

## **Cosmopolitanism is Not Enough: Why Nationalism and the Politics of Identity Still Matter<sup>1</sup>**

Craig Calhoun  
Social Science Research Council

I have not come to Singapore, one of the world's most cosmopolitan cities, to argue against cosmopolitanism. I do want to argue (1) that cosmopolitan democracy is not as easy as much recent theory has suggested, (2) that it may be less a matter of global cultural uniformity than of local and regional mixtures that preserve some old differences and produce new ones, (3) that cosmopolitanism in itself is not basis enough for democracy or development and that people still need a sense and a reality of belonging to more particular social groups (including nations, which can represent social achievements as well as limiting perspectives, and (4) that embedded in much current political theory of cosmopolitan democracy is a form of liberal rationalist universalism that (a) neglects the importance of culture, (b) obscures the locatedness of its advocates (providing, if you will, the class consciousness of frequent travelers), and (c) underestimates the extent to which the dominant patterns of globalization produce unity in ways that benefit the dominant, leaving others need of ways to protect their own interests and solidarities.

Allow me to take two texts for my talk:

“Some claim that the world is gradually becoming united, that it will grow into a brotherly community as distances shrink and ideas are transmitted through the air. Alas, you must not believe that men can be united in this way.”

--Fyodor Dostoevsky, 1880

Among the great struggles of man—good/evil, reason/unreason, etc.—there is also this mighty conflict between the fantasy of Home and the fantasy of Away, the dream of roots and the mirage of the journey.

--Salman Rushdie, 2000

### **Liberalism and Belonging**

Contemporary cosmopolitanism is the latest effort to revitalize liberalism.<sup>2</sup> It has much to recommend it. Aside from world peace and more diverse ethnic restaurants, there is the promise to attend to one of the great lacunae of more traditional liberalism.

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<sup>1</sup> Prepared for presentation at the National University of Singapore, March 2002. A longer version of this paper will appear in Daniele Archibugi, ed.: *Debating Cosmopolitics* (London: Verso).

<sup>2</sup> Liberalism of course embraces a wide spectrum of views in which emphases may fall more on property rights or more on democracy. So too cosmopolitanism can imply a global view that is liberal not specifically democratic. Archibugi prefers ‘cosmopolitics’ to ‘cosmopolitan’ in order to signal just this departure from a more general image of liberal global unity. See “Cosmopolitical Democracy,” *New Left Review* 4 (July-August 2000): 137-150.

This is the assumption of nationality as the basis for membership in states, even though this implies a seemingly illiberal reliance on inheritance and ascription rather than choice, and an exclusiveness hard to justify on liberal terms.

Political theory has surprisingly often avoided addressing the problems of political belonging in a serious, analytic way by presuming that nations exist as the prepolitical bases of state-level politics. I do not mean that political theorists are nationalists in their political preferences, but rather that their way of framing analytic problems is shaped by the rhetoric of nationalism and the ways in which this has become basic to the modern social imaginary.<sup>3</sup> ‘Let us imagine a society,’ theoretical deliberations characteristically begin, ‘and then consider what form of government would be just for it.’ Nationalism provides this singular and bounded notion of society with its intuitive meaning.

Even so Kantian, methodologically individualistic, and generally non-nationalist a theorist as John Rawls exemplifies the standard procedure, seeking in *A Theory of Justice* to understand what kind of society individuals behind the veil of ignorance would choose—but presuming that they would imagine this society on the model of a nation-state. Rawls modifies his arguments in considering international affairs in *Political Liberalism* and *The Law of Peoples*, but continues to assume something like an idealized nation-state as the natural form of society. As he writes:

...we have assumed that a democratic society, like any political society, is to be viewed as a complete and closed social system. It is complete in that it is self-sufficient and has a place for all the main purposes of human life. It is also closed, in that entry into it is only by birth and exit from it is only by death.<sup>4</sup>

Rawls is aware of migration, war, and global media, of course, even while he rules them out of theory and even though it is striking how little he considers the globalization of economic foundations for his imagined society. For Rawls, questions of international justice seem to be just as that phrase and much diplomatic practice implies: questions “between peoples”, each of which should be understood as unitary. Note also the absence

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<sup>3</sup> On the predominance of nationalist understandings in conceptions of ‘society,’ see Calhoun, “Nationalism, Political Community, and the Representation of Society: Or, Why Feeling at Home Is Not a Substitute for Public Space,” *European Journal of Social Theory*, Vol. 2 (1999) No. 2, pp. 217-31.

