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The State of Cosmopolitanism

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Arnaud Zacharie
22. **Les "démocraties" africaines, miroir des mutations démocratiques au Nord ?**,
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The State of Cosmopolitanism¹

Frédéric Vandenberghe:

Abstract	3
1 Globalization and the State	5
2 Global Governance without World Government.....	10
3 Hegemony and the Cosmopolitan State.....	15
4 Conclusion: Global Futures	19
Bibliography.....	20

Abstract

In this article, I want to bring the state back in as a strategic player of globalization. Whereas Marxists lament the withering of the state, neoliberals welcome the triumph of the market. Inspired by Habermas's proposal for a constitutionalization of international law, but with the intent to make it more dynamic, I introduce social movements into his cosmopolitan vision of a multi-level system of governance. Through a cross-reading of Ulrich Beck and Antonio Gramsci, I propose to update the historical sociology of the state and connect it to the sociology of social movements in order to explore how a cosmopolitan state can possibly act as a shifter in a counter-hegemonic project of globalization.

“While it is clear that the political order is the expression of the civil order, it is at least as evident that the civil order itself is only the expression of the state of civilization”
Auguste Comte, *Pensées et préceptes*.

The globalization of the world is a given and a fact. Cosmopolitization is an act and a task.² If the world is to be more than a *world system*, unified by an economic and technological substrate that spans the globe, to become a *universe*, symbolically unified by a vision of the world that coexists with other visions of the world, articulated among them through intercultural dialogue and a common project for humanity at large, we have to move from globalism to cosmopolitanism.³ Cosmopolitanism

¹ This paper is a delayed response to Habermas's dinner-talk at Yale University in 2005. I would like to thank Seyla Benhabib, Thomas McCarthy, Jeffrey Alexander, Fuyuki Kurasawa, Gerard Delanty, José Mauricio Domingues, Renato Boschi, Jayme Marques-Perreira and Sitharamak Kerakala for comments and suggestions.

² I owe the distinction between 'globalization' and 'mundialization' (or cosmopolitization) to Michel Freitag's systematic reflections on the crisis of globalization (Freitag, 2008: Part 4). Whereas globalization refers to the systemic integration of social life and its subordination to the abstract logic of financial capitalism and technological development, mundialization refers to a process of symbolic unification whereby societies and civilizations worldwide open up to each other through dialogue and seek, through the construction of a common world, to solve the problems that globalization poses to humanity.

³ Long before globalization became the cliché of the day, Luhmann had already theorized the emergence of a 'world society' without representation of its unity as and in the system and without political and normative integration (Luhmann, [1971] 1975: 51-71). In a series of ambitious sociological essays, Rudolf Stichweh (2000), who succeeded Luhmann in

presupposes a cosmology, an encompassing vision of the place of humankind in the universe, and a philosophy of history too that outlines a normative vision of its destiny and its unity within diversity. In more speculative terms, we could say that cosmopolitanism expresses the truth of globalization. Cosmopolitization is globalization *an und für sich*, to speak like Hegel. It is the dialectical resolution of world history in which globalization becomes conscious of its own alienation in and as a self-perpetuating world system ('globalization an sich') and strives to overcome its crisis in a new planetary synthesis that preserves its accomplishments, while directing in a new, more spiritual and more humane direction ('globalization für uns'). Like in all dialectical theories, it is the *Weltgeist* and the normative *Weltanschauung* that it embodies that ultimately 'directs' the course of history, steering it and driving it forwards towards its final truth.⁴

For a critical theory of globalization that analyzes the current geopolitical juncture *in weltbürgerlicher Absicht*, from the normative perspective of worldwide cosmopolitan solidarity, the central question is how a just world order can be established, and sustained. With Ricoeur, but slightly amending his elegant formulation of *eudaemonia*, we can describe the *visée* of a just world order as the planetary good life with and for each other in just global institutions and in a sustainable environment.⁵ As always, the transition from the normative to the empirical has to be articulated sociologically and grounded in collective actors that can carry the cosmopolitan project forwards. In Hegel, the main actor that 'incorporates' the universal is the state. Integrating, prolonging and overcoming the conflicts of interests that divide the civil sphere (which includes the economy or the 'system of needs') the state is celebrated as the agent of social integration that unifies society. Although Hegel's glorification of the state has been discredited by the horrors of the twentieth century and is thus no longer acceptable to us (Honneth, 2001: 1-17), I think, however, that Gramsci's reformulation of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* remains topical and can illuminate the current juncture of world politics.

Drawing on Gramsci's analysis of hegemony and the complex interrelations between the state and civil society, in this article I want to explore the thesis that the state is still a crucial political player and that it can possibly act as a shifter in a counter-hegemonic project of globalization. This thesis is meant as an alternative to the hypercritique of neoliberalism that is still current on the left and that has become not only stale and formulaic, but since the financial crises, also out of sync with reality. Instead of a critical analysis of the current conjuncture, one typically gets (in student papers, for instance) a pamphleteering denunciation of global capitalism in the first paragraph - with fingers pointing to the

Bielefeld and is now teaching at Luzern, has systematically worked out the concept of 'world society' as the encompassing system that comprises all communications, and nothing but communications.

⁴ Needless to say that there are no metaphysical guarantees. History may very well end "with a bang and a whisper". How long can sustainable development be sustained after all? Through a complex process of human under- and techno-capitalist overdevelopment, the planet is now, slowly but surely, reaching its ecological and demographic limits. Will humanity still be around in 50, 100, 250, 500, 1000 or 5000 years from now? For a tentative answer, see my book on posthumanism and biocapitalism (Vandenbergh, 2006: 7-150).

⁵ Ricoeur's (1990: 202) original formulation is the following: "The good life with and for others in just institutions".

usual suspects (IMF, WTO, World Bank, etc.)⁶ - and in the conclusion a highly ritualistic invocation of the anti-globalization movements as a new avatar of the proletariat. To the grandiose denunciations and self-celebrations of an 'automatic Marxism' that has lost touch with reality, I propose a theoretical alternative that focuses on the transformative capacities of the state within global politics.

