Cosmopolitanism and Hegemony

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Cosmopolitanism and Hegemony

Craig Calhoun

Discussions of global hegemony today usually and quite sensibly focus on projections of American power. The new imperialism of pre-emptive wars looms large. Even if the conception and conduct of these wars is so faulty that they do not achieve their objectives, their aim is manifest: to change political regimes and secure a world order conducive to American interests. American power is also projected in media and popular culture, in reforms and rankings of academic institutions that privilege the English language and American approaches to intellectual work, and in neoliberal economic restructuring that secures private property in forms conducive to global circulation and accumulation and thus privileges a country in which finance capital is ascendant over actual

material production. The prominence of actual American power, the prevalence of an American model, and the global reproduction of broader systems that privilege American interests all suggest that this is a valid and important critical perspective.

But there are two important limits to this critical perspective. First, it may exaggerate the extent to which American hegemony is ascendant rather than already giving way to a new multipolar structure of global power with perhaps multiple regional blocks and indeed regional hegemons. The dramatic economic growth of China now coupled with an increasing Chinese internationalism is the most significant new development. But India is rising nearly as fast and Asian integration creating a new regional structure. Russia has asserted a renewed global role, growing richer riding the wave of high energy prices, but also recognizing a long-term structural advantage as a natural supplier to a needy Europe. Europe itself is a global power if European integration proceeds (which is not a foregone conclusion) and includes capacity to conduct a common foreign policy. Iran is a potential global power, combining energy resources with possible capacity to lead at least the large *Shi'a* populations of the Islamic world. Whether Brazil will achieve its potential as a global power is unclear, but the potential is real and it already has exerted interesting counterhegemonic pressures in some global arenas, as with regard to the provision of generic and

lower-cost drugs to fight AIDS despite resistance from pharmaceutical companies claiming protection from an American-dominated intellectual property rights regime. None of these is a serious military counterweight to the United States, but a US losing relative economic and political power but retaining military might is not an entirely happy prospect. In any case, a critical theory of contemporary global hegemony needs to pay not only to the current pattern of dominance but to growing shifts in the structure of power and influence.

The second limit to discussions of hegemony focused mainly on US power is quite different but also telling. This concerns the extent to which the dominant discussions remain rooted in a traditional view of international relations. They discuss the relative power of different states, and indeed more or less national states, but not the organization of class power. We speak of American hegemony, and more generally of justice among peoples, the development or reform of the United Nations, and the importance of multilateral institutions and alliances. But we should also pay attention to the formation, expansion and transformation of a global class structure, one which in which elites are largely cosmopolitan, and participate in a legitimation of inequality even when they are not its primary agents.

Let me discuss the second a bit more before returning to the first and more directly to questions of global institutions.

Following Gramsci, discussions of hegemony within capitalist countries are largely discussions of the ways in which class power is sustained even while made less openly manifest. Institutions and cultural formations stabilize politics to the advantage of those with most power, but allow enough participation for others to minimize resentment and defection and indeed arguably to maintain vitality. They secure disproportionate benefits for dominant classes without making class rule explicit, largely by cultivating a discourse of the common good which represents this in skewed ways, for example as dependent on private property, which is in turn presented in the relatively attractive guises of small business and technological innovation. This may even extend to a kind of "repressive tolerance," in the phrase of Marcuse, Wolff, and Moore, which is liberal toward individual expression in ways that encourage consumer capitalism and minimize occasions for concerted protest.

Cosmopolitanism partakes of this insofar as it is conceived in consumer terms, an orientation towards ethnic and national diversity as so many different purchase options or tourist pleasures to be appreciated—Mexican dinner tonight and Indian tomorrow. More generally, cosmopolitanism of this sort is part of the self-understanding of elites well-adapted to and well-resourced for taking advantage of domestic diversity and global integration. It is what I have elsewhere called "the class consciousness of frequent travelers." It is a way of un-

derstanding the world available to those with business class seats, American Express cards, and passports that that easily pass the scrutiny of immigration officers. Lufthansa recognizes its most frequent travelers not just as citizens of the world but as Senators. For American Airlines they are Admirals. For Continental Airlines they are presidents. In other words their special status as rulers is recognized, very discretely, even while their sense of citizenship of the world is reinforced. This understanding exaggerates the extent to which the world is harmoniously integrated and underestimates the extent to which cosmopolitan inhabitation of this integrated world depends on economic and other privileges. Being one of the global cosmopolitans means inhabiting a particular location in the world and indeed a particular culture—the culture of those with degrees from Harvard, the LSE, and Sciences Po; those who have opinions about whether China should devalue its currency, about the importance of the International Criminal Court, and about whether Australian wines have really surpassed French; and those who complain in world weary tones of how difficult travel has become and how they really should cut back on the number of conferences they attend. In other words this cosmopolitan global class includes us. We are not its primary agents or beneficiaries—any more than national academic elites were primary agents or beneficiaries of earlier national and imperial class projects. But it is important that the cosmopolitan upper class includes

not only corporate elites and senior officials of the World Bank, IMF, and WTO. It includes also leaders of NGOs, human rights activists, and academics. It is a class of those whose particular position in the world allows them to believe they inhabit the world in its universality. They understand themselves as citizens of the world, though they usually have specific homes to which they can readily return and national citizenships that facilitate their travel. These cosmopolitans are especially apt to understand citizenship of the world as an individual ethical choice, rather than a transformation of global political economy—and this is one of the ways in which class consciousness contributes to hegemony.

Cosmopolitan elites may be drawn disproportionately from the world's richest and most powerful countries but they come from everywhere. In the Senator Lounges, Hilton Hotel bars, and indeed academic conferences, Brussels bureaucrats and Microsoft managers brush shoulders and sometimes chat with fellow citizens of the world from India, China, Brazil or Russia. They come less often from Mali, Peru, or Cambodia but at least sometimes. And contact is not limited to shoulder brushing. Trade talks and corporate deals are multinational. Managers from developing countries do rise to senior positions in global corporations and even more often in the UN, multilateral organizations, and major NGOs. Globalization is real. Cosmopolitans from the periphery can realistically aspire to inclusion in the center just as

corporations from the developing world aspire to have their shares traded in New York, London, or Frankfurt. Cosmopolitans from the rich countries learn appropriate multicultural manners in order to welcome them. This is not a bad thing. But it is a class thing, and we need to watch out for how its effects may distort our views of globalization—and of less cosmopolitan responses to it.