<sup>4</sup> John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), p. 41.

of attention to local or other constituent communities within this conception of society. Individuals and the whole society have a kind of primacy over any other possible groupings. This is the logic of nationalism.<sup>5</sup>

This is precisely what cosmopolitanism contests—at least at its best--and rightly so. Indeed, one of the reasons given for the very term is that it is less likely than ‘international’ to be confused with exclusively intergovernmental relations.<sup>6</sup> Advocates of cosmopolitanism argue that people belong to a range of polities of which nation-states are only one, and that the range of significant relationships formed across state borders is growing. Their goal is to extend citizenship rights and responsibilities to the full range of associations thus created. In David Held’s words,

people would come, thus, to enjoy multiple citizenships—political membership in the diverse political communities which significantly affected them. They would be citizens of their immediate political communities, and of the wider regional and global networks which impacted upon their lives.<sup>7</sup>

Though it is unclear how this might work out in practice, this challenge to the presumption of nationality as the basis for citizenship is one of the most important contributions of cosmopolitanism (and cosmopolitanism is strongest when it takes this seriously, weakest when it recommends the leap to a more centralized world government).

The cosmopolitan tension with the assumption of nation as the prepolitical basis for citizenship is domestic as well as international. As Jurgen Habermas puts it,

the nation-state owes its historical success to the fact that it substituted relations of solidarity between the citizens for the disintegrating corporative ties of early modern society. But this republican achievement is endangered when, conversely, the integrative force of the nation of citizens is traced back to the prepolitical fact

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<sup>5</sup> See Calhoun, *Nationalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

<sup>6</sup> Daniele Archibugi, “Principles of Cosmopolitan Democracy,” pp. 198-228 in D. Archibugi, D. Held, and M. Köhler, eds., *Re-imagining Political Community* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998) p. 216.

<sup>7</sup> David Held, *Democracy and the Global Order: From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995), p. 233. Held’s book remains the most systematic and sustained effort to develop a theory of cosmopolitan democracy.

of a quasi-natural people, that is, to something independent of and prior to the political opinion-and will-formation of the citizens themselves.<sup>8</sup>

But pause here and notice the temporal order implied in this passage. *First* there were local communities, guilds, religious bodies, and other “corporative bonds”. *Then* there was republican citizenship with its emphasis on the civic identity of each citizen. *Then* this was undermined by ethnonationalism. What this misses is the extent to which each of these ways of organizing social life existed simultaneously with the others, sometimes in struggle and sometimes symbiotically. New “corporative ties” have been created, for example, notably in the labor movement and in religious communities. Conversely, there was no “pure republican” moment when ideas of nationality did not inform the image of the republic and the constitution of its boundaries.

As Habermas goes on, however, “the question arises of whether there exists a functional equivalent for the fusion of the nation of citizens with the ethnic nation.”<sup>9</sup> We need not accept his idealized history or entire theoretical framework to see that this raises a basic issue. That is, for polities not constructed as ethnic nations, what makes membership compelling? This is a question for the European Union, certainly, also for the United States, and indeed for Singapore and for most projects of cosmopolitan citizenship. Democracy requires a sense of mutual commitment among citizens that goes beyond mere legal classification, holding a passport, or even respect for particular institutions. As Charles Taylor has argued forcefully, “self-governing societies” have need “of a high degree of cohesion”.<sup>10</sup>

Cosmopolitanism needs an account of how social solidarity and public discourse might develop enough in these wider networks to become the basis for active citizenship. So far, most versions of cosmopolitan theory share with traditional liberalism a thin conception of social life, commitment, and belonging. They imagine society—and issues of social belonging and social participation—in too thin and casual a manner. The result is a theory that suffers from an inadequate sociological foundation. Communitarianism (with which some neoConfucian thought has broad affinity) is more sociological in

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<sup>8</sup> *The Inclusion of the Other* (ed. C. Cronin and P. De Greiff; Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), p. 115

<sup>9</sup> *The Inclusion of the Other*, p. 117. Note that Habermas tends to equate ‘nation’ with ‘ethnic nation’.