The paper is divided in three parts. In part 1, I look at three generations of global studies and argue with German systems theory that globalization does not spell the end of state, but rather the beginning of a post-national epoch. In part 2, I present world politics as a multilevel system of governance. In an attempt to make Habermas's account of the constitutionalization of internal law more dynamic, I focus on the role of social movements that make the issues move from the lower to the upper tier of world politics. Finally, in the last part, I propose a neo-Gramscian reformulation of Ulrich Beck's theory of the cosmopolitan state that, in alliance with civil society, can change the world.

1 Globalization and the State

For any theory of the present that respects itself, the fact of globalization is like an axiom. It is, as Peter Sloterdijk (2006: 219) affirms with usual self-assurance, "the first and only presupposition" of contemporary social and political theory. In its most concise definition, globalization refers to a systematic "change of scale of societies" (Bayart, 2004: 13). This scale-shift intervenes when immense flows of capital, goods, services, people, information, technologies, policies, ideas, signs, images and regulations become integrated into global networks that transcend nation-states. *Deterritorialized flows* and *transnational networks* are the constitutive elements of any theorization of globalization. Deterritorialized flows refer to dynamic processes of transmission of information (broadly conceived) across borders, while transnational networks refer to the resulting mesh of nodes and links that interconnect the flows into a self-reproducing structure that remains invariant through its transformations.

As such, globalization is nothing new. The advent of world religions in the axial age, colonialism and the rise of the capitalist world-system in the long sixteenth century, the invention of liberalism and socialism in the eighteenth century, the Great Depression and the two World Wars were global phenomena from the very beginning. All indicators suggest, however, that the depth, the reach and the speed of the linkages and interconnections across, above and underneath the nation-state have so dramatically increased since WWII that they have spawned systemic effects of emergence at the global level. We can conventionally distinguish two ages of globalization within modern civilization, a first

⁶ Without ever distinguishing the left leanings of the World Bank from right ones of the IMF or the WTO, Latin-American followers of the 'coloniality of power' perspective (Quijano, Mignolo, Coronil), for instance, lump the 'new disciplinary institutions of global capitalism' together as so many replacements of 'colonial administrations' (Grosfoguel and Cervantes-Rodríguez, 2002: xxi).

one that goes roughly from 1850 to 1914, and is characterized above all by the integration of world finance and trade, epitomized by the ‘Gold Standard’, and a second one that picks up the slack of the *interbellum* and leads through the integration of the various subsystems to an emergent world system.⁷ For the sake of dramatization, I refer to this universal process of systemic integration as the globalization of globalization.

Following German systems theory, the world system can be understood as the encompassing social system that includes all communications that can communicate with one another through generalized symbolic media and form a single self-referentially closed system (Luhmann, 1998). From the fact that all communications are, by definition, included in the world system and that the world system includes all and nothing but communications, Luhmannians conclude that the world system or the world society, as they prefer to call it, “is actually the only existing society that exists on earth” (Stichweh, 2000: back cover).⁸

The existence of a single world system does not mean, however, that globalization has to be analyzed *en bloc*, monolithically, as if everything were determined in the last instance by a single factor, such as the economy or technology, for instance. The world system may be unified, functioning as a single unit in real time; as a systemically integrated yet functionally differentiated system, it is highly fragmented. Not only the economy, but also science, technology, health systems, social services, the military sector, communication media, tourism, and also sports are nowadays self-reproducing autopoietic world systems. From the point of view of systems theory, globalization has, thus, to be conceived of as both as a theory of a single world system, and as a theory of global subsystems that are functionally differentiated.

The emergence of *global studies* as a highly specialized interdisciplinary subfield with its own bibliographies is a sign of maturity. Within global studies, three (or, perhaps, even four) generations have succeeded each other in short tempo. The first generation of scholars emphasized the economic dimension and analyzed globalization as a radicalization of the processes of modernization. As a sequel to the debate on post-modernism, the ‘great globalization debate’, which rhetorically opposed ‘skeptics’, ‘hyperglobalizers’ and ‘transformationalists’ (Held et al., 1999), faded away and gave way towards the end of the nineties to a sober and factual analysis. It no longer reduces globalization to its economic dimension, but also takes into account its political, juridical, technological, demographic, cultural and subjective dimensions, while trying to integrate them in a more systematic and unified framework of social change.

⁷ The fact that the levels of foreign investment and trade were slightly higher in 1914 than today does not necessarily disprove the thesis of emergent effects at the global level. The figures that Hirst and Thompson (1996) cite do not allow one to conclude that nothing has changed. What has changed is the structure of the system as such.

⁸ The systemic approach of the world society or world system should not be confounded with the more Marxist theory of the world-system of Immanuel Wallerstein. To distinguish the former from the latter, I spell world system without hyphen. The world system includes all and nothing but communications. Consequently, it excludes human beings, animals and anything that is not communication – though it can enter the system as a communication about humans, animals and nothing.

If the second generation succeeded in formulating a multi-dimensional view of globalization, it remained, however, attached to a relatively simple conception of the relation between the economy and the state. The conventional view of globalization reinvented the ‘convergence thesis’ of modernization theories and assumed that all economies would sooner or later arrive at a common version of market capitalism. Taking neoliberalism at its word, it emphasized the domination of the market, the deregulation of the economy and the weakening of the state. In the same way as the first generation had a monolithic view of globalization, the second generation had a monolithic view of the economy and did not sufficiently take into account the existing ‘varieties of capitalism’ (Hall and Soskice, 2001) in the developed and the developing world. Like in standard theories of modernization, from Parsons to Giddens and Habermas, it generalized from the West to the rest of the world. Taking the Anglo-American model of liberal market economy as default model of economic development worldwide, it neglected the regulative and coordinating role of the state within capitalism. In spite of all their ideological divergences, Marxist and neoliberal analysts seemed to agree on one issue: Globalization spells the end of sovereignty and the state.

The third generation of global studies contests this simplistic view and reintroduces the state as a strategic player within a multidimensional process of globalization. Proposing a ‘post-neoliberal agenda’ of research and development, it seeks to conceptualize and analyze the politics of globalization through an investigation of the complex relations between the market, the state and civil society (Diniz and Bosschi, 2007). As the financial crises aren’t over yet, it is, no doubt, still too early to consider the most recent analyses of globalisation as a fourth generation. The succession of financial crises in fast tempo (the American subprime crisis of 2008 and European debt crisis of 2010), as well the reflation of the financial system through massive state-intervention (1 trillion dollars in the US in 2009 and almost as much in the euro-zone in 2010), does not only mean that neo-liberalism has, finally, come to its end. The instability of contemporary capitalism in all its variants also suggests that a return to an investigation of the features of capitalism *tout court* is timely. More generally, the recurrent crises may well indicate a geopolitical shift in global power from the ‘old world’ (EU + USA) to the ‘new world’ (the ‘Brics’). From the point of view of the former centre of the world-system, globalization appears not so much as the dawn of a new epoch of civilization as the decline of the old one – one in which it is no longer the prime globalizing force as the globalized one. The relative decline of the West is only the other side of the absolute rise of the East (China).