Cosmopolitan citizens of the world are often self-con-gratulatory, looking down on the déclassé nationalism of non-elites anxious about the implications of immigration or globalization for their own ways of life. Cosmopolitan world travelers who participate in Ulrich Beck's reflexive modernization, looking on their native cultures with at least a little distance and possibly critical self-awareness, are surprised that many poorer immigrants become more culturally conservative as a result of their version of in-habiting the globe. But of course populism, nationalism, and religious fundamentalism are all misunderstood—habitually misunderstood by many cosmopolitans—as traditional, as inheritances from older social formations, and as transitory phenomena reflecting difficulties of adjustment to globalization and more generally mod-ernization. This is a misunderstanding specifically rein-forced by their class position and culture. For of course populism, nationalism, and religious fundamentalism are all distinctively modern and produced in large part by globalization.

In any case, in considering the combination of power, and benefit, and institutional-cultural stabilization, it

makes sense to consider whether analysis of global class hegemony is not as significant as that of national or state hegemony (though of course the two and intertwined). Not least, I would suggest that unless we are somewhat more self-critical about it, the reproduction of this class hegemony many well produce a continuity in structures of global inequality and marginalization even as specifically American hegemony declines.

Let me turn now to questions about what cosmopolitans might hope for. After all, I do not bring up the class privilege and frequently incomplete self-awareness of cosmopolitans simply to debunk, but to encourage better thinking about how to pursue values I think most of us cosmopolitans share, even if we act on them rather imperfectly.

Cosmopolitan aspirations for a global ethical order are vulnerable to the Hegelian critique of promoting a "pure ought" if they do not contend with actual structures of power, politics, and participation. Moreover, a critical cosmopolitanism must take seriously the question of how either an enlarged ethical perspective or a more encompassing pursuit of political justice can grow "from below" rather than be merely imposed from above. It is not obvious that formal or procedural universalism can speak adequately to either of these concerns, however much it may contribute to utopian vision or normative ideals. And there is a risk that pursuit of universalist ambitions may divert critical theorists from adequate

engagements with concrete historical problems and possibilities. We need to watch out for thinking that advancing cosmopolitanism is an end in itself, rather than a development as readily supportive of intensified inequality as of democratization of the globe. To be blunt, we should ask when cosmopolitan thinking is part of the hegemonic project of a class rooted in the expansion of global capitalism and when it is a counterhegemonic break with that project.

Let me suggest one way in which I think this will come to a head relatively soon. Many well-intentioned cosmopolitans have been engaged neither in promoting capitalism nor pursuing power as such. They—and let me make clear that I count myself in this number, so we—have campaigned for human rights, humanitarian intervention, democratic constitutionalism, transitional justice, and other efforts to mitigate human suffering and in some cases mitigate the specific injustices and injuries produced by capitalism and state power. Many of the really good projects of recent globalization have focused on these issues. They have been in the forefront of cosmopolitan attention during the last two decades especially. They have flourished, ironically, at the same time that global neoliberalism was ascendant. And for the most part the tacit terms of their flourishing required that they would focus (a) on abuses, crises, and emergencies that could be approached without pursuing systematic challenge to the global order, and (b) that when they

were directly political they pursued democratic transitions compatible with both capitalism and continued strengthening of the global cosmopolitan class.

Part of the issue is that the recent popularity of human rights and humanitarian action has been rooted partly in the belief that these rose above the dirtier realms of politics and economics. Human rights advocacy and humanitarian action both have old roots, of course, but their recent flourishing came precisely as a variety of more directly political options seems foreclosed. During the 1960s and 70s a more straightforwardly Left politics had inspired notions of social transformation that at the very least seemed more distant by the 1980s. In particular, Third World economic development fell off the agenda for most progressive First World intellectuals. The ideas of minimizing abuses and mitigating suffering came to the forefront in this moment. Médécins sans Frontières is a clear example. It was founded largely by members of the '68 generation who became disillusioned with direct political action and sought to express moral outrage by witnessing and ministering to suffering. Eventually it split over precisely the issue of how political to be, and of course one of its key founders has recently made headlines and caused more than a little questioning by becoming Foreign Minister in France's new right-wing government (though himself a socialist, now expelled from the Socialist Party).

In any case, human rights and humanitarianism seemed—at least for a time—to be projects in which

moral commitments could be expressed directly, rather than complicated by entwinement in the compromises and complex structures of states or markets. This was partly an illusion, sometimes enabling—because it recruited large scale support—and often limiting. Let me evoke the limits very generally by reference to Africa. In most of Africa, attempting to stem human rights abuses without paying attention to the collapse of states is a pyrrhic struggle. Likewise, humanitarian interventions are occasioned often by the weakness of states and are structured almost always by the attempt to bring care to the suffering without regard to state politics. Yet solutions to the humanitarian crises—of Rwanda, Congo, or Sierra Leone or Liberia or Sudan—all involve states. They involve either the building of effective states where these are weak or less often the transformation of somewhat stronger but often corrupt or predatory states. There are many reasons for the problems of African states, from structures of precolonial societies to the effects of colonialism to problems in the clientalism and often misguided development efforts of the Cold War to the effects of world markets and weak economic development. It is for example, worth noting that the Rwandan genocide took place in the context of (a) a US-led democratization program that was abruptly terminated and (b) a calamitous collapse in world coffee prices. Or think of the impact of the diamond trade in other cases. Or, with more contemporary relevance, the extent to which

Sudan's capacity to sell its oil fueled its conflicts first with Southern rebels and then in Darfur.