<sup>10</sup> “Modern social imaginaries,” forthcoming in *Public Culture*, (Feb 2002) p. 1

inspiration, but often suffers from an inverse error, a tendency to elide the differences between local networks of social relationships and broad categories of belonging like nations.

The cosmopolitan image of multiple, layered citizenship can helpfully correct the tendency of many communitarians to suggest not only that community is necessary and/or good, but that people normally inhabit one and only one community.<sup>11</sup> Equally, though, cosmopolitan democracy requires a stronger account of social solidarity and the formation and transformation of social groups. If one of its virtues is challenging the idea that nationality (or ethnic or other identities understood as analogous to nationality) provides people with an unambiguous and singular collective membership, one of its faults is to conceptualize the alternative too abstractly and vaguely. Another is to underestimate the positive side of nationalism, the virtues of identification with a larger whole. This can indeed be oppressive and antidemocratic. But it can also be the source of mutual commitment and solidarity underpinning democracy and uniting people across a range of differences. Moreover, whatever its limits, the nation-state has proved more open to democratization than religions or some other kinds of large groupings.

### **Soldarity**

In cosmopolitanism as in much other political theory and democratic thought generally, there is a tendency to assume that social groups are created in some prepolitical process—as nations, for example, ethnicities, religions, or local communities. They reflect historical accident, inheritance, and necessity. They result perhaps from the accumulation of unintended consequences of purposive action, but they are not in themselves chosen. Surely, though, this is not always so.

The social solidarity that makes social commitments compelling is indeed shaped by forms of integration, like markets, that link people systemically, by force of necessity, or as it were “behind their backs”. It is also shaped by material power, as for example modern economic life is a matter not only of markets but of corporations and state regulation. Clearly, it is informed by shared culture and by categorical identities like race,

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<sup>11</sup> It is this last tendency which invites liberal rationalists occasionally to ascribe to communitarians and advocates of local culture complicity in all manner of illiberal political projects from restrictions on immigration to excessive celebration of ethnic minorities to economic protectionism. I have discussed this critically in “Nationalism, Political Community, and the Representation of Society,” op cit.

ethnicity, class, and nation. And crucially it is built out of networks of directly interpersonal social relations, such as those basic to local community. The last already suggests the importance of choice: community is not just inherited, it is made and remade—and interpersonal relationships are also basic to social movements. More generally, though, we should recognize the importance of public discourse as a source of social solidarity, mutual commitment, and shared interest. Neither individuals nor social groups are fully or finally formed in advance of public discourse. People's identities and understandings of the world are changed by participation in public discourse. Groups are created not just found and the forms of group life are at least potentially open to choice.<sup>12</sup>

Public discourse is not simply a matter of finding pre-existing common interests, in short, nor of developing strategies for acting on inherited identities; it is also in and of itself a form of solidarity. The women's movement offers a prominent example; it transformed identities, it did not just express the interests of women whose identities were set in advance. It created both an arena of discourse among women and a stronger voice for women in discourses that were male dominated (even when they were ostensibly gender neutral). The solidarity formed among women had to do with the capacity of this discourse meaningfully to bridge concerns of private life and large-scale institutions and culture. We can also see the inverse, the extent to which this gendered production of solidarity is changed as feminist public discourse is replaced by mass-marketing to women and the production of feminism's successor as a gendered consumer identity in which liberation is reduced to freedom to purchase.

In short, there are a variety of ways in which people are joined to each other, within and across the boundaries of states and other polities. Theorists of cosmopolitan democracy are right to stress the multiplicity of connections. But we need to complement the liberal idea of rights with a stronger sense of what binds people to each other. One of the peculiarities of nation-states has been the extent to which they were able to combine elements of each of these different sorts of solidarity. They did not do so perfectly, of

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<sup>12</sup> I have developed this argument about public discourse as a form of or basis for solidarity and its significance for transnational politics further in "Constitutional Patriotism and the Public Sphere: Interests, Identity, and Solidarity in the Integration of Europe," pp. 275-312 in Pablo De Greiff and Ciaran Cronin, eds., *Global Ethics and Transnational Politics*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002.

course. Markets flowed over their borders from the beginning, and some states were weak containers of either economic organization or power. Not all states had a populace with a strong national identity, or pursued policies able to shape a common identity among citizens. Indeed, those that repressed public discourse suffered a particular liability to fissure along the lines of ethnicity or older national identities weakly amalgamated into the new whole; the Soviet Union is a notable case. Conversely, though, the opportunity to participate in a public sphere and seek to influence the state was an important source of solidarity within it.

