

On Cosmopolitanisms

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The past twenty years has witnessed an enormous resurgence of interest in cosmopolitanism among scholars working in a wide variety of academic disciplines, including philosophy, political science, sociology, English, history, and law. Building on the already-contested tradition of cosmopolitan reflection, whose roots can be traced back to the Cynics and Stoics of ancient Greece, and which is substantially reconceptualized during the Age of Enlightenment, these scholars introduced a dizzying variety of theoretical innovations and novel applications. Cosmopolitanism is now characterized by some, for example, as a necessarily universalistic theory, while for others it is definitively post-universalistic. Some celebrate the cosmopolitan condition as a kind of rootlessness, while others insist that it is unavoidably rooted. For some, cosmopolitanism constitutes a kind of utopian ethical or political ideal, while for others it names a banal, everyday reality. And for some, it is a phenomenon best exemplified in the lifestyles of jet-setting consumers of culture, while according to others it is manifest most clearly in the experiences of diasporic communities and migrant laborers. Faced with such a proliferation of often contradictory articulations, one might find it extremely difficult to form any kind of determinate conception of the meaning of cosmopolitanism.

I believe, however, that we can begin to clarify the sense of the term by identifying a single, very broad commitment that all forms of cosmopolitan thought share, viz. that all human beings belong, or ought to be treated as if they belong, to one worldwide community. In what follows, I will provide an overview of the most important and influential articulations of cosmopolitanism, taking this shared commitment as a guiding thread. More specifically, I will treat cosmopolitan thought as falling into three categories: moral, political, and sociological. Moral and political cosmopolitanism are both concerned with normative questions, while sociological cosmopolitanism is primarily descriptive. Moral cosmopolitanism attempts to determine the nature and the sources of the obligations we have to others qua members of the worldwide community of human beings, while political cosmopolitanism, broadly speaking, attempts to determine what kind of transnational and international institutional framework is most appropriate for the governance of this community. And finally, sociological cosmopolitanism attempts to describe the connections that bind the worldwide community of human beings together. In addition, it is concerned to describe the relations between this community and the various national political communities.

I. Moral Cosmopolitanism

Moral cosmopolitanism can be described, at least provisionally and with some simplification, as the thesis according to which “every human being has

obligations to every other.”¹ Our obligations to other human beings, in other words, are not based primarily, if at all, upon their being members of our own national, ethnic, cultural, religious, or linguistic communities. Rather, we have obligations to other human beings simply in virtue of their being human. Different cosmopolitan ethicists, of course, disagree on some of the details of the thesis. There is disagreement, for example, on how precisely to weigh the obligations we have to humanity in general against those we have to our particular communities. Some argue that no weighing is required at all, since “particular human relationships and group affiliations never provide independent reasons for action or suffice by themselves to generate special responsibilities to one’s intimates and associates.”² On this view, preferential treatment can be justified only by reference to its benefit to humanity generally. Others argue for the more moderate cosmopolitan thesis that we have obligations to humanity in addition to those based on our more particular allegiances.³ Likewise, different theorists disagree about the source of our obligation to humanity in general. Some, including Marcus Aurelius, ground cosmopolitan obligation in the rationality that is common to all human beings.⁴ Others, like Epictetus, emphasize the arbitrariness of local affiliations: “Never in reply to the question, to what country do you belong, say that you are an Athenian or a Corinthian, but that you are a citizen of the world. For why do you say that you are an Athenian, and why do you not say that you belong to the small nook only into which your poor body was cast at

birth?”⁵ Finally, cosmopolitans disagree about how best to characterize the relation between the local and the universal. Many treat the relation as one between rich concreteness and bloodless abstraction, while others, such as Kwame Anthony Appiah, caution us against overstating the difference, emphasizing the great degree to which supposedly abstract “others” are in fact woven into the fabric of our everyday lives.⁶ But despite these various disagreements on the details, all moral cosmopolitans share a core commitment to the proposition that, ethically speaking, “everybody matters.”⁷

A. Ancient Moral Cosmopolitanism: Diogenes and Hierocles

The origins of moral cosmopolitanism can be traced back to the Cynic philosopher Diogenes, who is responsible for the doctrine’s name. Asked where he came from, Diogenes answered provocatively that he was a kosmopolitēs, a citizen of the world.⁸ In pronouncing himself a citizen of the world, Diogenes articulated what might be called the negative thesis of moral cosmopolitanism: he denied that his identity was bound up with the polis, which was regarded by the most important political thinkers of the time as providing the necessary normative context for the well-lived life.⁹ Diogenes denied the normative force of nomos or custom, including the norms of political life, emphasizing instead the importance of living in accordance with human nature, which is common to us all. He does not seem to have worked out any determinate conception of the positive

obligations we have toward other human beings in virtue of this common nature. Indeed, the only evidence we have of Diogenes' cosmopolitanism comes from contemporary accounts of his way of life, which focus overwhelmingly on his very public practice of flouting social norms. Nonetheless, in denying the role of particular human relationships and affiliations as legitimate sources of obligation, Diogenes played an indispensable role in the development of a more contentful cosmopolitan morality.