Arguing with the third and fourth against the second generation of global studies, I want to contest the thesis of the ‘eclipse’ of the state (or its ‘striptease’, as Subcomandante Marcos called it) and suggest that alternative paths of globalization are only possible if and when civil society enters into an alliance with the state, which uses its leverage in international forums to change the global agenda.⁹ Before I propose my main thesis, however, I want to present three arguments in favor of the state.

⁹ Within sociology, the role of the state within globalization is a contested issue. While pessimists argue that the power of the state is inversely proportionate to the power of the market, optimists look to the state in the hope that it can regulate the economy. Reviewing the literature, Raewyn Connell (2007: 58-59) lists the various positions in the field – ranging from

The first argument comes from *historical sociology*. Although the state has indeed come under attack from the markets, one should not forget, however, that the nation-state is itself a relatively recent invention. Territoriality, monopoly of legitimate violence, standing armies, administration, law making and enforcement, fiscalism, roads, education, national culture, internal pacification, diplomatic relations between states, passports, all these characteristics of the state have spread over the world in the last two or three centuries. The fact that there are now more states than ever before is testimony of the globalization of the state, not of its demise. Today, even self-declared Islamic states, like Iran or Saudi Arabia, sworn to the *ummah*, the worldwide community of Muslims, have institutionalized the format of the nation-state. If only political economists had consulted historical sociologists of the state! If they had read Perry Anderson, Michael Mann or even Anthony Giddens, they would, no doubt, have come to different conclusions. The diffusion and institutionalization of the nation-state, not its demise, appears indeed as the decisive fact of world politics.

The second argument comes from *international political economy*. One should not forget that the institutional conditions for the emergence of a free market are ultimately guaranteed by the state. Without state, there's no free market. "The market is planned", as Polanyi (1957: 136) famously said, and this explains why neoliberalism was not just an ideology of the market, but also a transnational program of governmentality that infiltrated the state to liquidate (or 'liquidify'?) its apparatuses. Since the Second World War, the international political economy is dominated by the United States, a hegemonic state that is liberal in orientation and fosters the free market. In his neo-realist theory of hegemonic stability, Gilpin (1987: 86) argues that the existence of a hegemonic or dominant liberal power is "a necessary (albeit not a sufficient) condition for the full development of a world market economy".¹⁰

In typical American fashion, 'world polity theory' projects the US onto the world and universalizes a particular world view. John Meyer (1997) and his colleagues from Stanford ask us to imagine the discovery of an unknown society on an unknown island. What would subsequently change on this island? A democratic state would emerge and be recognized by other states, the inhabitants would be granted the whole gamut of rights and, for sure, foreign experts of all sorts would consult the government and suggest the usual policy package to rationalize government. Although world polity

bleak to relatively rosy: "Bauman accepts the thesis of states in decline, unable to regulate an international economy that is now effectively out of control. Arrighi suggests that many states in the world system have never had much power, the general view in world-systems analysis. Therborn thinks that states are still powerful in most parts of the world, and Guillén agrees, emphasizing that they can choose different development paths. Evans considers the fate of the state contingent, while Mann emphasizes the diversity of forms of power. To Sklair, the international economy has grown in importance with the nation-state, but there's nothing fragmented about it. Robinson agrees and sees business power materialized in a transnational state. Meyer denies that any such thing exists. Sassen sees business power reflected in some deterritorialization of sovereignty. Giddens and Beck, while agreeing that the economy is moving out of control, are optimistic about the power of the state to control events – if the state's will is stiffened by an extra dose of democracy and civil society. Albrow sees a global state already emerging, not from capital but from activities of citizens oriented to the common interests of world society". My own position is more in line with the latter authors and considers the state as a strategic player in the transition from a global to a cosmopolitan world.

theory does not explicitly say that the island would be run along the lines of market liberalism, we can nevertheless expect that under the guise of rationalization, the national economy would be opened up to the world and liberalized to ensure competition.

But not all capitalist economies are 'liberal market economies' that rely on the 'invisible hand' to coordinate the endeavours of the main actors. Recent research on the "varieties of capitalism" has demonstrated that even in developed countries, like Germany and Japan, an alternative model exists in which endeavours are coordinated not by the market, but through neo-corporatist arrangements in which the state plays a facilitating and regulating role in consensus decision making in the main sectors of the economy (Hall and Soskice, 2001).¹¹ The success of 'coordinated market economies' suggests that the existence of a strong state may well be a competitive advantage in a globalized economy. The rise of the Asian Tigers is an interesting case that belies the thesis of the eclipse of the state. Rather than being weakened by the market, 'developmental states' actively intervened in the productive sector of the economy to make it more competitive, implement structural change and guarantee steady economic growth (Castells, 1998: 243-309). For the Asian Tigers, the market economy is not an end in itself, but only a means to further development. The case of China goes in the same direction, but is more puzzling. The state encourages private property and implements market reforms, but, paradoxically, the latter seem to be part of a nationalist strategy that uses the market to reinforce the power of the state.

My last argument reconnects the third generation of global studies to the historical conjuncture and interprets the *end of neo-liberalism* as a sign of the times. Two waves of neoliberalism (Thatcherism and Reaganism in the 1980's, followed by the 'Washington Consensus' of the 1990's) have played havoc with the world, especially the Third World where two thirds of the population live in poverty. The implementation by the IMF of 'textbook economics' has triggered a sequence of crises of national economies in Asia and Latin America. Global unrest and a war have further undermined neoliberalism as an ideology and as policy. The massive build up of powerful 'military-industrial complexes' in the USA (and elsewhere) confirms in a more perverse way the current enmeshment of state and markets (Nederveen Pieterse, 2004). Last but not least, the financial crises and the massive intervention of states to stabilize the global markets have brought down the neo-liberal orthodoxy with a vengeance.