Sudan's oil trade is particularly revelatory. The development of oil fields near Bentiu was led initially by Chevron—not coincidentally an American-based multinational corporation. It was then taken over by a more international consortium led by a Canadian firm. And if the oil was initially simply sold on the abstract "world market," it is now sold largely to China, which now also gives the Sudan both foreign assistance and direct foreign investment. That oil was found in Sudan's South is one of the sources of the reignited civil war of the 1980s. So, of course, was Islamicization, inspired partly by Iran. The conflicts had very strong international sources, but not necessarily in the sense of globalization celebrated by most cosmopolitan visions. Sudan's central government was able to wage its war against the South largely because it earned $500 million a year in oil revenues (and it earns more now). In this context, it is not surprising that field staff from UN agencies, humanitarian organizations, and human rights advocates began to feel that they were, in Randolph Martin's words, "unwitting accomplices" to the slaughter.[1] This doesn't mean that humanitarian action, or support for peace processes and constitution-making aren't important. It does mean that they need to be connected to the rest of the whole story.

And one feature of the rest of that story is the harbinger of major challenges for those who would advocate for an

advancing cosmopolitan legal order—whether framed in terms of human rights or of justice more broadly. This is the role of China. China's economic growth and increasing global role is one of the major facts on the contemporary political and economic scene. It signals the likely development of a more multipolar world. It also signals the centrality of issues like energy to contemporary politics as well as economics. Think of the implications of Europe's dependence on Russian fuel. But China is not only a purchaser of petroleum—and indeed a range of other natural resources on very large scales; and not only a marketer of manufactured goods running up surpluses in trade with Europe as well as the US, but an advocate to other countries in what we once called the Third World for a vision of economic development not laden with concerns about human rights, democracy and social justice. These, says China—and the Sudanese government agrees—are meddling by the world hegemon, America, and by the West more generally. And the meddling is not merely a nuisance it is in very bad faith given the past and current abuses perpetrated by European colonialism and American imperialism.

And China is not all wrong in this. It is cynical and manipulative and largely self-interested as it looks to African (and Latin American and Asian and other) trading partners. But in fact this is an attraction. Many in the developing world find it refreshing when China says "this is just an economic deal; we won't bundle any political or

human rights conditionalities into it." More important, though, is the extent to which economic development and the strengthening of more or less national states may in fact be the necessary bases for reductions in human suffering and even potentially democracy. But we may be headed for an era of clashes between developmental and rights agendas.

The attempt to produce democracy and respect for human rights by transformation of global law rather than global political economy may amount to the late 20th and early 21st century version of what Marx decried as the pursuit of mere bourgeois rights in 19th century European states. We need not denigrate the importance of these rights to see the limits. Marxists have been wrong to dismiss both democracy and liberal rights—civil or human rights—as mere window dressing. They matter much more than this. Moreover, if Marxists are right to point to the limits of politics without economics, we should also point to the problems of substituting ethics for politics which beset a good deal of liberal individualist cosmopolitanism today. A human rights regime is not achievable as a direct expression of ethical or moral commitments, still less is democracy.

In this context, the development of legal norms matters, and so does the development of new legal institutions—like the International Criminal Court that America in its hegemonic but short-sighted fashion doesn't recognize. But we should be cautious about leaping to the conclu-

sion that the crucial developments can all take place in international law, or in what might be called cosmopolitan law. If international law is that rooted in treaties and other agreements among nations, cosmopolitan law is that which develops in the governance arrangements of more or less free-standing global organizations. The ICC is clearly international, thus, and so is the WTO. The Bretton Woods organizations are best understood as international though they have considerable latitude for independent action. But a new legal arena is indeed emerging, perhaps most visibly in agreements among corporations for arbitration of disputes and management of common standard-setting. This proceeds often with minimal government roles, but large roles for lawyers. It is certainly an economic support for the cosmopolitan class. But although these developments are very significant and interesting, we would be mistaken to let our cosmopolitan class interests in these new governance arrangements obscure the extent to which nations still matter. Most of the growth in cosmopolitan law is precisely in arenas that demand little popular legitimation.

This is less true with regard to international law (though many important decisions are approached as matters of expertise rather than democratic participation). Most of the enforcement capacity for international law remains national. This matters most where directly political arrangements or contentions are at stake, for example in regard to human rights, and less for that international

law which essential provides necessary regulation and enabling procedures that are accepted by capitalist and state actors. It is not just that international law needs to be incorporated effectively into national law, but that the political will to enforce international law is largely structured at the national level. There are serious problems with democracy at this level, including difficulties faced by parliaments (let alone popular forces) in demanding that executives respect their will with regard to international treaties. More generally, it is national level politics that matter most for the promotion or achievement of democracy around the world. I mean this in two senses: First, it is the capacity of social movements, media, and others to put pressure on national governments in rich countries that most keeps democracy and human rights on the agenda. Second, democracy is mainly achieved at the national, not the transnational level.

Whatever their other virtues, few transnational organizations are in any serious way democratic. This goes not merely for the World Bank, but for NGOs. There are a range of issues about just what democracy means in such contexts—is one country, one vote analogous to one person one vote? Does one mean population-weighted voting? Does one mean a different set of internal governance procedures? What would make Oxfam or the Ford Foundation or MSF democratic? The issue is not just internal governance? In general, NGOs operate with minimal accountability standards, and the external

accountability they are obliged to take on is to donors. So we should be cautious about assuming that international organizations, even very progressive ones, are democratic. And we should expect significant questions to be raised about their legitimacy in various circumstances.

If our question is by what means ordinary people gain the capacity to shape the institutional conditions of their own lives, then politics within states—mainly more or less national states—still come at the top of the list. They gain it because those states can change domestic conditions more or less directly, and can influence external conditions. Indeed, they can even do things like incorporate international human rights law into national constitutions—and sometimes actually enforce it.