Diogenes' cardinal insight was developed into a positive moral philosophy by Stoic philosophers such as Zeno, Epictetus, Cicero, and Marcus Aurelius. Owing to considerations of space, I will not be able to examine the contributions of each of these philosophers to the development of cosmopolitan thought. Instead, I will focus on one particular Stoic philosopher—Hierocles—who introduced an especially intuitive and influential model for thinking about cosmopolitan obligation. In a fragment preserved by Stobaeus, Hierocles writes that

Each one of us is as it were entirely encompassed by many circles, some smaller, others larger, the latter enclosing the former on the basis of their different and unequal dispositions relative to each other. The first and closest circle is the one which a person has drawn as though around a centre, his own mind.... Next, the second one further removed from the centre but enclosing the first

circle; this contains parents, siblings, wife, and children. The third one has in it uncles and aunts, grandparents, nephews, nieces, and cousins.... The outermost and largest circle, which encompasses all the rest, is that of the whole human race. Once these have all been surveyed, it is the task of a well tempered man, in his proper treatment of each group, to draw the circles together somehow towards the centre, and to keep zealously transferring those from the enclosing circles into the enclosed ones.... It is incumbent on us to respect people from the third circle as if they were those from the second, and again to respect our other relatives as if they were those from the third circle....¹⁰

Unlike Diogenes, Hierocles does not conceive the local and the universal as standing in a relation of opposition. One can regard oneself as a citizen of the world without renouncing one's connections to the family or polis. The local and the universal are conceived rather with reference to a continuum of affection: the interior circles contain people, including ourselves, with whom we maintain strong, natural bonds of affection, while those in the outer circles are progressively more distant, both spatially and affectively. This way of conceiving the relation between local and universal shapes Hierocles' moral cosmopolitanism in an important way. It suggests that our obligations to humanity in general do not require us to renounce our more particular affiliations. Indeed, Hierocles'

articulation of cosmopolitan obligation presupposes that we experience these affiliations as making morally powerful claims on us. To fulfill our obligations toward those in the outer circles, we must treat them as if they belonged to the inner circles. It is our local, more particular affiliations and relationships, in other words, that provide the model for our obligations to humanity in general. The humanity toward which we are obligated, then, is not the kind of lifeless abstraction that holds minimal power over the moral imagination. Hierocles' cosmopolitanism requires not that we adopt a psychologically unsustainable attitude of strict impartiality toward all human beings, but merely that we make it our project to extend our existing relations of affection outward toward progressively more distant circles.

B. Contemporary Moral Cosmopolitanism: Nussbaum and Appiah

Stoic cosmopolitanism of the kind exemplified by Hierocles remains enormously influential, informing the thought of philosophers reflecting on the moral difficulties of the contemporary world. Among the most prominent of these philosophers is Martha Nussbaum, whose essay "Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism" addresses the role of patriotic identification in education and in national self-consciousness generally. In the essay, Nussbaum responds to the philosopher Richard Rorty, who calls upon the American left to "rejoice in the country it inhabits" and to reaffirm "the idea of national identity, and the emotion

of national pride.”¹¹ Nussbaum objects to Rorty’s appeal on cosmopolitan grounds. One of her most compelling arguments recalls Epictetus’ reflection on the arbitrariness of political identity. Contemporary multicultural liberal democracies must be able to persuade their citizens, who are divided, sometimes deeply, by differences in ethnicity, race, class, and gender, to respect each other and to work together for the common good. But why, Nussbaum asks, ought we to be concerned to work together across these differences within the boundaries of the state, but not outside those boundaries? “Why should we think of people from China as our fellows the minute they dwell in a certain place, namely the United States, but not when they dwell in a certain other place, namely China? What is it about the national boundary that magically converts people toward whom we are both incurious and indifferent into people to whom we have duties of mutual respect?”¹² In addition, Nussbaum notes that the values on which citizens of liberal democratic states pride themselves, including the ideas that all human beings are created equal and are endowed with certain inalienable rights, including the right to pursue their own visions of the good life as they see fit, are remarkably cosmopolitan.¹³ To be true to the values of our own particular political community, on this account, just is to adopt a cosmopolitan point of view. Finally, Nussbaum makes an argument that has come to play an important role in more explicitly political and sociological forms of cosmopolitanism: many of the contemporary world’s most pressing problems simply cannot be addressed

within the context of isolated moral or political communities. Any adequate response to problems such as climate change, environmental pollution, and nuclear proliferation will require decision makers who are able to adopt a genuinely global outlook, transcending their particular attachments and points of view.

These kinds of cosmopolitan arguments have drawn much criticism from philosophers representing a broadly communitarian point of view. Two anti-cosmopolitan arguments, which are closely related, have been especially prominent. The first is that cosmopolitanism disregards the necessary conditions for the development and sustenance of moral consciousness. According to Alasdair MacIntyre, “it is an essential characteristic of the morality which each of us acquires that it is learned from, in and through the way of life of some particular community.”¹⁴ The goods that one learns to pursue, the motivations one has for pursuing them, and the modes of life that are associated with those goods, are community-specific. Deprived of this thick normative context, one would no longer have any reason to be moral at all.¹⁵ The system of morality to which the cosmopolitan expects us to adhere, then, is hopelessly abstract. And this leads to the second of the two major anti-cosmopolitan arguments: we cannot reasonably be expected to extend our serious moral concern to humanity in general. Our moral concern is much more naturally directed toward those with whom we stand in concrete relations of love, friendship, collegiality, and trust. These, of course,

are primarily members of our own communities. Benjamin Barber summarizes this line of argumentation well: “Diogenes may have regarded himself as a citizen of the world, but global citizenship demands of its patriots levels of abstraction and disembodiment most women and men will be unable or unwilling to muster, at least in the first instance.”¹⁶

I would like to conclude this discussion of moral cosmopolitanism with a brief examination of Kwame Anthony Appiah’s Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers, which can be read as a defense of cosmopolitanism against these sorts of objections. One of the principal theses that Appiah defends throughout the book is that moral cosmopolitanism does not require any kind of rootless, contentless existence or psychologically improbable levels of affection for abstract humanity. The conception of community life on which the communitarian objections rely is itself an abstraction. There is no community that is not, at least to some degree, a product of the kinds of migrations and contaminations that cosmopolitanism celebrates. Appiah describes his own childhood in Kumasi, Ghana, where he interacted regularly and as a matter of course with Indians, Syrians, Lebanese, Greeks, Hungarians, and various northern Europeans.¹⁷ He explains that the textiles we associate with the cultures of West Africa were originally milled and sold by the Dutch.¹⁸ Even the bagpipes came to Scotland from Egypt via the Roman infantry.¹⁹ The pervasiveness of cultural hybridization throughout history strongly suggests that “we do not need, have

never needed, settled community, a homogeneous system of values, in order to have a home. Cultural purity is an oxymoron.”²⁰ If it is true, as Appiah suggests, that communities are and always have been cosmopolitan, then we have less reason to accept the communitarians’ worry that moral cosmopolitanism undermines the very conditions of moral life.