Globalization does not spell the end of the state, but in accord with the cosmopolitan spirit, I would like to suggest that it weakens the nation and may, thereby, be a first step towards the emergence of genuine post-national states. I will make the argument by referring once again to systems theory, which allows one to analyze globalization differently, namely in terms of a systemic disconnection between social and political processes. Whereas social systems and subsystems, such as the economy, science, religion, law and education, are *functionally differentiated*, the political system is still

¹¹ Unlike the older, neocorporatist approach to comparative political economy that foregrounded the role of unions in the stabilization of the welfare state (Esping-Andersen, 1990), the variety of capitalism approach does not so much bring the state to the centre of the analysis as the firm, analyzing the variety of relations it establishes with the state and suggesting that the welfare state was, in fact, built by the employers.

predominantly structured through *segmental differentiation* and operates on a national territorial basis (Luhmann, 1998, I: 166). Unlike functionally differentiated social systems, segmental systems have a clear centre and top that ‘steers’ the social system as a whole. The segmental organization of the political system within a functionally differentiated world society means that a political system is surrounded by similarly segmented political subsystems in its environment. Within the world society, the political system organizes its operations by using the distinction between internal/national and external/transnational affairs, with the result that all political matters (including the politics of the economy, science, law, etc.) are automatically referred to the state to be processed by its specialized apparatuses.

From the point of view of the political subsystem, globalization signifies first and foremost the *denationalization of the state* (Zürn, 1998). Denationalization reconfigures the state within a transnational environment and forces it to govern beyond the national level. Weakening the hyphen of the nation-state, globalization delinks and disconnects the nation from the state. This disconnection should not be understood as a zero-sum game whereby the national and the transnational level are seen as mutually exclusive. Rather the national and the transnational are interlocked, enmeshed and mutually constitutive. To reproduce or transform the state, transnational networks have to work with and through the state, whereas the state has to work with and through the networks in order to reproduce or transform them. More positively, the disconnection of the nation and the state opens up the possibility of a practical refutation of the neo-realist thesis, classically formulated by Morgenthau, that “in politics, the nation and not humanity is the ultimate fact” (quoted in McGrew, 1997: 16).¹² Indeed, with the deconstruction of the hyphen of the nation-state, a genuine re-empowerment of the state within a cosmopolitan order can be envisaged. When the tension between the universalism of the constitutional state and the particularism of the nation is released to the advantage of the former, the state can actually become a ‘cosmopolitan state’ and pursue its role beyond its borders, as is presumably the case with the European Union, and without being bound by the limitations of the social imaginary of a primordial bond between the state and its subjects.¹³

2 Global Governance without World Government

¹² Morgenthau’s neo-realism seems to echo Carl Schmitt’s (1983: 234) national-populism: “The central concept of democracy is the people and not humanity”.

¹³ Habermas’s (1987: 159-179) defense of a post-national identity does not work very well in a post-colonial context. To the extent that colonialism was spawned by the nationalisms of the European powers, it comes after nationalism, but for the colonies that liberated themselves from the colonial yoke in struggles of independence, nationalism comes after colonialism. In Latin America, for instance, where the author is currently based, the national identity was formed in struggles of emancipation from the Spanish and Portuguese metropolises. As a result, the construction of the state (even of a welfare state) is inseparable from the construction of the nation. Although Latin America remains as yet largely divided between the Hispano- and Lusophone parts of the continent (not to mention the Caribbean, which is mainly Anglophone), the construction of a regional bloc, Mercosul, modeled on the accomplishments of the E.U., has now become a possibility and a necessity.

Until relatively recently, ‘the diplomat’ and ‘the soldier’ were the only actors that were recognized within international relations (Aron, 1962: 18). Although the field of international relations remains tempted as always by a realist outlook that only recognizes competing sovereign states as actors, most scholars now accept Rosenau’s (1990) contention that the world has definitively left behind the ‘Westphalian system’, theorized by Grotius and based on state sovereignty and international law, and entered the stage of ‘post-international politics’ in which a multiplicity of state and non state actors at different levels, from the UN and the Red Cross to international law firms and the local branch of Amnesty International, set the political agenda, make law and solve the problems of collective action. ‘Global governance’, to use the consecrated phrase, has to be understood as a complex multi-level network or “salmagundi of multiplying, highly mobile and intersecting lines of governmental powers” (Keane, 2003:98). It is a fragmented system of interlocking and overlapping sub-state, state and supra-state institutions and multi-dimensional processes that interact, and have political and social effects, on a global scale.

The world society can, perhaps, best be described as a *three-tiered system of governance*.

In the absence of a world government, we find at the highest level of the world system a single organisation: the United Nations. The UN is not a state, but a *supranational* actor that is composed of all the existing states of the world and authorised by them to intervene in well defined matters of global concern, above all war, peace and human rights.

At the intermediate level, we find a *transnational* hotchpotch of governmental and non governmental networks of all kinds that participate in global public policy. Comprised of intergovernmental bodies, corporate actors, non governmental organizations, activist networks and epistemic communities, global governance is a complex multi-level, multi-layered and multi-actor system. According to Anne-Marie Slaughter (2004), the unitary state has given way at the intermediary level to the ‘disaggregated state’ in which a myriad of national officials, bureaucrats, technocrats, experts and judges seek to regulate all kinds of global technical issues concerning trade, communications, health, security and pollution, among others, by sharing information, harmonizing rules and coordinating policies. Those intermediate bodies are not necessarily despotic, but to the extent that they are technocratic and deal with political issues, they lack democratic legitimacy.

Looking at parallel processes of law making, Gunther Teubner has observed the emergence of a global legal order that is insulated from the state. “Globalization of law creates a multitude of decentred law-making processes in various sectors of civil society, independently of nation-states. Technical standardization, professional rule production, human rights, intra-organizational regulation in multinational enterprises, contracting arbitration and other institutions of *lex mercatoria* are forms of rule making by ‘private governments’ which have appeared on a massive global scale” (Teubner, 1997: xiii).

Finally, at the lowest level, we find the *nation-states* of the world with their parliaments, ministries, embassies and other apparatuses of law that carry out domestic politics, administering the national territory, and defend its interests against other states. In the global context, the lowest level of the nation-state may have lost some of its regulatory capacity to the higher levels of governance; it nevertheless remains the only actor that is democratically legitimated and legally entitled by its electorate to govern. The question now is whether democracy can be extended from the level of the state to the level of international relations. The cosmopolitan project emphatically confirms this possibility and affirms that democracy needs to be realized as a form of global governance on three different interconnected levels: within states, between states and at a world level.