Actually existing international civil society includes some level of each of the different forms of solidarity I listed. In very few cases, however, are these joined strongly to each other at a transnational level. There is community among the expatriate staffs of NGOs; there is public discourse on the Internet. But few of the categorical identities that express people's sense of themselves are matched to strong organizations of either power or community at a transnational level. What this means is that international civil society offers a weak counterweight to systemic integration and power. If hopes for cosmopolitan democracy are to be realized, they depend on developing more social solidarity.

As I have emphasized, such solidarity can be at least partially chosen through collective participation in the public sphere. It is unlikely, however, that solidarity can be entirely a matter of choice. This is the import of Habermas's question about whether the nation of citizens can fully replace the ethnic nation. A purely political conception of human beings has two weak points. First, it does not attend enough to all the ways in which solidarity is achieved outside of political organization, and does not adequately appreciate the bearing of these networks on questions of political legitimacy. Second, it does not consider the extent to which high political ideals founder on the shoals of everyday needs and desires—including quite legitimate ones. The ideal of civil society has sometimes been expressed in recent years as though it should refer to a constant mobilization of all of us all the time in various sorts of voluntary organizations.<sup>13</sup> But in

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<sup>13</sup> This hyperTocquevillianism appears famously in Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone* (New York: Simon and Schuster 2000), but has in fact been central to discussions since at least the 1980s, including prominently Robert Bellah, et al., *Habits of the Heart* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1984). The embrace of a notion of civil society as centrally composed of a "voluntary sector" complimenting a capitalist market economy has of course informed public policy from America's first Bush administration with its "thousand points of light" forward. Among other features, this approach neglects the notion of a

fact one of the things people quite reasonably want from a good political order is to be left alone some of the time—to enjoy a non-political life in civil society. In something of the same sense, Oscar Wilde famously said of socialism that it requires too many evenings. We could say of cosmopolitanism that it requires too much travel, too many dinners out at ethnic restaurants, too much volunteering with *Mèdècins Sans Frontiers*. Perhaps not too much or too many for academics (though I wouldn't leap to that presumption) but too much and too many to base a political order on the expectation that everyone will choose to participate—even if they acknowledge that they *ought* to.

A good political order must deal fairly with the fact that most people will not be politically active most of the time. That actually existing politics turn many people off only makes the issue more acute. But for cosmopolitan democracy, scale is the biggest issue. Participation rates are low in local and national politics; there is good reason to think that the very scale of the global ecumene will make participation in it even narrower and more a province of elites than participation in national politics. Not only does Michels' law of oligarchy apply, if perhaps not with the iron force he imagined, but the capacities to engage cosmopolitan politics—from literacy to computer literacy to familiarity with the range of acronyms--are apt to continue to be unevenly distributed. Indeed, there are less commonly noted but significant inequalities directly tied to locality. Within almost any social movement or activist NGO, as one moves from the local to the national and global in either public actions or levels of internal organization one sees a reduction in women's participation. Largely because so much labor of social reproduction—child care, for instance--is carried out by women, women find it harder to work outside of their localities. This is true even for social movements in which women predominate at the local level.<sup>14</sup>

### **Globalization, Capitalism, and the Nation-State**

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political public sphere as an institutional framework of civil society; see Jurgen Habermas, *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989). It grants a high level of autonomy to markets and economic actors; it is notable for the absence of political economy from its theoretical bases and analyses. As one result, it introduces a sharp separation among market, government, and voluntary association (non-profit) activity that obscures the question of how social movements may challenge economic institutions, and how the public sphere may mobilize government to shape economic practices.