A second, and closely related, argument that runs throughout the text challenges the assumption that communication across cultural differences presents insurmountable difficulties. Cross-cultural communication is only that difficult, according to Appiah, “when we are trying to imagine making sense of a stranger in the abstract.”²¹ This is because we tend to think of cultural differences in terms of disagreements over basic values and principles. Within a culture, it is supposed, there is basic agreement on these values and principles; indeed, it is that agreement that holds the culture together. Members of other cultures, however, do not share those values and principles, and this makes communication and cooperation with these people extraordinarily difficult. This common-sense understanding of cross-cultural communication is mistaken. It is simply not true that members of a particular culture share a commitment to a set of core principles. The United States Constitution, for example, guarantees the freedom of religion. But there is certainly no agreement among citizens of the United States concerning the ultimate justification of that freedom. Some would point to the epistemic difficulties involved in determining the one true religion, while

others would cite the importance of protecting religion from government interference.²² Appiah's point is that we do not need any agreement on principles; all that matters is that enough people accept the First Amendment protection of religious freedom for their own reasons, whatever they are. What is true of communication and cooperation within cultures is equally true between cultures. There is a great deal of similarity across cultures. Incest, for example, is regarded as morally bad among the Asante and among contemporary Americans. The Asante and the American would probably provide very different reasons for judging incest to be morally bad, but for practical purposes that does not matter.²³ When the theoretical Asante meets the theoretical American then, communication is precluded by disagreement over basic principles, but when the real Asante communicates with the real American, they understand each other well enough. Moral cosmopolitanism works, according to Appiah, precisely because it does not require us to relate to human beings in the abstract, but rather to concrete human beings whose perspectives we are perfectly capable of understanding, as long as we are willing to make the effort.

II. Political Cosmopolitanism

A. Cosmopolitanism as Project for Peace: Kant and Kelsen

The essential point of reference for all of the most important contemporary articulations of political cosmopolitanism is Immanuel Kant's conception of cosmopolitan right, which is developed in many different texts, but most thoroughly in "Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Project" and in Part One of The Metaphysics of Morals. In both of these works, Kant calls for the establishment of a league of nations, which he views as indispensable for securing the universal rights of human beings and for promoting a genuine peace that would be more than a mere temporary and precarious cessation of hostilities.

As a first step toward understanding Kant's conception of cosmopolitan right, it is essential to appreciate the way in which that conception is grounded in concerns that are unambiguously moral. According to Kant, the establishment of a league of nations is "a direct duty."²⁴ The source of this duty, and indeed of all duties, is pure, i.e., non-empirical, reason. As Kant had argued in his Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals, we can never hope to arrive at a determinate conception of our duties by means of any kind of empirical study of experience. A duty, for Kant, is an act that is morally necessary; it is one that we find ourselves commanded to perform, unconditionally. Because morality has its source in pure reason, its commands are the same for all rational beings, irrespective of their different life experiences and their different calculations of their own self-interest.

That part of practical philosophy that is specifically concerned with persons' actions insofar as they affect the freedom of others is called the doctrine

of right. In The Metaphysics of Morals, Kant articulates the universal principle of right as follows: “Any action is right if it can coexist with everyone’s freedom in accordance with a universal law, or if on its maxim the freedom of choice of each can coexist with everyone’s freedom in accordance with a universal law.”²⁵ This means that as long as a person exercises her freedom in a way that does not constrain the freedom of choice of another, then her act is right. The right to freely pursue one’s own projects, subject only to the limitation that one’s pursuit does not interfere with the free choice of others to pursue their own ends, is innate: it “belongs to everyone by nature, independently of any act that would establish a right.”²⁶ Nonetheless in the state of nature, i.e., prior to the establishment of a civil condition, rights are insecure: in the absence of any established, commonly recognized system of law to institutionalize relations of right, persons may resort to “dealing with one another only in terms of the degree of force each has.”²⁷ It is thus a duty to make right secure by agreeing to regulate social life in the state under coercive public laws. This duty, like all duties, is universal: it is binding on all rational persons, irrespective of whatever advantages they may have enjoyed or disadvantages they may have suffered from the relations of injustice that obtain in the state of nature.

The establishment of a civil condition within the state is not sufficient, however, to abolish the nonrightful condition that characterizes the state of nature. This is because the states themselves, in the absence of any higher

institutionalized system of right, relate to each other “only in terms of the degree of force each has.” In the international state of nature, “each state puts its majesty...in its not being subject to any external lawful coercion at all, and the splendor of its chief consists in his being able, without even having to put himself in danger, to command many thousands to sacrifice themselves for a matter that is of no concern to them.”²⁸ This condition is detrimental to the rights of citizens of all states. Even when states are at peace, they must constantly prepare for the outbreak of war. In doing so, they can hardly avoid using their own citizens as means, conscripting them into standing armies and subjecting them to the burden of defense-related debt. Because of this, all rational beings have a duty to leave the international state of nature and to enter into a global condition of right.

In conceptualizing the kind of global civil condition that would put an end to the international state of nature, however, cosmopolitan theory must find a way to resolve a certain tension within the concept of right. On the one hand, as we have seen, rights are conceived as universal: one has them simply in virtue of being a human being, and not in virtue of being a particular kind of human being, e.g., a man, a Christian, a Frenchman, etc. On the other hand, these rights are secured, and one might even say realized, within particular states. Indeed, according to Kant it is the protection of these innate, universal rights that constitutes the state’s raison d’être. This tension gives rise to a question that every proponent of political cosmopolitanism must address: in the transition to a global

civil condition, to what extent should states retain their traditional roles as guarantors of universal rights, and to what extent should that function be taken over by supranational institutions? To what extent, in other words, should citizens be conceived as national citizens and to what extent as citizens of the world?