* * *

Philosophical Interlude: Cosmopolitanism and Cosmopolitics

Surprisingly, the old fashioned idea of cosmopolitan democracy is back on the agenda. After nationalism, socialism, communism and neo-liberalism, cosmopolitanism has been heralded as the next big idea that could transform the divided world into a harmonious and just world order as envisioned by Kant in his essay on *Eternal Peace*. The intuition that animates cosmopolitanism is that one does not have to choose between loyalty to one's small group and concern for the larger world. By virtue of being human, one is member both of the *polis* and the *cosmos* – the two being ideally joined by democracy. Elaborated by the Stoics, beginning in the third century BC, the creed of cosmopolitanism was taken up again by the Enlightenment, especially by Kant in his proposal for a 'league of nations', and after the Second World War by philosophers like Jaspers and Arendt, who reflected on the crimes against humanity perpetrated by the Nazis. The cosmopolitan ideal is not only defended by political philosophers like Jürgen Habermas, Martha Nussbaum and David Held, however, but also by post-colonial cultural theorists like Paul Gilroy, Kwame Anthony Appiah and Dipesh Chakrabarty. Even if the political and cultural philosophers are still largely talking past each other, the fact that the idea attracts both universalists and differentialists suggests that cosmopolitanism is a universal principle with a difference.

Cosmopolitanism comes, thus, in two versions, a cultural one, which I'll call *cosmopolitics*, and a political one, which I'll call *cosmopolitanism*. The first version can be considered as the cultural counterpart to ecumenism. Driven by an enthusiasm for customary differences, hybridity and fusion – "mélange, hotchpotch, a bit of this and bit of that is how newness enters the world" (Rushdie) - it counters the clash of civilizations with an appeal to intercultural dialogue and the recognition of difference (cf. Cheah and Robbins, 1998, Pollock et al, 2000). The second version continues the Kantian tradition and projects a theory of world government and corresponding citizenship (cf. Archibugi and Held, 1995, Archibugi, 2003). The two versions are in tension, but to the extent that the cultural perspective suggests that Kantian universalism is necessarily situated (and therefore 'provincial') and opens up the perspective of multiple cosmopolitanisms, the tension is fruitful and allows one in principle to overcome the arrogance of universalism and the relativism of localisms.

Fusing ‘universal concern’ with ‘respect for legitimate difference’ (Appiah, 2006: xv), cosmopolitanism is a normative framework that offers the solution for the problems of material equality and cultural difference that respectively mark the North-South and the East-West divide. Emerging at the point where justice and recognition, equality and difference intersect, cosmopolitan solidarity constitutes the regulative ideal of the global age. To implement it and realize the dream of cosmopolitanism, democracy needs to be extended beyond the nation-state to the sphere of international relations.

* * *

In an ambitious attempt to update Kant’s project for a confederation of republican states, Jürgen Habermas (2004: 113-193, 2005: 324-365), the universal philosopher, has recently presented an outline of a *cosmopolitan constitution* that transforms international law from a law of states into a law of individuals.¹⁴ He sketches out his vision for the governance of a world society without world government in terms of a three-tiered system with multiple actors to which he allocates different functions.

At the highest level of the world organization, the UN should limit itself essentially to two well determined vital functions, which it should accomplish impartially and, above all, effectively. Those two functions are the safeguarding of international peace and the enforcement of human rights, if necessary against ‘rogue states’ through humanitarian interventions. Although I do agree with Habermas’s intent, I think, however, that the UN should also be allowed to concern itself with moral issues that have to be regulated in the name of humanity as such. Boaventura Santos (1995: 365-373) regroups those issues under the heading of *ius humanitatis*, which takes the globe itself as the object of its regulation. I’m thinking here not only of the eradication of famine and extreme poverty, as stated in the Millenium Development Goals, but also of the stewardship of nature and the preservation of natural resources that are the common property of mankind, such as water and energy.

The resolution of these issues clashes with two fundamental principles of the dominant paradigm of law: property, upon which the capitalist world system is based, and sovereignty, upon which the interstate system is based. Esteeming that those issues are too political to be satisfactorily resolved through ‘Unanimity’, Habermas relegates them to the second tier of the world system. Composed of a transnational spaghetti junction of governmental and non governmental agencies, this impenetrable jungle of acronyms solves not only technical problems; it also deals with political problems that straddle the divide between domestic and foreign politics. Those ‘intermestic’ issues are the global issues of the day that call for regulation and legislation at the transnational level: above all economic issues of social redistribution and the re-regulation of the market (economic and financial politics), but also techno-scientific challenges of the risk society (ecological and energetic politics). Too important to be left to bureaucrats and technocrats, these issues need the legitimacy of democratically elected

¹⁴ For a discussion of the “constitutionalization of international law”, see the special issue of *Constellations*, 2008, 15, 4.

politicians to be resolved successfully. The problem, however, is that democracy is only effective at the national level and that as yet neither the collective actors nor the institutional forums exist that deal properly with these issues of ‘world domestic politics’ (*Weltinnenpolitik*). Thinking about the EU, Habermas esteems that these global players have to be constituted at the regional level as a cosmopolitan federation of nation-states.

This brings us to the third level of the nation-state: “If nation-states want to play the role of collective carriers of global domestic politics at the global level and obtain the capacity of action of global players, achieving thereby the democratic legitimation for the results of transnational agreements, they must grow beyond mere forms of intergovernmental forms of cooperation” (Habermas, 2005: 338).

Habermas’s proposal is interesting, but too static in my opinion. It fails to specify the interrelations between the state, civil society and the market, and does not sufficiently take into account the role that transnational social movements and advocacy networks play in global governance. Recent studies in international relations have highlighted the ways in which non-state actors can change the interests and identities of states and international organizations (Risse et al., 1999; Price, 2003). Using the *lingua franca* of human rights (broadly conceived, comprising not only political and civil rights, but also social, economic, cultural and ecological rights), social movements ‘frame’ issues as global issues, exercise normative pressure on nation-states, persuade them to publicly endorse their positions in international fora and to bring the issues they defend on the international agenda.