<sup>14</sup> On how global NGOs actually work, see Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

Various crisis of the nation-state set the stage for the revitalization of cosmopolitanism. The crises were occasioned by acceleration of global economic restructuring in the 1990s, new transnational communications media, new flows of migrants, and proliferation of civil wars and humanitarian crises in the wake of the Cold War. The last could no longer be comprehended in terms of the Cold War, which is one reason why they often appeared in the language of ethnicity and nationalism. Among their many implications, these crises all challenged liberalism's established understandings of (or perhaps willful blind spot towards) the issues of political membership and sovereignty. They presented several problems simultaneously: (1) Why should the benefits of membership in any one polity not be available to all people? (2) On what bases might some polities legitimately intervene in the affairs of others? (3) What standing should organizations have that operate across borders without being the agents of any single state (this problem, I might add, applies as much to business corporations as to NGOs and social movements) and conversely how might states appropriately regulate them?

Enter cosmopolitanism. Borders should be abandoned as much as possible and left porous where they must be maintained. Intervention on behalf of human rights is good. NGOs and transnational social movements offer models for the future of the world. These are not bad ideas, but they are limited ideas.

The current enthusiasm for global citizenship and cosmopolitanism reflects not just a sense of its inherent moral worth but also the challenge of an increasingly global capitalism. It is perhaps no accident that the first cited usage under "cosmopolitan" in the Oxford English Dictionary comes from John Stuart Mill's *Political Economy* in 1848: "Capital is becoming more and more cosmopolitan".<sup>15</sup> Cosmopolitan, after all, means "belonging to all parts of the world; not restricted to any one country or its inhabitants." As the quotation from Mill reminds us, the latest wave of globalization was not required to demonstrate that capital fit this bill. Indeed, Marx and Engels wrote in the *Communist Manifesto*:

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<sup>15</sup> This is a point made also by Bruce Robbins in *Secular Vocations: Intellectuals, Professionalism, Culture* (London: Verso, 1993), p. 182. See also his "The Village of the Liberal Managerial Class" pp. 15-32 in Vinay Dharwadker, ed.: *Cosmopolitan Geographies: New Locations in Literature and Culture* (New York: Routledge 2001).

the bourgeoisie has through its exploitation of the world market given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. ... All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. ... In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations. And as in material so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature.<sup>16</sup>

This is progress, of a sort, but not an altogether happy story. “The bourgeoisie,” Marx and Engels go on, “by the rapid improvement of all instruments of production, by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilisation. ... It compels all nations, on pain of extinction, to adopt the bourgeois mode of production; it compels them to introduce what it calls civilization into their midst, i.e., to become bourgeois themselves. In one word, it creates a world after its own image.”<sup>17</sup> It is not clear that these new commonalities are necessarily a basis for harmony, though, and Marx and Engels stressed the contradictions within capitalism and the inevitable clashes among capitalist powers. In addition, unification such as that brought by capitalist markets consistently benefits the dominant at the expense of those who are not prepared, especially when it is introduced with speed and little effort to protect existing institutions.

The rise of the modern capitalist world system was not simply a progress of cosmopolitanism. It marked a historical turn against empire, and capitalist globalization has been married to the dominance of nation-states in politics.<sup>18</sup> Capitalist cosmopolitans have indeed traversed the globe, from early modern merchants to today’s World Bank officials and venture capitalists. They have forged relations that cross the borders of

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<sup>16</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, pp. 477-519 in *Collected Works* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1976), p. 488.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. Marx and Engels, remarkable as their insight is, were fallible observers. Not much later in the *Communist Manifesto* they reported that modern subjection to capital had already stripped workers of “every trace of national character” (p. 494).

<sup>18</sup> This is a central point of Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System*, vol. 1 (New York: Academic Press, 1974).

nation-states. But they have also relied on states and a global order of states to maintain property rights and other conditions of production and trade. Their passports bear stamps of many countries, but they are still passports and good cosmopolitans knew which ones get them past inspectors at borders and airports.