In the system that Kant proposed, states would retain almost all of their traditional functions. In order to effect a condition of international right, states would join together in a league, which would function primarily as an arbiter of their disputes, and thereby as a keeper of peace.²⁹ In joining the league, however, the states would not surrender any of their sovereignty: the league of nations would not constitute a new global state, standing in a relation to its member states analogous to that between the United States and its fifty member states.³⁰ Specifically, the league would lack the authority to use coercion to enforce public law against the member states. Moreover, membership in the league would be entirely voluntary, so that the states could dissolve the union at any time. Kant recognizes that such a loose confederation of states would be insufficient to bring a definitive end to the nonrightful condition that obtains between states. He nonetheless endorses the idea of the league of nations for two reasons. First, he believes that states would be unwilling to renounce their sovereignty to the degree necessary to establish a genuine world state, “thus rejecting in hypothesi what is correct in thesi.”³¹ Second, and more importantly, he believes that a world state would do a worse job of protecting universal human rights than the various states:

“if such a state made up of nations were to extend too far over vast regions, governing it and so too protecting all its members would finally have to become impossible, while several such corporations would again bring on a state of war.”³² The league of nations, then, while not the ideal means of effecting a global civil condition, is according to Kant nonetheless the best practicable option.

In the twentieth century, the Austrian philosopher of law Hans Kelsen emerged as one of the most prominent and influential advocates of the Kantian cosmopolitical project. Kelsen’s cosmopolitanism, like Kant’s, is motivated primarily by the moral imperative to “eliminate the most terrible employment of force—namely, war—from inter-State relations.”³³ And like Kant, Kelsen believes that genuine peace cannot be achieved unless states enter into a kind of global civil condition, leaving behind the relations of pure force that characterize the international state of nature. And finally, Kelsen agrees with Kant that this global condition cannot take the form of a world state, at least in the foreseeable future: even though such a state would be “an ideal solution of the problem of world organization as the problem of world peace,” it is unfortunately “confronted with serious and, at least at present, insurmountable difficulties.”³⁴

The novelty of Kelsen’s cosmopolitan project consists in the emphasis it places on the role of an international judiciary. Writing at the time of the Second World War, Kelsen was interested in determining precisely why the League of

Nations had “failed completely” in its mission of securing international peace. He concluded that the League’s “fatal fault” was the centrality it gave to the Council of the League of Nations, which functioned as a kind of world government.³⁵ The degree of centralization required by an effective world government required member states to sacrifice more of their sovereignty than they could have reasonably been expected to sacrifice. History shows that it takes a very long time to develop the degree of mutual trust necessary to sustain a centralized state with a monopoly on the legitimate use of force. If this is true for relatively small and relatively homogeneous nation-states, then it is certainly true for a world state. The solution to this problem, according to Kelsen, is to minimize the role of the legislature in international governance and to emphasize instead the role of the judiciary. What is essential to the project of world peace is that states renounce the prerogative to determine unilaterally whether or not they have been wronged by other states and to punish supposed wrongdoers as they see fit. States would be unwilling to surrender this prerogative to a world government, as this would undermine their sovereignty to an excessive degree. This is why “it is advisable to make a court, and not a government, the main instrument of an international reform. It is the line of least resistance.... Seldom has a State refused to execute the decision of a court to whose authority it has submitted itself in a treaty.”³⁶

In order for this proposed judicial authority to play an effective role in securing international peace, it was necessary, Kelsen believed, that it should have

jurisdiction not just over states, taken as juristic persons, but also over individuals. According to the traditional interpretation, it is only states that are obligated by, and that can function as subjects of, international law. Of course acts of states are in reality acts performed by individuals in their capacity as agents of the state.³⁷ Nonetheless, the acts of those individuals have been traditionally imputed to the states themselves. Accordingly, punishments for violations of international law have not been carried out against the individuals responsible, but rather against the whole state, the vast majority of whose citizens may have been entirely innocent.³⁸ This, of course, provides minimal disincentive for individual agents of the state to violate international law. The core commitment of Kelsen's political cosmopolitanism, then, is the idea that laws must be enacted to establish "individual responsibility of the persons who as members of government have violated international law by resorting to or provoking war."³⁹

B. Cosmopolitanism and Democratic Legitimacy: Held and Habermas

In the early 1990s, when liberal democracy seemed to be emerging victorious throughout the world as the only viable and legitimate form of government, political theorists began to propose new articulations of the cosmopolitan project in an attempt to address the changed realities of the post-Cold War world. These new cosmopolitanisms were no longer motivated primarily by a concern for world peace. They were animated rather by the desire

to defend the newly victorious liberal democratic values against threats posed to them by the increasing pace of globalization. More specifically, these cosmopolitanisms emphasized the traditional role of liberal democracy as a means of legitimating the power that states exercised against their own citizens. In the increasingly interconnected world of globalization, however, more and more of the real power that is exercised against persons escapes the control of individual states. The newer cosmopolitanisms, then, are concerned primarily with the question of how to preserve liberal democratic modes of legitimation in a world in which individual states no longer hold monopolies on the power exercised against their citizens. The two most influential forms of this kind of cosmopolitanism have been the project of cosmopolitan democracy, associated most closely with the work of David Held and Daniele Archibugi, and the project of constitutional patriotism, articulated by the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas.