The leverage of transnational networks on nation-states is particularly useful when local movements are confronted with undemocratic, repressive or otherwise unresponsive states. When one state is relatively immune to direct local pressure and linked activists elsewhere have better access to their own governments or to international organizations, they can trigger a “boomerang effect, which curves around local state indifference and repression to put foreign pressure on local policy elites” (Keck and Sikkink, 1998: 200). Within a multi-layered, multi-level global society, social movements have to intervene at all levels at the same time.¹⁵

The externalization of domestic contention and the formation of durable transnational coalitions that can put pressure on states and international organizations are the strongest signs that a fusion of national, international and transnational politics are taking place. When coordination of collective actions occurs at a different level than where it began, a ‘scale shift’ comes about (Tarrow, 2005: 32).

¹⁵ To illustrate the complexity of ‘glocal’ collective action and the multiplicity of mechanisms that have to be activated within, above, across and below the state, Alison Brysk (2002: 253-254) gives the example of the enforcement of labour rights in a Taiwanese-owned Chentex textile assembly plant located in Nicaragua’s Las Mercedes Free Trading Zone. Activists have lobbied three states: the Taiwanese government, the Nicaraguan state agencies, and because the U.S. Army is a major buyer from the overseas apparel plants, also the U.S. congress. Above the state, the campaign has appealed to international organizations such as ILO and OAS. Across states, by virtue of the fact that the Taiwanese owner has an outlet in Los Angeles, U.S. unions have filed a class action suit on behalf of Nicaraguan workers under the U.S. Alien torts Act. Below the state, activists have also organized consumer pressure on Chentex’s principal buyer, the Kohl’s department store chain. Finally, the transnational networks have helped to catalyze the formation and regional coordinating committee for *maquila* unions, with representatives from throughout Central America and the Caribbean

Returning now to Habermas, the point I want to make is that successful social movements make the issues ‘move’ from the bottom of civil society, via the middle tier of the state, to the top of the UN, and from there, via a cascade of intermediary organizations and associations, back to the grassroots. By introducing social movements as ‘movers’ and ‘shakers’ of political issues, we have thus put Habermas’s tripartite division in motion, making his vision of world politics more dynamic.

3 Hegemony and the Cosmopolitan State

“The state is the *carrefour* through which contemporary history passes” (Cardoso and Faletto, 2004: 208). To theorize the dynamic relations between the state, civil society and the market, I will, in a first moment, seek inspiration in the philosophy of praxis of Antonio Gramsci and, then, in a second moment, I will part company from the prisoner to join the cosmopolitan sociology of Ulrich Beck. The general thesis I will defend is that a cosmopolitan state can enter into an alliance with civil society, and act as a shifter in a counter-hegemonic project of globalization.

From a *Gramscian perspective*, globalization is to be conceived of as a dynamic totality of entangled relations of force at different levels (Gramsci, 1971: 175-185). These levels comprise the international relations between states (relations of dependence and sovereignty of states within geopolitical systems), the objective relations within societies (relations of production and degree of development of productive forces within social formations that define a civilization) and, finally, the relations of political force within the state (relations of hegemony, i.e. the complex of relations of domination and moral-intellectual leadership between the state and civil society).

With the philosopher of praxis, I start from the assumption that “the international situation should be considered in its national aspect” (Gramsci, 1971: 240). To consider the international situation in its national aspect, one has to zoom in on the state and analyze the relations of force and hegemony within the state/civil society complex. The state is the place where hegemony is constructed and consolidated. For sure, the point of arrival is internationalism, but as the state is considered as a crucial point of transition that has to be engaged on the road to a cosmopolitan world order, the point of departure is the state.

If the world is to move from globalism to cosmopolitanism, the symbolic representations of the world have to be articulated and shifting alliances be formed to contest the extant representation of the world as a world system rather than as a universe, i.e. a ‘unity within diversity’. Globalization is a ‘metapolitical’ game for hegemony and, as such, a struggle for the hearts and minds that is based on an ethico-political view of the world (“the planetary good life with and for each other in just global institutions and in a sustainable environment”). Unlike dominance, hegemony is a form of ‘soft’ or

‘symbolic’ power that is not only based on coercion, but also on consent.¹⁶ As a class-based way of ‘world-making’ that is ultimately grounded in the relations of production, it structures immediately the form of the state, and mediately also the form of the world order. According to Gramsci, the state has to be conceived of as an ‘integral’ one.¹⁷ It does not only include the apparatuses of the state, but also the associations of civil society. This is evident in the famous equation of the *Prison Notebooks*: “state = political society + civil society” (Gramsci, 1971: 263). Ultimately, the struggle for hegemony is a struggle for the state in its relation to civil society. Depending on the social relations between the different class fractions, the state takes on a definite form. Different constellations are possible, but when a class establishes its hegemony over other classes, a ‘historical bloc’ (*blocco storico*) is constituted. The latter concept refers to the contingent historical constellation that fuses the economic, political and cultural elements of society into a political alliance or coalition, “bringing about not only a unison of economic and political aims, but also intellectual and moral unity [...] on a ‘universal plane’” (Gramsci, 1971: 181-182).

If the neo-Gramscian approach to international relations teaches us that “the task of changing the world order begins with the long, laborious effort to build new historic blocs within national boundaries” (Cox, 1983: 174)¹⁸, the *cosmopolitan perspective* in sociology extends this vision and insists that the state has to open itself up to the concerns of civil society and become a ‘transnation-state’ that pursues its politics in cooperation with other states on a regional level. With Ulrich Beck (2002), we can, somewhat schematically, conceive of world politics as a ‘metagame’ in which three

¹⁶ Gramsci was a revolutionary and a Marxist. When he was talking about hegemony of the working class, he was not thinking about society as a whole, but about the alliance of the proletariat with other exploited groups, above all the peasantry, in a common struggle against the oppression of capital. In his unsurpassed reconstruction of Gramsci, Perry Anderson (1977) makes it quite clear that the proletariat uses force against the bourgeoisie (‘dictatorship of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie’) and resorts to consent with the allied classes (‘hegemony of the proletariat over the peasantry’). Here, I take the freedom not only to make abstraction of violence and to collapse force into consent, but also to generalize the notion of hegemony beyond the nation-state and to substitute the proletariat with new social movements.

