution	Adopted by the General Assembly at its 96th plenary meeting, Lake Success, New York, 20 Oct. 1947. 1p. Issued in A/519 (GAOR, 2nd sess., Resolutions, 16 Sept. to 29 Nov. 1947). p. 91.
Flag: code and regulations	ST/SGB/ 132(1967)	The United Nations flag code and regulations	[New York] : UN, Jan. 1967.

Figure 62 – Documents regarding the original proposal, changes and final resolutions pertaining

to the emblem and the flag (no date).

Appendix III : Per Krohg's mural

Figure 63 – Detailed view of Per Krohg's mural (no date).

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