Not least, if we are talking about "democracy and the legitimation of law in world society," the title of this conference, we need to consider that it is largely in national level politics that ordinary people have the chance to participate in public discourse and decisions that might bring democratic legitimation to international or cosmopolitan law. Certainly some people participate directly as cosmopolitans. They advocate for human rights or consult on legal reforms. But a key question is whether these cosmopolitans are also effective within their own countries in bringing popular support to international legal developments (or simply better political and economic behavior of their countries). To take an issue from yesterday's discussion: I think Christina Lafont

is absolutely right in suggesting that protection of some markets by rich countries amounts to an abuse of human rights because of the poverty and loss of life it causes in poor countries. This may, indeed, be one of the few areas in which European policy outstrips American in its cynical pursuit of self-interest. But the politics that would change this is not directly cosmopolitan. It is for the most part domestic—either within nation-states or within the EU. Even if inspired by global activism, it requires that citizens of particular countries vote to choose governments that will open markets in this way. This they might do as a matter of democratic legitimacy—if they became convinced that it was deeply illegitimate to perpetuate inequality in this way. They might call it a national sin, as anti-slavery advocates successfully branded first the slave trade and then slavery itself in what was perhaps the first great humanitarian campaign of the modern era. But whether with religious or secular rhetoric, what would be required is not merely solidarity with the suffering poor of the world. This, after all, could simply underwrite charity—checks to Oxfam not political action. What would be required is politically organized pressure—which democracy facilitates.

But democracy also depends on solidarity. It depends on the capacity to adopt a strong collective voice, as for example in saying "we the people." It is achieved at least for now in domestic politics, on the basis of connections of different segments of the population to each other and

the development of vital public spheres. How and how well this can be achieved either in larger domestic politics (up to the level of a global domestic politics) or in transnational and international politics is unclear.

One of the dominant patterns in modern history is the organization of power and capital on ever larger scales, and with new intensity. This precipitates a race in which popular forces and solidarities are always running behind. It is a race to achieve social integration, to structure the connections among people, to shape social institutions, and to organize the world. Capital and state power are out in front. Workers and ordinary citizens are always in the position of trying to catch up. As they get organized on local levels, capital and power integrate on larger scales.

Ordinary people have achieved a modicum of democracy, and a number of significant material benefits, but they did not choose the "race" in which electoral democracy is one of their partial victories. This was for the most part imposed by the development of more centralized states and the integration of capitalist markets. Most ordinary people experienced a loss of collective self-determination before the eventual gains of 19th and 20th century democratization. They experienced this loss as the communities and institutions they had created were overrun and undermined by state and market forces. This doesn't mean that workers two generations later were not in many ways materially better off, or that life chances in the advanced industrial countries were not generally

better than in those that did not go through similar transformations. It does not mean that many workers would not have preferred the chance to be owners. It does mean that many of those who lived through the transformations lost—and bitterly resented losing—both what has recently been called "social capital" and the chance to choose ways of life based on their own values and manner of understanding the world.

The formation of modern states was a matter both of expansion, as smaller states gave way in the process of establishing centralized rule over large, contiguous territories, and of intensification, as administrative capacity was increased and intermediate powers weakened. Likewise, the growth of capitalism involved increases in both long distance and local trade, the development of both larger and more effectively administered enterprises, the extension of trade into financial markets and production relations, and the subjection of more and more dimensions of social life to market relations. The expansion and intensification state power and capital accumulation was made possible by an infrastructure that included transport and communications technologies as well as industrial production.

Together, these factors helped to underwrite a reorganization of identity and solidarity at the level of the nation, recasting an old category of belonging as the crucial cultural and social counterpart of the state. The abstract category of nation became more important as

appeals through chains of dependency—mutual or hierarchical—managed less of personal and public affaris.[2] Nations were "imagined communities," in Benedict Anderson's phrase.[3] They joined members in common projects and common rituals—from narrating collective history to waging wars and revolutions to simply reading the newspaper each morning. Of course this imaginary membership came replete with a variety of struggles over representation and identity: Who was a citizen? What ethnicity, if any, defined the nation? What responsibilities and privileges did members enjoy? Nationalism not only reflected the integration of nation-states, it expressed a new "theory" of political legitimacy, in which governments were obliged to serve the interests of the nation. And if national ideologies typically subordinated class-specific claims of workers, nationalism nonetheless became an idiom expressing the aspirations of ordinary people to a secure and prosperous place in the world, and to participation in public life.

State formation and capitalism coincided not only in the projects of nation-states, but also in empires and sometimes imperialism without formal empire. To a considerable extent the modern histories of the two political forms have been simultaneous. Nations were forged in part in making empires and in contesting empires.[4] Indeed, in important senses, the modern large-scale business corporation was also a creature of imperialism, with pioneers like the East India Company.[5] Postcolonies, even

where they did constitute more or less integrated nation-states, could seldom achieve the autonomy promised by nationalist ideology precisely because they confronted global capitalist markets and unequal terms of trade as well as the continued hegemony of other states.

At the same time, the organization of markets, government, and the public sphere at the level of the nation worked in many ways to disadvantage those whose organizational strength and intellectual perspectives were sharper at local levels. The great English historian E. P. Thompson thus demonstrated the ways in which craft workers in local communities exerted the "moral economy of the English crowd" in protests against those who withheld food seeking higher prices in hard times, and "collective bargaining by riot" in which craft workers used public disturbances to limit the spread of job-destroying technologies or demand decent wages. Such tactics worked better to the extent capital was organized locally rather than nationally or internationally.[6] Workers have often drawn on strong local ties—organized for example in residential communities, crafts, and churches—to support their struggles (as several chapters below discuss). But at the same time they also drew on national traditions—notably of the English constitution—to assert their claims to both just representation in the polity and recognition by it.

The demand that states operate for the benefit of nations came in part from "below," thus, as ordinary

people insisted on some level of participation and, in Hobbes's term, "commonwealth" as a condition of treating rulers as legitimate. But the integration of nation-states is an ambivalent step. On the one hand, state power is a force its own right—not least in colonialism but also domestically—and represents a flow of organizing capacity away from local communities. On the other hand, democracy at a national level constitutes the greatest success that ordinary people have had in catching up to capital and power. They have made effective demands on states, and if there was some ambivalence in giving up capacity for communal self-organization there were nonetheless real gains.