Not least of all, capitalist cosmopolitanism has offered only weak defense against reactionary nationalism. This was clearly declass  so far as most cosmopolitans were concerned. But Berlin in the 1930s was a very cosmopolitan city. If having cosmopolitan elites were a guarantee of respect for civil or human rights, then Hitler would never have ruled Germany, Chile would have been spared Pinochet, and neither the Guomintang nor the Communists would have come to power in China. Cosmopolitanism is not responsible for empire or capitalism or fascism or communism, but neither is it an adequate defense.

Even while the internal homogeneity of national cultures was being promoted by linguistic and educational standardization (among other means), the great imperial and trading cities stood as centers of diversity. Enjoying this diversity was one of the marks of the sophisticated modern urbanite by contrast to the “traditional” hick. To be a cosmopolitan was to be comfortable in heterogeneous public space.<sup>19</sup> Richard Sennett cites (and builds on) a French usage of 1738: “a cosmopolite ... is a man who moves comfortably in diversity; he is comfortable in situations which have no links or parallels to what is familiar to him,” Yet there is a tendency for commercial capitalism and political liberalism to tame this diversity. While cities can be places of creative disorder, jumbling together ethnicities, classes, and political projects, most people claim only familiar parts of the diversity on offer. The difference between a willingness to enter situations truly without parallels or familiarity and a willingness to experience diversity as packaged for consumer tastes is noteworthy. While Sennett’s strong sense of cosmopolitanism calls for confrontation with deep and necessarily contentious differences between ways of life, there is a tendency for a soft cosmopolitanism to emerge. Aided by the frequent flyer lounges (and their extensions in “international standard” hotels), contemporary cosmopolitans meet others of different backgrounds in spaces that retain familiarity.

The notion of cosmopolitanism gains currency from the flourishing of multiculturalism—and the opposition of those who consider themselves multiculturally modern feel to those rooted in monocultural traditions. The latter, say the former, are locals with limited perspective, if not outright racists. It is easier to sneer at the far right, but too much claiming of ethnic solidarity by minorities also falls afoul of some advocates of cosmopolitanism. It is no accident either that the case against Salman Rushdie began to be formulated among diasporic Asians in Britain or that cosmopoliticians are notably ambivalent towards them. Integrationist white liberals in the United States are similarly unsure what to make of what some of them see as “reverse racism” on the part of blacks striving to maintain local communities. Debates over English as a common language reveal related ambivalence towards Hispanics and others. It is important for cosmopolitan theorists to recognize, though, that societies outside the modern West have by no means always been “monocultural”. On the contrary, it is the development of the European nation-state that most pressed for this version of unity. And it is often the insertion of migrants from around the world into the Western nation-state system that produces intense “reverse monoculturalism”, including both the notion that the culture “back home” is singular and unified and pure and sometimes the attempt by political leaders on the home front to make it so. Such projects may be simply reactionary, but even when proclaimed in the name of ancient religions, they often pursue alternative modernities. An effectively democratic future must allow for such different collective projects—as they must allow for each other. It must be built in a world in which these are powerful and find starting points within them; it cannot be conceptualized adequately simply in terms of diversity of individuals.

This complexity is easy to miss if one’s access to cultural diversity is organized mainly by the conventions of headline news or the packaging of ethnicity for consumer markets. In the world’s global cities, and even in a good many of its small towns, certain forms of cosmopolitan diversity appear ubiquitous. Certainly Chinese food is now a global cuisine—both in a generic form that exists especially as a global cuisine and in more “authentic” regional versions prepared for more cultivated global palates. And one can buy Kentucky Fried Chicken in Beijing. Local taste cultures that were once more

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<sup>19</sup> *The Fall of Public Man* (New York: Knopf, 1977), p. 17.

closed and insular have indeed opened up. Samosas are now English food just as pizza is American and Indonesian curry is Dutch. Even where the hint of the exotic (and the uniformity of the local) is stronger, one can eat internationally--Mexican food in Norway, Ethiopian in Italy. This is not all “MacDonaldization” and it is not to be decried in the name of cultural survival. Nonetheless, it tells us little about whether to expect democracy on global scale, successful accommodation of immigrants at home, or respect for human rights across the board. Food, tourism, music, literature, and clothes are all easy faces of cosmopolitanism. They are indeed broadening, literally after a fashion, but they are not hard tests for the relationship between local solidarity and international civil society.