According to David Held, the core value that is affirmed in the liberal democratic model of legitimation is that of autonomy, which is the principle according to which

persons should enjoy equal rights and, accordingly, equal obligations in the specification of the political framework which generates and limits the opportunities available to them; that is, they should be free and equal in the determination of the

conditions of their own lives, so long as they do not deploy this framework to negate the rights of others.⁴⁰

The principle of autonomy is realized in liberal democracies by the mechanism of the vote: citizens periodically grant their consent to the government and its decisions by electing officials who represent their interests and preferences. This creates a symmetrical relationship between political decision-makers and those who are affected by their decisions: the power that political decision-makers exercise against and for the benefit of the citizens is power that the citizens themselves have legitimated through their consent.⁴¹

The liberal democratic model of legitimation has historically presupposed the existence of a determinate, territorially-bounded “we” that has constituted itself as a community by agreeing to live together in accordance with a specified institutional framework. The citizens who make up this “we” are regarded as the true stakeholders in the community. It is they who take on the burdens of maintaining the community, and it is they who reap the benefits. Cosmopolitan democracy constitutes an attempt to maintain the value of autonomy in the face of the breakdown of the historical presupposition of discrete, bounded political communities. In conditions of globalization, characterized by increased interconnectedness between political communities, and between groups or citizens belonging to different political communities, it becomes less and less the case that the set of stakeholders in a political community’s decisions corresponds

to the set of that community's citizens. The symmetry that is essential to the liberal democratic model of legitimacy breaks down as the decisions of one community's political officials come to affect more and more the lives of non-members, who have no means of holding the decision-makers accountable.

The solution to these sorts of problems, according to proponents of cosmopolitan democracy, is to replace the system of state sovereignty with "a system of diverse and overlapping power centres, shaped and delimited by democratic law."⁴² In such a system, states would cease to function as the ultimate legitimate authorities within their own borders. Sovereignty would rather be divided across four levels of governance: local, national, regional, and global. In order to determine which issues are to be dealt with at which levels, one would consult the principle of autonomy. One would attempt to delimit the set of people significantly affected by a particular issue and to determine which level of governance would contribute most effectively to the realization of those peoples' objectives.⁴³ Issues concerning the pollution of a river that runs through several states, for example, would call for regional governance, since the set of stakeholders does not correspond to the set of citizens of any one of the states. Issues that affect people throughout the world, such as climate change, human rights, and the proliferation of nuclear weapons, on the other hand, are best dealt with at the global level. In sum, then, the level at which an issue ought to be

addressed is the level at which the liberal democratic ideal of autonomy is most satisfactorily realized.

For Jürgen Habermas, the most problematic aspects of globalization are the de-nationalization of the economy and the consequent decline of political autonomy within democratic states. As capital becomes increasingly mobile, the specifically economic imperative of competitiveness comes to influence national decision-making more and more. Faced with worldwide competition, businesses continually strive to increase the productivity of their labor forces and to decrease their tax burdens. If states prove unwilling or unable to sustain environments friendly to the interests of business—if they remain committed to strong social welfare systems or to strong protections for labor unions, for example—then businesses can threaten to leave, depriving states of needed tax revenues. Faced with this permanent threat, citizens lose much of their capacity to freely determine the conditions of their own lives. Social life comes to be determined by the logic of the marketplace rather than by the specifically political norms of democratic legitimacy.⁴⁴

In order to preserve the value of autonomous, democratic legitimation against the encroachments of market-based rationality, then, people must form themselves into political communities that transcend the traditional sovereign state. This, however, is no easy matter. According to Habermas, the triumph of liberal democracy over its rivals owes much to the fact that democratic ideals took

root in nation-states.⁴⁵ The citizens of a nation-state viewed themselves as one people, united by a common race, language, culture, and history.⁴⁶ This experience of national unity contributed to the sense of solidarity necessary to sustain the kinds of very large democracies that followed in the wake of the American and French Revolutions, where citizens who had no personal acquaintance with each other would cooperate in bearing the burdens and sharing the benefits of common governance. This sense of responsibility for one another's well-being would be impossible if people did not regard their fellow citizens as "their own" people.⁴⁷ There is simply no solidarity of this sort between citizens of different states. As a result, states come to view their economic competitiveness relative to other states as their highest priority, becoming more concerned with the needs of multinational corporations than with their own citizens' capacity to contribute meaningfully to the steering of political life. According to Habermas, this "broad renunciation of the power of politics to shape social relations, and the readiness to abandon normative points of view in favor of adaptations to supposedly unavoidable systematic imperatives, now dominate the political arenas of the Western world."⁴⁸

Constitutional patriotism attempts to address this problem by steering a middle course between neo-nationalism, which proposes a return to the traditional model of sovereignty and a re-nationalization of economic life, and neo-liberalism, which celebrates the weakening of the sovereign state as a liberation

from burdensome economic regulation and from compulsory cultural conformity.⁴⁹ Habermas agrees with the neo-nationalist position that solidarity is essential to sustaining the kind of political space that can effectively defend the ideals of democratic legitimation against the domination of strictly economic forces. But he does not believe that this solidarity can be grounded in any experience of national unity. The era in which economic policy can be effectively steered at the level of the sovereign nation-state is decisively past. On this latter point, Habermas agrees with the neo-liberals. What is required, then, is the constitution of a transnational political community whose members would be united not by a thick cultural and historical commonality, but rather by a thin shared commitment to the basic principles of liberal democracy. Such a consensus, Habermas believes, can provide a sufficient basis for the kind of solidarity necessary to motivate citizens of different states to cooperate in the effective regulation of their common economic and political life.