At least in the contemporary world of states and other large-scale abstract social organizations, there is a paradox to radicalism (which may of course be of the "right" as well as the "left"). Most radicalism is based on tradition and local communities—including sometimes intentionally created communities of religious or political converts. Yet when successful, radicalism both disrupts tradition and displaces power towards the center of society and its large-scale systems of control. It may be possible to "think globally and act locally," but reaching out globally—or even just to the state—in order to protect the local is almost guaranteed to transform it.

Where revolutions succeed, and transform societies rather than only changing regimes, two sorts of radical groups have usually been involved. On the one hand,

there has usually been a tightly organized, forward look-
ing, relatively sophisticated group of revolutionaries. On
the other hand, there has also generally been a broad
mass of protestors and rebels acting on the basis of strong
local communities and traditional grievances. The latter
are essential to making the revolution happen, to destabi-
lizing the state. The former, however, are much better
positioned to seize power during the transformation.

Struggles against colonial rule have often reflected
similar issues and paradoxes. Dominated peoples have
simultaneously sought to resist foreign rule and to forge
nations by drawing disparate "traditional" groups to-
gether.[7] A claim to common "traditional" culture under-
writes both nationalism and sectional or "communal"
resistance to it (each of which is a project of groups
placed differently in a larger field, not simply a reflec-
tion of pre-existing identity—though never unrelated
to ongoing cultural reproduction). Nations appear si-
multaneously as cultural commonalities and solidari-
ties that are ostensibly "always already there," as new
projects occasioned by colonialism and independence
struggles, and as impositions of certain constructions
of the national culture over others identities and cul-
tural projects within the ostensible nation. The situa-
tion of struggle against external colonial power makes
larger categories of "indigenous" solidarity useful, but
the achievement of these is always a redistribution of
power and resources—usually away from more or less

autonomous local communities, subordinated cultures, and other groups. The sociologist Pierre Bourdieu describes one version of this:

> As I was able to observe in Algeria, the unification of the economic field tends, especially through monetary unification and the generalization of monetary exchanges that follows, to hurl all social agents into an economic game for which they are not equally prepared and equipped, culturally and economically. It tends by the same token to submit them to standards objectively imposed by competition from more efficient productive forces and modes of production, as can readily be seen with small rural producers who are more and more completely torn away from self-sufficiency. In short*, unification benefits the dominant.*[8]

This is Bourdieu writing about Algeria faced with French colonialism in the 1950s, but it could equally describe his reasons for resisting neoliberal globalization in the 1990s. In such struggles, seemingly anti-cosmopolitan resistance is often a weapon of those in danger of intensified exploitation by dominant interests; it may shape a better international order and eventually better terms for cosmopolitan transcendence of parts of the nation-state system. But equally, extensions of transnational power and capitalist markets can also inform fears that fuel populist reactions against immigrants. These are fears not merely from the ethnically prejudiced—though they may also be that—but fears as well from citizens who feel that their citizenship buys them less and less protection from global threats and less and less participatory democracy.

Those who resist such market incursions or the similar centralizations of state power are commonly described as "traditional" by contrast to modern. Their defense of community, craft, religion, and kinship is seen as somehow irrational. It is indeed often backward-looking, though not always and not for this reason incapable of generating social innovation and sometimes truly radical visions of a better society. But to look backward is not inherently irrational—especially when there is no guarantee that the future amounts to progress—or that what some deem progress will advance the values ordinary people hold dearest.

Moreover, the communities and institutions that are defended by those who resist the incursions of expanding and intensifying capitalist markets and state administrations are not simply dead forms inherited from the past. They are social achievements, collectively created often in the face of considerable opposition. They provide some level of capacity for ordinary people to organize their own lives—imperfectly, no doubt, but with potential for improvement and some level of autonomy from outside forces. The shift from a society organized on the basis of personal relations to one organized more through larger, often impersonal categories opens up new opportunities but it also undercuts old solidarities—and the distribution of benefits may be highly unequal. As Bourdieu remarks, defending older and sometimes segmented social solidarities is gains rationale from the extent to

which unification benefits the dominant. Extremely rapid changes in social organization may especially benefit the dominant, disrupt life more, and reduce chances for social struggle to win compromises and create alternative paths of development.

States, as Marx suggested, may be committees to manage the affairs of the bourgeoisie (or now of global capitalism). But they are also arenas and vehicles for popular resistance to dominant political and economic trends. Globalization displaces both arenas of struggle in which workers and others have gained power, and institutions representing achievements of previous struggles. Yet globalization also provides new arenas for potentially creative, democratic struggle. It is in some ways stacked against popular forces, but it is not closed.

Part of the appeal of human rights in the last twenty some years has been that it has seized one of the openings. Yet it is worth noting that it is an opening linked importantly to the idea that human rights are prepolitical, to be accepted (like national identity) as a basis for politics rather than made the object of political argument and contestation. Appeals to human rights have worked best where they could be based either on a pre-established consensus rooted in tradition or *doxa*, or where they were dramatized by specific events, incidents that aroused moral outrage. They have worked least well where systemic processes rather than specific events—emergencies—have been at issue. They have worked least well

where the existence of a right had to be established by political argument rather than recognized as incontestable or self-evidence by the international community.

The "international community" in this regard is largely an asymmetrical vehicle of hegemony. This is so first in terms of which states participate and what power they are able to exert. The international community is dependent on US military power and European consultative and legal mechanisms play a disproportionate role. But there is also a serious problem of scale. In convening any formal group to consider a regulatory issue—starting with the G8—numbers of representatives quickly multiply if not only governments are included as interested parties from each state, but also business and civil society (and the idea of representing civil society as such is more than a little tendentious as well). This is but one way in which an iron law of oligarchy operates on a global scale. The international community is also a deceptively inclusive arena. There is some participation from everywhere but most from hegemonic powers. And not least of all, it is precisely a locus of the reproduction of cosmopolitan class consciousness, connections, and power.