Despite the spread of consumerist cosmopolitanism, too many states still wage war or take on projects like ethnic cleansing that an international public might constrain or at least condemn. Profit, moreover, is pursued not only in “above board” trading and global manufacturing, but in transnational flows of people, weapons, and drugs. The “legitimate” and “illegitimate” sides of global economics life are never fully separable—as is shown for example by the role of both recorded and unrecorded financial transfers in paving the way for the September 11 attacks. The cosmopolitan project speaks to these concerns, suggesting the need not only for multilateral regulatory agreements but for new institutions operating as more than the sum—or net outcome--of the political agendas of member states. It may be that “legitimate” businesses have an interest in such institutions and that this will help to compensate for their weak capacity to enforce agreements. Trying to secure some level of democratic participation for such transnational institutions will remain a challenge, though, for reasons suggested above. So too will avoiding a predominantly technocratic orientation to global governance projects. Not least, there will be important tensions between liberal cosmopolitan visions that exempt property relations from democratic control and more radical ones that do not. If this is not addressed directly, it is easy for the rhetoric of cosmopolitanism—and indeed cosmopolitan democracy—to be adopted by and become a support for neoliberal visions of global capitalism.

Cosmopolitanism—though not necessarily cosmopolitan democracy--is now largely the project of capitalism, and it flourishes in the top management of multinational

corporations and even more in the consulting firms that serve them. Such cosmopolitanism often joins elites across national borders while ordinary people live in local communities. This is not simply because common folk are less sympathetic to diversity—a self-serving notion of elites. It is also because the class structuring of public life excludes many workers and others. This is not an entirely new story. One of the striking changes of the 19<sup>th</sup> and especially 20<sup>th</sup> centuries was a displacement of cosmopolitanism from cities to international travel and mass media. International travel, moreover, meant something different to those who traveled for business or diplomacy and those who served in armies fighting wars to expand or control the cosmopolis. If diplomacy was war by other means, it was also war by other classes who paid less dearly for it.

Deep inequalities in the political economy of capitalism (as earlier of empire) mean that some people labor to support others whose pursuit of global relations focuses on acquisition and accumulation. Cosmopolitanism does not in itself speak to these systemic inequalities, any more than did the rights of bourgeois man that Marx criticized in the 1840s. If there is to be a major redistribution of wealth, or a challenge to the way the means of production are controlled in global capitalism, it is not likely to be guided by cosmopolitanism as such. Of course, it may well depend on transnational—even cosmopolitan--solidarities among workers or other groups. But it will have to contend with both capitalism's economic power and its powerful embeddedness in the institutional framework of global relations.

The affinity of cosmopolitanism to rationalist liberal individualism has blinded many cosmopolitans to some of the destructions neoliberalism--the cosmopolitanism of capital--has wrought and the damage it portends to hard-won social achievements. Pierre Bourdieu has rightly called attention to the enormous investment of struggle that has made possible relatively autonomous social fields—higher education, for example, or science--and at least partial rights of open access to them.<sup>20</sup> Such fields are organized largely on national bases, at present, though they include transnational linkages and could become far more global. This might be aided by the “new internationalism” (especially of

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<sup>20</sup> See the essays in Bourdieu, *Acts of Resistance* (New York: New Press, 1999) and *Contre-feux II* (Paris: Raisons d'Agir, 2001).

intellectuals) that Bourdieu proposes in opposition to the globalization of neoliberal capitalism. The latter imposes a reduction to market forces that undermines both the specific values and autonomy of distinctive fields—including higher education and science—and many rights won from nation-states by workers and others. In this context, defense of existing institutions including parts of national states is not merely reactionary. Yet it is commonly presented this way, and cosmopolitan discourse too easily encourages the equation of the global with the modern and the national or local with the backwardly traditional.

Neoliberalism presents one international agenda simply as a force of necessity to which all people, organizations, and states have no choice but to adapt. Much of the specific form of integration of the European Union, for example, has been sold as the necessary and indeed all but inevitable response to global competition. This obscures the reality that transnational relations might be built in a variety of ways, and indeed that the shifting forces bringing globalization can also be made the objects of collective choice. Likewise, existing national and indeed local institutions are not mere inheritances from tradition but—at least sometimes—hard won achievements of social struggles. To defend such institutions is not always backward.