III. Sociological Cosmopolitanism

A. Critique of Methodological Nationalism: Beck

I would like to conclude this overview of cosmopolitan thought with an examination of sociological cosmopolitanism. Sociological cosmopolitanism differs from the older and better known moral and political varieties in its

emphasis on descriptive, rather than prescriptive, accounts of cross-cultural and transnational phenomena. From the sociological point of view, cosmopolitanism is less an ethical ideal or political project than an actually existing social reality. According to cosmopolitan sociologists, many of the most basic conceptual and theoretical commitments of classical sociology obscure rather than clarify this reality. Specifically, all those whose work can be described under the rubric of sociological cosmopolitanism are committed to denying the descriptive adequacy of what Ulrich Beck calls the container model of society. Classical sociological theory has tended to view societies as discrete and relatively homogeneous, territorially contained within the borders of sovereign nation-states.⁵⁰ Sociologists have been slow to recognize the inadequacy of this model, in large part because the discipline's foundational theoretical perspectives were established during the time when the nation-state was emerging as the dominant form of political organization in the societies of the north Atlantic rim.⁵¹ Even at the time of the discipline's emergence, however, the container model misrepresented the reality of the vast majority of the world's peoples, whose political lives were dominated by the nationally organized colonizing powers of the north Atlantic. The more recently emerging processes of globalization, characterized by a global mass media, increased economic interdependence and the worldwide sharing of risks, have rendered the container model obsolete everywhere. The cosmopolitan

sociologists attempt, in various ways, to reformulate the basic theoretical commitments of sociology in order to better account for these changed realities.

Perhaps the most influential sociologist working in this tradition is Ulrich Beck, whose work persistently challenges the dominance within sociology of what he calls methodological nationalism. The basic commitment of methodological nationalism is the container model of society, which entails a kind of either/or logic that systematically misdescribes social reality. From methodological nationalism's conceptualization of society on the model of the nation-state, it follows that social or cultural belonging is understood by analogy with citizenship: one either belongs to a particular culture or one does not. The operation of this either/or logic is nicely illustrated by Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim, who describes the kind of "where-are-you-from-originally" dialogue that takes place when someone who is obviously a native within a particular culture converses with someone whose appearance or strange-sounding name deviates from the norm:

'Where do you come from?'—'From Essen.'

'No, I mean originally?'—'I was born in Essen.'

'But your parents?'—'My mother comes from Essen.'

'But your father?'—'My father is Italian.'

'A-ha...!'

'Is that an Italian name?'—'Yes.'

‘So what part of Italy do you come from?’—‘I don’t come from Italy.’⁵²

From the point of view of the more obviously German native in this example, it is simply inconceivable that his interlocutor could really be one of “us” in any deeply meaningful sense. He seems to understand that people who do not look traditionally German and who do not have traditionally German names can be citizens of the Federal Republic of Germany. What he cannot conceive is that such people could really be German. And if they are not German, they must be something else, lifelong residence and linguistic competence notwithstanding. This explains his insistence on assigning his interlocutor the identity “Italian,” despite the fact that he resists that identification. Most fundamentally, one is either an authentic German or one is not; there is no third possibility.

Sociologists committed to methodological nationalism argue that this territorial conception of identity is necessary both for individuals’ self-understanding and for social integration. But this, according to Beck, is empirically false: “All methods of enquiry that operate with statistical concepts such as ‘foreigner’ and ‘native’ are unprepared for the realities of life in a world that is becoming increasingly transnational and involves plural attachments that transcend the boundaries of countries and nationality.”⁵³ An example of this phenomenon is what Beck calls cosmopolitan empathy. With recent developments in communication technology, including 24-hour cable news and the Internet, we have gained an unprecedented degree of access to worlds that would formerly

have been closed off to us. As a result, we develop more and more the capacity to identify with people who are not members of our own national communities. The situations of Muslims in France or of the poor in the favelas of Brazil, for example, become the concern not just of French or Brazilian citizens, but of the whole world. As Kant had argued already in “Toward Perpetual Peace,” “the peoples of the earth have thus entered in varying degrees into a universal community, and it has developed to the point where a violation of rights in one part of the world is felt everywhere.”⁵⁴ People come to identify with French Muslims and with the poor of Brazil, even if they are neither French, Muslim, poor, nor Brazilian. And this kind of identification is more than merely affective: as the worldwide demonstrations protesting the impending invasion of Iraq showed, people from around the world are becoming committed to concrete social and political action on the basis of such transnational identifications.⁵⁵

A second source of cosmopolitan identity-formation that Beck emphasizes is the recognition of risks whose scope is global and that cannot be effectively managed by individual nation-states. As the recent accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant has demonstrated once again, the regulation of nuclear power is a matter of global concern. Although the plant is located in Japan and is managed by a Japanese corporation, the consequences of its meltdown are felt by the entire world. The “we” that is affected by the crisis and that mobilizes both to minimize its damage and to prevent similar disasters in the future, is not

primarily a Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Russian, or American “we,” but rather a global one. The same is true of the “we” that emerges from the recognition of economic and climatological risk, which have long since ceased to be primarily national risks.

What these examples of cosmopolitan empathy and global risk suggest is that social identification is much better understood on the model of both/and rather than the model of either/or. It is no longer true—and probably never was—that identity is straightforwardly national, such that one would always be able to give an unambiguous and consistent answer to the question, Who am I? One can identify, as Kwame Anthony Appiah reminds us, with one’s hometown (Kumasi), one’s region (Asante), a couple of different nation-states (Ghana and the United Kingdom), their continents, and with the world as a whole.⁵⁶ Under conditions of real cosmopolitanism, then, “one constructs a model of one’s identity by dipping freely into the Lego set of globally available identities and building a progressively inclusive self-image. The result is the proud affirmation of a patchwork, quasi-cosmopolitan, but simultaneously provincial, identity....”⁵⁷

B. A Sociology of Networks: Urry and Castells

John Urry goes even further in his rejection of the presuppositions of methodological nationalism, denying the explanatory value of the concept of society altogether. Urry cites with conditional approval former British Prime

Minister Margaret Thatcher's provocative claim that "there is no such thing as society." Urry believes that this claim was "oddly right" in the sense that the proposition itself was true, even though it was wrong in terms of the sense that she intended. What Thatcher meant, of course, was that there is no such thing as "society" over and above the individuals who compose it. Urry agrees that there is no such thing as society, but insists that there certainly are processes, which he describes as post-societal, that do "lie beyond individual men and women," and that shape the qualities of their interpersonal relationships and life experiences enormously.⁵⁸ He conceives of these post-societal processes as mobilities, or flows of people and objects through networks that are not delimited by or explainable in terms of nation-states or national societies. These mobilities, he argues, must become the focus of the discipline of sociology if it is to remain relevant in the twenty-first century.