In this regard, there is a problem with starting with the project of normative design. Such a top-down perspective is inherently problematic for democracy. Even when it includes mechanisms for popular participation, these tend to domesticate or tame the public, confining them in relation to the substantive content of the original

design. These are often depoliticizing in practice even where they are ostensibly openings to politics. There is a widespread tendency to treat problems as matters of expertise rather than public debate. The international normative-legal order thus empowers bureaucracies and cosmopolitan experts. Even where it requires or at least allows for "consultation" with those ordinary citizens affected by various decisions, this is severely limited as a source of democratic legitimation. Affected citizens themselves gain voice largely by deploying their own cosmopolitan experts, advocates, and spokespeople. (Consider global debates over media policy, but it is true in every arena.) Or these affected persons may mobilize for public protest. As a way of influencing decisions this is a matter of appealing by means of media to what is sometimes called a "weak public" in the hopes that this in turn may influence the stronger public of inside experts and decision-makers. This is not a bad thing, but not exactly a robust process. It is quite different from direct political participation, and certainly from participation in potentially transformative struggles (as distinct form more routine electoral politics). Moreover, this form of consultation or response to decisions by bureaucrats or experts reduces the opportunities for democratic agenda-setting and innovation. This does not mean one should seek mass popular democracy. On the contrary, expertise has a role. Securing "good government" and rule of law are both important and may be better achieved by pro-

cesses that are not immediately democratic. A democracy may choose to delegate certain functions to experts—as is typically the case with the legal system. In strengthen the governance institutions of global society, trying to achieve democracy in advance of competent, non-corrupt (and preferably citizen-oriented) government may be unrealistic or even counterproductive. But just as a democratic society would ideally institute procedures for accountability and choice of experts, so on a transnational scale there need to be arenas in which questions may be raised and answers demanded, performance judged, and appointments questioned. There may be a useful role for judicial review, which may improve quality of governance and overall legitimacy even though it would be only tenuously a step toward democracy as such.

Cosmopolitanism—like indeed, NGOs and civil society—makes much more sense as a complement to states, and sometimes a corrective to state policies, than as an alternative. We live in a world of states in which being a citizen of the world without a relatively strong state is a disaster. If we seek democratic legitimation of global legal arrangements, we need to seek it by opening these to the political processes of states.

Cosmopolitanism, like liberalism, is important but insufficient. Each needs the complement of a stronger appreciation of political economy and social solidarity. With regard to the first of these, I feel embedded in an odd intellectual-political trajectory on the Left. It seems

there has been movement from an old Marxist denigra-
tion of mere bourgeois democracy to assertion of both the
"relative autonomy of the state" and unfinished potentials
of the Enlightenment public sphere, to a bracketing or
neglect of the material-economic in abstract universalist
political philosophy which in the end returns nearly to
"mere" liberalism (sometimes in the name of refusing to
disturb the functional differentiation of social spheres).
I would like to see that ideological belief in necessarily
separate spheres disturbed. Again, this does not mean
that we should imagine directly democratic management
of every social function, but rather (a) both democratic
and more expert review and accountability, and (b) open
questioning of what is appropriately regarded as a self-
regulating system or a matter for experts. While, for
example, it is obvious that markets are to some extent
self-regulating and attempts at total planning have not
proved fruitful, it is not obvious that all economic activ-
ity should be protected from political scrutiny or that all
questions about world financial markets should be seen
as matters to be decided by bankers (or investors or arbi-
trageurs or lawyers) on the basis of technical expertise.

Hauke Brunkhorst has called attention to the second
point about social solidarity, drawing on the ancient
ideas of friendship and brotherhood echoed in the French
Revolutionary slogan of *liberté, egalité, fraternité*.[9] The
third term of the slogan is all too commonly neglected,
leaving liberalism—and cosmopolitanism—lacking an

adequate concern with solidarity. He focuses rightly on the ways in which social integration may be accomplished through various systems such as the economy that do not produce solidarity among participants, and on the need for such solidarity if democracy is to be effective. His account stands out among liberal cosmopolitan theories for its recognition of the centrality of solidarity, though his main focus is on the emergence of a "worldwide people" rather than the continuing role of solidarities on slightly less encompassing scales.

But not only is it easy to exaggerate the extent to which global "peoplehood" has developed, it is important to see how global democratic integration depends on smaller scale mediating solidarities. Theorists of cosmopolitan democracy tend to denigrate nations, communities, ethnic groups, religions, and similar existing solidarities.[10] Cosmopolitans often seem in favor of global diversity, but against strong connections to particular identities. They see these as particularistic, as given by history rather than rational choice, and as in principle unnecessary. They prefer to think of the direct connections of individuals on a global scale. This reflects among other things the dominance of ethical reasoning—about what individuals owe other individuals—over political and social analysis. It also reflects a penchant for ethically "maximalist" approaches that work from ideals of total global justice, imaginings of the best possible global order as an abstract system, and therefore tend to see

historically given institutional structures as simply in greater or lesser degree defective. The thin and abstract sense in which people belong to humanity as a whole is given clear precedence over thicker and more concrete senses in which people belong to families, communities, cities, ethnicities, nations, and religions.

That all human beings are increasingly connected, increasingly constitute a community of fate, and therefore share ethical obligations seems to me correct and important. But it does not seem a trump card against more local solidarities and obligations. Even more basically, to think that global democracy or indeed justice could be achieved by bypassing or radically subordinating intermediate social solidarities or polities is a deep sociological misunderstanding. If they are to be democratic in any sense other than just applauding the actions of demagogues or rulers, large populations must be organized into strong intermediate solidarities.