¹⁷ In Gramsci, there is a constant tendency to generalize the concepts and to drift towards an integral concept of Man, culture, the intellectual and, yes, also the state. The formula of the integral state innovates both with regard to Hegel and Marx. Instead of conceptualizing society in terms of a tripartite division between family, civil society and state (as in Hegel), the Italian philosopher includes both the family and political society within civil society, and civil society within the state. Unlike Marx and Hegel, he does not, however, include the economy within civil society, but conceives of the control of economy as that what is ultimately at stake in the hegemonic struggle for the control of the state.

¹⁸ Robert Cox, Stephen Gill and Kees van der Pijl have updated and extended Gramsci’s insights to international relations (Gill, 1993), but true to the Marxist spirit, they overemphasize the importance of economics and fall back on a simplifying vision that reduces the tensions within the world system to an opposition between capital and labor, global markets and transnational civil society, globalization-from-below and from-above. Instead of seeing that all national, transnational and international political institutions are shot through by struggles over hegemony and that, therefore, social movements have to engage all those institutions to transform them from within, they schematize geopolitics as a struggle between two alternate visions of globalization: a hegemonic one ‘from above’ that is championed by business and financial elites and pervades the central governmental agencies of the OECD-world and key multilateral agencies (such as the IMF, the World Bank and the G20-secretariat) and a counter-hegemonic globalization ‘from below’ that is upheld by a myriad of anti-globalization movements (such as the Zapatistas, the black bloc anarchists and the movement for global justice) that uphold the ideals of global justice (redistribution), intercultural dialogue (recognition) and survival of the planet (consciousness) and are represented at the World Social Forum.

actors vie for power: the global economy, the state and transnational civil society.¹⁹ Depending on the form of state, which is determined by the larger field of social relations in which it is embedded, two articulations are possible: Either the global economy captures the state and transforms it from within for its own purposes or, alternatively, global civil society enters into an alliance with the state, persuades it to change its policies so as to become a cosmopolitan state.

Let's see how that works out in Beck's grand cosmopolitan theory of global domestic politics (Beck, 2002: 95-184, Beck and Grande, 2004: 207-257). The global economy is neither illegal, nor legitimate, but 'translegal'. Transnational capital acts as a global actor that possesses and exercises political power, not directly, but indirectly by threatening national governments to delocalize its business if it does not satisfy its demands for flexibility and profitability. Acting as a kind of transnational political party, it is capable of imposing its own hegemonic view of the world as a deregulated market and to pursue its own undemocratic policies across national boundaries, undermining the welfare state in the process.

Alarmed by the imperial tendencies of the market, impending climate change and the disempowerment of the state, civil society reacts with an orchestrated call for global justice. Prompted by the perception of global risks that threaten whole societies, if not the survival of humanity as such, civil society counters the depolitization of the state with a call for action. A transnational public sphere emerges, according to Beck, as a happy, though largely unintended consequence of the perception of global economic risks (extreme poverty, rising inequality and financial crises), ecological threats (global warming, biodiversity and ecosystem losses) and political risks (war, terrorism and 'rogue states').²⁰ It is the "law of the double consequences: The world risk society engenders consequences of the first order – calculable risks and uncertainties that are hard to calculate – which, then, create public spheres that transcend the borders" (Beck, 2002: 56).

Whereas transnational capital has the power to change the world, but not the legitimacy, civil society has the support of public opinion, but not the power to effectuate change. This is the paradox of power and legitimacy. Transnational social movements, NGO's and activist networks that advocate human rights represent humanity and speak in its name, but when they criticize the failures of the state and the market that lead to global risks, they are self-appointed and not elected. "[They] are, as Brunkhorst (2002: 213) says, elected by nobody and represent the global 'people' only counterfactually and advocatorily".

¹⁹ Boaventura Santos (1995: 268) simplifies the strategic metagame when he opposes "TNC's + state" (globalization-from-above) to "NGO's + state" (globalization-from-below). The whole point of radical transformism is to deconstruct binary oppositions and to make alternative alliances possible. I see no reason why alliances between civil society and global markets should be ruled out *a priori*. Why should we assume that transnational corporations cannot be moralized and that they, by definition, remain impervious to human rights? Why should we presume that multilateral organizations, like the IMF or the WTO, are homogeneous and that they cannot be reformed from within by heterodox economists?

²⁰ Updating and enlarging his former account of the risk society, Ulrich Beck (2007: 37-39, 355-361, *passim*) discerns three types of hazards of the world risk society: climate change (ecological risks), terrorism and nuclear proliferation (political risks) and financial crises (economic risks). His theory of reflexive modernization integrates not only the theory of the risk society, but also of individualization and globalization into a single conceptual framework (cf. Vandenberghe, 2001).

To overcome the tension between self-authorization, delegitimation of states and global economic actors on the one hand and the self-legitimation of its own advocacy practices on the other hand, civil society has to enter into an alliance with the state. It is only when the state opens itself up to the demands of civil society and globalizes itself from within that the power of the state can be combined with the legitimacy of civil society into an effective ‘global domestic politics’ that challenges the current hegemony. “In order to obtain transnational capacity for action as well as new sources of global legitimacy and power, the state has to open itself to a merger with global civil society” (Beck, 2002: 255). The state that incorporates the demands from civil society and bands together with other states to solve the global problems of the day is called a ‘cosmopolitan state’.²¹

The true *cosmopolitan state* can act as a shifter in global politics and contribute to the emergence of counter-hegemonic historical bloc at the transnational level. Pressured by social movements, it can use its power and leverage to bring the legitimate demands of civil society at a higher level. The strategies of social movements are two-fold. On the one hand, they use the usual channels of domestic politics in the hope of influencing the positions of national governments, changing thereby the balance of power in international bodies. On the other hand, they seek formal recognition by the state as representatives of civil society in international fora. As consulting members of national delegations to international gatherings, they enter the thicket of international governmental and nongovernmental organizations, democratizing thereby the circuits of global governance. In any case, to change the world, social movements cannot limit their action to a wholesale rejection of the existent system from without. Adopting the strategy of “radical entrism” (Trotsky), they have to engage it from within and brace themselves for the “long march through the institutions” (Dutschke).