Urry's sociology of mobilities builds on Manuel Castells's influential theorization of the network society. A network, in Castells's sense of the term, is simply "a set of interconnected nodes."⁵⁹ Networks define the topology of social space in profound ways: within the network, "the distance (or intensity and frequency of interaction) between two points (or social positions) is shorter (or more frequent, or more intense) if both points are nodes in a network than if they do not belong to the same network."⁶⁰ This means that the life experiences and opportunities of individuals are shaped less by their absolute locations within a

bounded territorial social space than by their positions relative to the nodes of the network. An airport is an example of a node in a network that channels the flow of persons. A person who lives near one of these nodes may be closer, socially speaking, to her peers on another continent than to her fellow citizens who live 200 miles away. Another example is a television, which functions as a node within a network through which informative or entertaining images and sounds flow. Someone who has access to such a node becomes socially close to much of the rest of the world, while someone without access remains more firmly fixed to the social world of her absolute geographical location. According to Urry's post-societal sociology, it is these sorts of networks, and not "society," that have explanatory value in accounting for the social experiences and opportunities of individuals.

The proliferation of these networks beyond the borders of nation-states contributes to establishing the conditions of possibility for cosmopolitanism as a lived social reality. Bronislaw Szerszynski and John Urry refer in this context to a "banal globalism," i.e., an everyday, taken-for-granted sense of oneself as connected affectively, economically, aesthetically, and morally to individuals and cultures outside one's own locality or nation.⁶¹ This banal globalism is not the same thing as lived cosmopolitanism, which entails an active curiosity about and concern for other peoples and cultures, along with an ability to appreciate and understand them. But it does, at least to an extent, support its development.

Szerszynski and Urry's research has demonstrated the ways in which imaginative travel through television creates "an awareness of cosmopolitan interdependence."⁶² Interviews with focus groups in the United Kingdom revealed "a widespread if rather general cosmopolitanism. People had a strong awareness of the global flows of money, commodities and pollution; of extended relations connecting them to other peoples, places and environments; of the blurring boundaries of nation, culture and religion; and of a diverse range of possible local, national and global experiences."⁶³ In addition, participants demonstrated a kind of cosmopolitan moral sensibility, taking as their exemplars such iconic figures as Princess Diana, Nelson Mandela, and Bob Geldof, whom they had become acquainted with through the mass media.⁶⁴

It is important, though, not to overstate the degree to which mass media networks can create a sense of global belonging and solidarity. Szerszynski and Urry report that participants' levels of moral concern tended to decrease with distance, and that they viewed their exemplars of cosmopolitan morality as idealists, going above and beyond the demands of everyday morality.⁶⁵ Moreover, as John Tomlinson has argued, there is a kind of affective distancing involved in television viewing, which limits the medium's "capacity to involve and engage us emotionally and morally.... Because of these limitations it is implausible that media experience alone will furnish us with a sense of global solidarity."⁶⁶ Despite these concerns, though, Szerszynski and Urry conclude from their

research that “television and travel, the mobile and the modem” are slowly producing a cosmopolitan civil society and a cosmopolitan ethical sensibility, characterized by a blurring of the distinction between the local and the global.⁶⁷

IV. Conclusion

I would like to conclude by tying together some of the threads of cosmopolitan discourse that I have separated for purposes of exposition, as it would be highly misleading to suggest that these different programs of research are carried on without reference or relevance to the others. Specifically, I would like to highlight three important connections. First, there is a strong and obvious connection between the two normative strands of cosmopolitanism. Political cosmopolitanism, as Kant argued explicitly, is concerned with establishing the global political institutions necessary to fulfill our moral obligations to other human beings generally, without reference to their status as citizens or subjects of particular states. As such, political cosmopolitanism presupposes a conception of moral cosmopolitanism. One’s conception of the appropriate global political institutions will certainly be shaped by one’s conception of cosmopolitan obligation. For example, a theorist who was committed to a strict version of moral cosmopolitanism, i.e., one who believed that particular human relationships and affiliations provide no independent, morally valid reasons for action, would likely favor an international order that weakened the sovereignty of states, lessening

their power to make decisions oriented entirely or primarily by the perceived best interests of their own citizens. On the other hand, a political cosmopolitan who accepted the validity, at least to some extent, of particularist and communitarian critiques of strict moral cosmopolitanism, would likely favor an international order that preserved more of the elements of traditional, Westphalian state sovereignty.

Second, political cosmopolitanism can benefit from the results of sociological cosmopolitan research. Political cosmopolitan projects that are motivated by the desire to preserve democratic models of legitimacy in conditions of global interdependence require the existence of something like a global public sphere. Whether or to what extent such a thing exists, or can be brought into existence, is a question for empirical sociological research. In addition, Held's global democratic project relies on empirical knowledge of the ways in which people's lives are interconnected across political boundaries in order to determine who the relevant stakeholders are in the various areas of local, national, regional, and global governance.

And finally, moral cosmopolitanism can also make valuable use of sociological cosmopolitan research. For example, research concerning the degree to which society is and has been actually cosmopolitan can shed a great deal of light on the debate between moral cosmopolitans and their communitarian critics. If, as Beck suggests, societies are not nearly as homogeneous and as territorially

delimited as classical sociology had thought, or if, as Urry suggests, society does not even exist, then the communitarian's concern about the necessary conditions for moral development will carry less weight. Of course there are sociologists who believe that cosmopolitans' claims about the decline of the nation-state and of national society are vastly overstated. If these sociologists are correct, then those who are committed to some version of moral cosmopolitanism might be more inclined to adopt the kind of moderate cosmopolitan ethics exemplified by Nussbaum and Appiah.