Such intermediate solidarities are necessarily partial, but they are not simply "the local" or the sectional. Rather, they are the actually existing structures of integration across various lines of difference. Nations integrate people from different localities and sometimes ethnicities or religions. Religions likewise cut across nations. Cities too are structures of interconnection across differences of religion and ethnicity. Much of the practical cosmopolitanism of everyday life is not in fact global. London is arguably more cosmopolitan than the EU Parliament

at Strasbourg and New York more cosmopolitan than the board of directors of any global NGO. These cities are of course not only internally diverse but also linked to each other.[11] Yet if this is a crucial dimension of globalization, it is crucial to emphasize the disjuncture between the linkage of cities and the disconnection (and often under-development or domination) of their hinterlands. While New York City thrives as a dynamic global center, thus, the older industrial cities of upstate New York decline. As Shanghai becomes a major node in global networks it pulls much of Southeastern China with it, albeit in subordinate roles. But a disjuncture from much of rural China is a basic fact of this globalization. Shanghai, like most cities in the developing world, has also grown mainly by domestic migration—not the international migration that makes the old imperial and trading cities so distinctive.

Of course, London and New York are biased and unequal structures of inclusion and neither is a model of perfect democracy. Nations and religions are commonly organized internally in unattractive hierarchies and commonly in conflict with each other externally. But each of these is an arena for action, for struggles to make it better. Such struggles are sometimes explicitly about justice and democracy—notably in the case of nations. In other cases, like religions, struggles for purity of practice, elimination of corruption, or more consistent adherence to ethical norms may have democratic aspects even while they are not primarily about democracy—es-

pecially when they are part of a religious orientation to reform in the secular world rather than only the pursuit of other-worldly salvation. In other words, intermediate solidarities like nations, cities, and religions not only produce real connections among participants otherwise different from each other, they provide settings for action that potentially transcends and remakes the initial conditions of collective life. They are given by history, but this doesn't make them mere arbitrary inheritances. History includes this process of human world making and remaking as well as the impact of material conditions. Precisely because these are historically produced solidarities, they are mutable. The point is not that fixed inheritances from the past are the necessary bases of future allegiance. On the contrary it is a loose and unfortunate reading of the "politics of identity" to think that identities are simply inherited bases for contemporary action. On the contrary, we would do better to recognize the element of politics in all identity—and thus of shaping of identity through political action—including speech. There are always many more identities available as bases for mobilization than become effective. It takes politics to determine which become effective as well as what is done in their name.[12]

Not least, effective democratic action on very large scales—like the world as a whole—is heavily dependent on intermediate associations of various sorts.[13] Those with money and power can be effective without

mobilizing their fellows (or, rather, by mobilizing them through means other than solidarity and agreement). But democracy depends on collective action, and in large scale populations collective action depends on intermediate scales of organization. Voluntary organizations are important, and so are intermediate levels of government with their own elections and other political processes. But especially where risky struggles are concerned and struggles that have the potential to be transformative, strong mutual commitment among members of intermediate associations is crucial. This can be built in the course of movement organizing. But pre-existing relationships and mutual understanding are of enormous value as bases for such action. Nations, communities, ethnic groups, religions and other historically produced solidarities are crucial bases for democracy partly because they are bases for struggles to achieve it (or to resist impositions of power or economic systems that limit it). Nations are central. Of course this doesn't mean that nations, ethnic groups or other popular solidarities are automatically democratic, or that they are do not offer bases for anti-democratic mobilization as well. But it does mean that cosmopolitanism should not be taken as a basis for writing them out of democratic theory.

The apparent abstraction of liberal citizenship has recurrently raised questions about the motivational basis for universal political participation. These questions are renewed in the context of European integration,

as Habermas for example asks "whether there exists a functional equivalent for the fusion of the nation of citizens with the ethnic nation."[14] And indeed, from Fichte forward, theories of the ethnic nation sought to account for both the moral and the motivational identification of individuals with the state.

Cosmopolitan theorizing is not the same as actual cosmopolitanism—if by that we mean successful, benign relations across the many lines of cultural and social difference that shape the world. For people have found myriad ways of connecting to others different from themselves, and their efforts to understand each other—and keep the peace with each other—have not always waited on theorists. People have sampled each other's cooking, danced to each other's music, borrowed each other's clothes, and looked with pleasure on each other's art almost forever. But they have done so in particular relationships, usually not by abstracting to the universal.

Cosmopolitanism has had an ambivalent relationship to politics—and especially democracy. It has flourished in empires partly because they were not self-governing polities of citizens. It has been sheltered by the multicultural worlds—and conditions of internal peace—those empires sometimes provided—even while many cosmopolitans have criticized the violence and imposition at the heart of imperial rule. The cosmopolitan notion of being a citizen of the world has not meant that the world could be an ordinary polity (though some recent advo-

cates have taken it that way) so much as that citizenship should not be left to mere politics. When cosmopolitans from the Stoics of the Roman Empire on said they were citizens of the world, they usually meant instead and in spite of politics.

And so it is odd that recently cosmopolitanism and democracy have appeared to be almost naturally linked concepts (as though all good things must naturally fit together against the bad—a Manichean hope that infects much political theory). Nationalism is now read mainly as the 'bad old' ethnic solidarities of pre-cosmopolitans—rather than as a form of solidarity that unified as well as divided (and that is hardly exhausted).[15] In the context of renewed globalization, cosmopolitanism was claimed by—rather than against—political theory—and claimed especially to rescue liberalism from its reliance on nation-states for concepts of citizenship and belonging.

Two tendencies encourage the lack of attention to solidarity. First, there is slippage in the usage of cosmopolitan between the notion of planning a rational global order and the notion of an individual ethical orientation to the world (whether it is rational or not). Second, and even more importantly, democracy is conceived as merely a matter of procedures, not of people and their ways of life. Here the variegated mixings of urban life may be as helpful a guide as any notion of rational constitutional order.[p] In an effort to escape from the limitations of culture and history, democratic theorists have tried to

develop accounts of the abstract procedures appropri-
ate to democracy entirely divorced from "substantive"
values or ways of life. But this divorce is untenable, and
there is no escape from culture and history. Democracy
is necessarily achieved in culture and through historical
changes in culture and social relations. Pure procedural-
ism provides useful heuristics but it allows theorists to
imagine democracy without paying enough attention to
what makes it possible for citizens to say, in the words of
the US Constitution and quite a few others, that "we the
people" will make this political system.