The cosmopolitan state transcends itself as a nation-state and uses its power at the transnational level to regain some of the power it lost in the process of globalization. Global problems can no longer be solved at the national level, but only at the transnational level through cooperation with other states as well as with the multiplicity of governmental and nongovernmental actors of global governance. Overstating the case a bit, we could say that “the [cosmopolitan] state is the most recent social movement” (Santos, 2007: 111).

The ecological politics of the Netherlands in the 1980’s are a good example of how the state can use its power to its own advantage at the transnational level by cooperating with other states and social movements to confront the problems of the risk society. Ecological issues are highly political, but also highly complex and technical issues that require expert knowledge. In risk societies, expert knowledge

²¹ Beck insists that civil society can transform the state, but neglects to investigate the impact of the state on civil society. If he had analyzed the role of the state, and more particularly of foreign states and development aid on grassroots movements (aka CBO’s or community based organizations) in developing countries, he would have perhaps been able to explain the massive wave of ‘NGO-ization’ of social action that has occurred in the last twenty years. While observers of civil society have noticed how talk about NGO’s has progressively supplanted social movements in the nineties, they have not been able to explain it. Following Kakarala et al. (2006: 34), I contend that international donor organizations, which are partly sponsored by development aid coming from the governments of the OECD countries, are “the single most important reason for translating social movement actors into NGO’s”.

is highly controversial. Every expertise seems to call forth a counter-expertise. As a result, science becomes highly reflexive and opens itself up to questions coming from the life-world. When this happens, civil society can influence science intra-scientifically and insinuate its views on the epistemic community of experts, which can in turn “influence national governments and international organizations by occupying niches in advisory and regulatory bodies” (Haas, 1992: 30).

This is precisely what happened in the Netherlands.²² Sensitive to the demands of an ecologically minded population like the Dutch, the members of the epistemic community have identified the issues for the national decision makers and these have in turn influenced the interests and behaviors of other member states of the EU, inducing convergent state behavior and fomenting international policy coordination at a regional level. By aggressively putting ecological issues on the agenda of the EU and other international organizations, it has tilted its own national interests to a higher level, transcending thereby the opposition between domestic and foreign politics. This example nicely illustrates that transnational politics should not be conceived of as a zero-sum game in which the nation-states are fated to lose, but that states that cooperate with civil society and other states can gain in strength and become global players that make a difference. The civil society-state synergy empowers both the state and the civil actors. The new alliance between civil actors and the state is not mere fancy. “The possibility that state apparatuses might forge new alliances with civil actors in the early decades of the new millennium is, as Peter Evans (1997: 86) says, no less implausible than the alliances that were actually forged between labor organizations and the state during the early decades of the twentieth century”.

4 Conclusion: Global Futures

With a little bit of cosmopolitan imagination, we can perhaps extend this example to the European level and think of the European Project as a utopian one.²³ The EU has the vocation to become a counter-hegemonic cosmopolitan empire that reconstitutes and reconstructs the welfare state at the transnational level and integrates different populations into a multicultural, postnational and postsecular society that reflects in its unity the diversity of the universe. Potentially, Europe is the theater where Kant’s dream of eternal peace can be realized. If Europe does not succeed in formulating

²² My account of the ecological politics of the Netherlands is based on the epistemic communities approach of Peter Haas (1992), but politicizes it significantly by injecting a good deal of reflexivity into science and opening it up to the pressures of civil society. Haas is primarily concerned with the political influence that an epistemic community can have on collective policy making at the national and international level, but omits to analyze the political influence that civil society can have on science.

²³ Perhaps one should distinguish between the European Project, which is progressive and utopian, and the European identity, which is conservative, xenophobic and nostalgic, looking backwards rather than forwards. Let’s face it, for the last thirty years the right has been hegemonic in Europe. As things stand, the political horizon is blocked. In all countries, one can see the resurgence of nationalism, not in the old fashioned sense of chauvinist pride (though there’s also a lot of that in Flanders, Italy, Austria, Hungary), but rather as a gut reaction to, and rejection of, international relations and a focalization on one’s own country.

a social-economical and cultural-ecological counterproject for the world, we can, however, expect that, by default, it will follow the way of economic orthodoxy. In the same way as Mexico offers perhaps a template for a Latin America that is subdued to America, Canada foreshadows the path Europe will take if it does not succeed in realizing its own ideals. Assuming counterfactually that the European Project will succeed, we could imagine that other regional powers in other continents will join the fray and build a counter-hegemony within the established hegemony, contributing thereby to the construction of an alternative transnational historical bloc. The emergence of loosely unified bloc that integrates the emergent countries (the 'Brics') under European leadership is not very likely though. Although the phrase transnational bloc suggests a unity within diversity, the world of the future will most likely be a multipolar one of 'scattered hegemonies' with a multiplicity of regional centers whose power is concentrated in the global cities of the world (New York, London, Tokyo and Beijing, which can be considered as the 'capitals' of the three major regions, each with its own centers, peripheries and semi-peripheries). In this scenario, the United States loses its supremacy and becomes a regional hegemon that has to relinquish its dominance and share its power with Europe and China. In case China continues its frenzied expansion, overcomes its animosity with Japan, and starts to closely collaborate with India, we can expect the emergence of the Asian Pacific as the major player in world politics. Such a global shift in the balance of power away from the West to Asia would definitely challenge Western narratives of modernization and even force us to rewrite universal history as we know it.

European hegemony, principally Dutch, French and British, was a result of the scientific and industrial revolutions. Europe was not always the centre of the world and the endpoint of universal history, as Hegel thought, but has only assumed this position for the last two centuries. If we may believe Enrique Dussel, Europe was until the fifteenth century only "a periphery of the Islamic, Chinese and Hindustani world – that 'Oriental' world, much more refined and developed, from all points of view, that was the 'center' of the old world", and the densest part of the world-system until the end of the eighteenth century" (Dussel, 2002: 231). In a similar attempt to 're-orient' and 'de-center' universal history and rewrite it from an Asian perspective, John Hobson (2006) has recently defended the provocative thesis that after a "short Western interlude" of two centuries, Europe and the US will slowly, but surely backslide to the semi-periphery, while the mainstream of global history might finally be returning back to China. Like geomancy, futurology is always a risky business. But for heuristic purposes, we need to think ahead and develop scenarios of the global future – "Close your eyes, imagine that we are in the year 2020 and tell us what you think the world should look like" (Nederveen Pieterse, 2000: xv).

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