NOTES

¹ Kwame Anthony Appiah, Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006), 144. Hereafter Cosmopolitanism.

² Samuel Scheffler, "Conceptions of Cosmopolitanism," Utilitas Vol. 11, No. 3 (November 1999): 259.

³ *Ibid.*, 259-260.

⁴ Marcus Aurelius, The Meditations, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1983), 26-27 [IV, 4].

⁵ Epictetus, The Discourses of Epictetus, with the Encheiridion and Fragments, trans. George Long (London: George Bell and Sons, 1890), I, 9.

⁶ Appiah, Cosmopolitanism, 98-99; 101-113.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 144.

⁸ Diogenes Laertius, Lives of Eminent Philosophers, Vol. II, trans. R.D. Hicks (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1925), 65.

⁹ Eric Brown, "Hellenistic Cosmopolitanism" in A Companion to Ancient Philosophy, ed. Mary Louise Gill and Pierre Pellegrin (West Sussex, UK: Blackwell, 2009), 551.

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- ¹⁰ A.A. Long and D.N. Sedley, eds. The Hellenistic Philosophers, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 349.
- ¹¹ Richard Rorty, “The Unpatriotic Academy,” New York Times, February 13, 1994, Opinion section.
- ¹² Martha Nussbaum, “Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism” in Martha Nussbaum, For Love of Country?, ed. Joshua Cohen (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 14. Hereafter FLC.
- ¹³ Ibid., 13.
- ¹⁴ Alasdair MacIntyre, “Is Patriotism a Virtue?” in Debates in Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology, ed. Derek Matravers and Jon Pike (London: Routledge, 2003), 291.
- ¹⁵ Ibid., 292.
- ¹⁶ Benjamin Barber, “Constitutional Faith” in Nussbaum, FLC, 34.
- ¹⁷ Appiah, Cosmopolitanism, xix.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., 107.
- ¹⁹ Ibid., 112-113.
- ²⁰ Ibid., 113.
- ²¹ Ibid., 98-99.
- ²² Ibid., 70.
- ²³ Ibid., 69-70.
- ²⁴ Immanuel Kant, “Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Project” in Immanuel Kant, Practical Philosophy, The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant, trans. and ed., Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 327 [8:356]. Hereafter TPP. Page numbers in brackets refer to the Akademie Edition of Kant’s works.
- ²⁵ Immanuel Kant, The Metaphysics of Morals in Kant, Practical Philosophy, 387 [6:230]. Hereafter MM. Page numbers in brackets refer to the Akademie Edition of Kant’s works.
- ²⁶ Ibid., 393 [6:237].
- ²⁷ Ibid., 456 [6:312].
- ²⁸ Kant, TPP, 326 [8:354].
- ²⁹ Kant, MM, 487-488 [6:350].
- ³⁰ Ibid., 488 [6:351].
- ³¹ Kant, TPP, 328 [8:357].
- ³² Kant, MM, 487 [6:350].
- ³³ Hans Kelsen, Peace Through Law (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1944), 4-5.
- ³⁴ Ibid., 5.
- ³⁵ Ibid., 49.
- ³⁶ Ibid., 21.

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- ³⁷ Ibid., 73.
- ³⁸ Hans Kelsen, Pure Theory of Law, trans. Max Knight (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), 327.
- ³⁹ Kelsen, Peace Through Law, 71.
- ⁴⁰ David Held, Democracy and the Global Order (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 147. Italics omitted.
- ⁴¹ Ibid., 16; 224.
- ⁴² Ibid., 234-235.
- ⁴³ Ibid., 236.
- ⁴⁴ Jürgen Habermas, The Postnational Constellation, trans. and ed. Max Pensky (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2001), 78-79. Hereafter PC.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., 60.
- ⁴⁶ Jürgen Habermas, The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory, ed. Ciaran Cronin and Pablo De Greiff (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1998), 107.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., 112-113.
- ⁴⁸ Habermas, PC, 79.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid., 81.
- ⁵⁰ Ulrich Beck, Cosmopolitan Vision, trans. Ciaran Cronin (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2006), 27. Hereafter CV.
- ⁵¹ Gerard Delanty, "The Cosmopolitan Imagination: Critical Cosmopolitanism and Social Theory," The British Journal of Sociology, Vol. 57, Issue 1 (2006): 26; John Urry, Sociology Beyond Societies: Mobilities for the Twenty-First Century (London: Routledge, 2000), 11. Hereafter SBS.
- ⁵² Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim, Wir und die Anderen (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2004), 171. Quoted in Beck, CV, 25.
- ⁵³ Beck-Gernsheim, Wir und die Anderen, 106, quoted in Beck, CV, 26.
- ⁵⁴ Kant, TPP, 330 [8:360].
- ⁵⁵ Beck, CV, 6.
- ⁵⁶ Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Cosmopolitan Patriots" in Nussbaum, FLC, 21-22.
- ⁵⁷ Beck, CV, 5.
- ⁵⁸ Urry, SBS, 6.
- ⁵⁹ Manuel Castells, The Rise of the Network Society, Second Edition. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 501.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid.
- ⁶¹ Bronislaw Szerszynski and John Urry, "Cultures of Cosmopolitanism," The Sociological Review Volume 50, Issue 4 (2002): 466-467.
- ⁶² Ibid., 469-470.
- ⁶³ Ibid., 472.
- ⁶⁴ Ibid., 474-475.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ John Tomlinson, Globalization and Culture (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 202.

⁶⁷ Szerszynski and Urry, "Cultures of Cosmopolitanism," 477-478.