To bring cosmopolitanism and political solidarity
together is a daunting challenge. As I have suggested,
cosmopolitanism has usually been a complement to po-
litical solidarity. In many ways, it is precisely freedom
from politics that has encouraged cosmopolitan open-
ness to strangers and other ways of life. At the same
time, intensified globalization makes it important to
extend political attention to distant strangers, people dif-
ferent from ourselves, and those not bound to us by ties
of close solidarity. Care for those affected by the markets
and systems of production and consumption in which we
are embedded, concern for ecological degradation of the
planet all humans share, sympathy for those who suffer,
and alarm at abuses of human rights and destruction of
human potential all demand a cosmopolitan outlook that
transcends nationality, religion, economic group inter-
est, and local community. But though this outlook may

inform a politics as well as an ethics, it is not likely to be an adequate substitute for more specific solidarities and structures of inclusion.

As Salman Rushdie once wrote, human beings have two great longings, two great fantasies, two great idealizations: home and away. At the moment, away is more in fashion among intellectuals and especially political theorists. But home has a strong popular following. Debates over cosmopolitanism are in large part about this tension. In considering these debates, it needs to be remembered that intellectual values and tastes reflect positions of privilege (and sometimes alienation) as well as potential ethical norms for broader populations. The temptation to dispense with the national in the interest of a more normatively perfect imagining of the global whole is risky on several grounds, including sacrificing the democratic potential of actually solidary national citizenries. But it is reinforced by the participation of many critical (or would-be critical) intellectuals in the consciousness of a global cosmopolitan class. Among the deformations or limits of this are the illusion that global peoplehood is near at hand and conversely, a distance from democratic struggles within national polities.

It is not that cosmopolitan global government is intrinsically a bad idea, but that it is much harder to achieve than theorists typically think, much less likely to be democratic (especially when approached as a project of top-down design), more likely to be disempowering

for ordinary people—even if it is good for them in other (possibly paternalistic) ways, and more likely to be dominated by an elite global cosmopolitan class. It is part of the *habitus* of this class to misrecognize itself as more universal than it really is. The same class consciousness encourages a skewed perception in which cosmopolitanism itself appears as a primary good (perhaps because it is such a primary compliment to a member of the class). Cosmopolitanism may be good, but it is not *the* good.

Notes

1. "Sudan's Perfect War," *Foreign Affairs*, 81, 2 (2002), p. 122.
2. In Gordon Wood's terms, a "society of connections" gave way to a more impersonal one; see *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*. See also Calhoun, "Community", in *Letters of the Republic*, Michael Warner has traced the importance of impersonality to written debate in the late 18th century public sphere.
3. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*. See also my discussion in Calhoun, *Nationalism*.
4. See Linda Colley, *Britons*, among several studies that bring out the former dimension; on the latter, in addition to Anderson, see among many the essays and works cited in Geoff Eley and Ron Suny, eds., *Becoming National*; Frederic Cooper and Ann Stoller, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, which also brings out the interrelationship of nationalism, imperialism, and capitalism; and Craig Calhoun, Kevin Moore, and Frederic Cooper, eds., *Lessons of Empire: Imperial Histories and American Power*. This has of course been a central theme in "subaltern studies" as well as colonial history. See also Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire*, for an examination of the ways in which French and British liberalism was

forged in the context of empire, and as part of a 19ᵗʰ century turn away from the widespread criticism of empire offered in the late 18ᵗʰ century by figures as otherwise diverse as Jeremy Bentham, Edmund Burke, and Adam Smith.

5. See John Kelly, "Who Counts? Imperial and Corporate Structures of Governance, Decolonization and Limited Liability".

6. See E.P. Thompson's classic accounts of the socially organized and regulated struggles of artisans, outworkers, and others—that were strong through the 18ᵗʰ century and increasingly challenged in the 19ᵗʰ century, even while the organization of the national working class gathered strength: *The Making of the English Working Class* and "Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the 18ᵗʰ Century". Also discussion in Calhoun, *The Question of Class Struggle*.

7. The work of Partha Chatterjee is particularly informative on this issue. See *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* and *The Nation and Its Fragments*. See also Calhoun, *Nationalism*.

8. Pierre Bourdieu, "Unifying to Better Dominate."

9. Brunkhorst: *Solidarity: From Civic Friendship to a Global Legal Community*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 2006.

10. This is true, of course, in varying degree and chapters below will suggest some of the lines of difference. David Held, for example, has argued for cosmopolitan global structures that would incorporate nations and communities as subsidiary groups at different scales. See *Democracy and Global* Order, Cambridge, Polity, 1995.

11. See Saskia Sassen, *The Global City*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, rev. ed. 2001.

12. See Calhoun, *Critical Social Theory: Culture, History and the Challenge of Difference*, Cambridge, MA, Blackwell, 1995, and "'New Social Movements' of the Early Nineteenth Century", *Social Science History*, v. 17, n. 3, p. 385-427, 1993.

13. This was of course emphasized by Tocqueville at the national scale (see *Democracy in America*). Forming such associations was a crucial problem for democracies, Tocqueville thought, because they lacked the acceptance of older hierarchies of association; that Montesquieu and others had shown to be basic

to the stability of aristocracies and monarchies. Individualism militated against intermediate associations though an ethos of voluntary participation could build them. This is the problematic associated with "social capital" by more recent thinkers like Robert Putnam (*Bowling Alone*).

14. *Inclusion of the Other*, p. 117
15. See Calhoun, *Nations Matter*, London, Routledge, 2007, and *Nationalism*, Minnespolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1997.
16. See Richard Sennett, *The Uses of Disorder*, New York, Norton 1970.