The global power of capitalism, among other factors, makes the creation of cosmopolitan institutions seems crucial. But it would be a mistake for this to be pursued in opposition to more local solidarities or without adequate distinction from capitalism. Appeals to abstract human rights in themselves speak to neither—or at least not adequately as currently pursued. Building cosmopolitanism solely on such a discourse of individual rights—without strong attention to diverse solidarities and struggles for a more just and democratic social order—also runs the risk of substituting ethics for politics. An effective popular politics must find roots in solidary social groups and networks of ties among them.

## **Conclusion**

The current pursuit of cosmopolitan democracy flies in the face of a long history in which cosmopolitan sensibilities thrived in market cities, imperial capitals, and court society while democracy was tied to the nation-state. Cosmopolitanism flourished in Ottoman Istanbul, old regime Paris, and colonial Singapore partly because in neither were

members of different cultures and communities invited to organize government together. It was precisely when democracy became a popular passion and a political project that nationalism flourished. Democracy depends on strong notions of who “the people” behind phrases like “we the people” might be, and who might make legitimate the performative declarations of constitution-making and the less verbal performances of revolution.<sup>21</sup>

One way of looking at modern history is as 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 and organize the world. Capital is 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. States come close to catching up, 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—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. Because markets and corporations increasingly transcend states, there is new catching up to do. This is why cosmopolitan democracy is appealing.

Yet, as practical projects in the world (and sometimes even as theory) cosmopolitanism and democracy have both been intertwined with capitalism and Western hegemony. If cosmopolitan democracy is to flourish and be fully open to human beings of diverse circumstances and identities, then it needs to disentangle itself from neoliberal capitalism. It needs to approach both cross-cultural relations and the construction of social solidarities with deeper recognition of the significance of diverse starting points and potential outcomes. It needs more discursive engagement across lines of difference, more commitment to reduction of material inequality, and more openness to radical change. Like many liberals of the past, advocates of cosmopolitan democracy often offer a vision of political reform attractive to elites partly because it promises to find virtue without radical redistribution of wealth or power. This is all the more uncomfortable for the left in the advanced capitalist countries because those advocating more radical change

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<sup>21</sup> See Charles Taylor, “Modern Social Imaginaries,” *Public Culture*, 14 (2001) 1.

typically challenge Western culture and values—including much of liberalism--as well as global inequality.

The answer clearly does not lie with embracing illiberal nationalisms or “fundamentalisms”. These may be voices of the oppressed without being voices for good. But not all nationalism is ugly ethnonationalism; not all religion is fundamentalism. Both can be sources of solidarity and care for strangers as well as xenophobia or persecution of heretics. They are also in conflict with each other as often as they are joined together. But if cosmopolitan democracy is to be more than a good ethical orientation for those privileged to inhabit the frequent traveler lounges, it must put down roots in the solidarities that organize most people’s sense of identity and location in the world. To appeal simply to liberal individualism—even with respect for diversity—is to disempower those who lack substantial personal or organizational resources. It is also disingenuous, if would-be cosmopolitans don’t recognize the extent to which cosmopolitan appreciation of global diversity is based on privileges of wealth and perhaps especially citizenship in certain states. Cosmopolitan democracy depends on finding ways to relate diverse solidarities to each other rather than trying to overcome them.

This is surely a matter of robust public communication in which ordinary people can gain more capacity to shape both the societies within which they live and the global forces that shape the options open to them. But it is important to recognize that relations across meaningful groups are not simply matters of rational-critical discourse but involve the creation of local hybrid cultures, accommodations, collaborations, and practical knowledge. Equally, it is important to see that attenuated cosmopolitanism won’t ground mutual commitment and responsibility. Not only tolerance but solidarity is required for people to live together and join in democratic self-governance.

Still, feeling at home can’t be enough an adequate basis for life in modern global society. Exclusive localism is neither empowering nor even really possible, however nostalgic for it people may feel. Cosmopolitanism by itself may not be enough; a soft cosmopolitanism that doesn’t challenge capitalism or Western hegemony may be an ideological diversion; but some form of cosmopolitanism is needed.