

Cosmopolitanism, self-interest, and world government

That a dealer should not overcharge an inexperienced purchaser certainly accords with duty; and where there is much commerce, the prudent merchant does not overcharge but keeps to a fixed price for everyone in general, so that a child may buy from him just as well as everyone else may. Thus customers are honestly served, but this is not nearly enough for making us believe that the merchant has acted this way from duty and from principles of honesty; his own advantage required him to do it.

(Immanuel Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, 1993 [1785])

For those, like Kant, conducting an investigation into fundamental moral principles, it is important to distinguish a moral motivation for acting from a self-interested motivation for acting, even where the two motivations encourage the same action. However, when the concern is rather how the practical demands of given principles might be realised, it should be recognised that self-interest might prove useful. My focus in this paper is how, and *in which institutional conditions*, self-interested motivations might aid the realisation of a cosmopolitan vision of global justice.¹ I will argue that usefully harnessing three such motivations – which I call economic self-interest, prudential self-interest and democratic self-interest – requires or strongly implies world government. I use this latter descriptor deliberately loosely, intending it to capture both those institutional proposals conceptualised as residing between a confederal and federal world order, and full world state proposals.² In both cases, at least some features of genuine government (not the weaker vision of ‘global governance’) are present: in particular, sovereign executive authority and/or a (democratic) global legislature. My thought is that if the varieties of self-interest I will consider here are to motivate behaviour that ‘accords’ with cosmopolitan ends, it will be in an institutional context in which one or both of these features are present.

¹ We need not assume one specific cosmopolitan theory. Common to all such theories is that principles of distributive justice are global in scope, and are to be relationally understood, entailing the limitation or eradication of inequalities in a given metric between persons worldwide.

² For examples of the first type see Archibugi, 2008; Caney, 2005; Held, 1995; Pogge, 2002; Habermas, 2006. For examples of the latter type see Cabrera, 2004; Marchetti, 2008.

World government is sometimes a direct implication of cosmopolitan principles: where one makes a cosmopolitan case for globalised representative democracy, for instance, one is necessarily at the same time making the case for at least some features of world government (e.g. a global parliament). In other cases, world government is not implied in this direct way, but endorsed by cosmopolitans, for example, because of the perceived inconveniences of state sovereignty (Cabrera, 2004), or because practically realising cosmopolitan ends is understood to require new administrative apparatus (Pogge, 2002). The argument in this paper *reinforces* the notion that realising cosmopolitan principles entails world government by offering another, novel, way to make the connection, and is therefore primarily directed at cosmopolitans who have remained ambivalent about, or indeed have explicitly rejected, radical institutional implications (e.g. Barry, 1998; Beitz, 1994; Brock, 2009; Brown, 2009; Tan, 2004; Ypi, 2012).

It is important to make two points clearly out the outset. First, at no point in what follows am I suggesting that self-interested motives *alone* can motivationally sustain cosmopolitanism – to the contrary, my argument here assumes that a genuine and widespread *moral* commitment to cosmopolitan principles already pertains, and that the global population is prepared to understand itself as a political ‘community’ to which principles of justice apply; I will refer to this as an assumption of ‘cosmopolitan solidarity’. This, of course, is a counterfactual assumption, and for those concerned about the prospects for the realisation of cosmopolitan principles, the current lack of a widespread moral motivation is a pressing concern – it is just not the concern of this paper.³ Note also that such an assumption is necessary if one is interested in the question of cosmopolitan institutions, because without it, *all* such institutional proposals, however apparently modest or radical, are doomed to failure.

Second, the exact status of the argument bears clarifying. I will offer three examples of self-interested motivations that might aid the realisation of a cosmopolitan condition *were there to be world government*. This is importantly different to offering self-interested reasons *to create world government*. The argument here is made in support of a particular cosmopolitan institutional ideal – it does not obviously tell us anything about how (or if) that institutional form itself might be

³ For thoughts on this issue, see Ulaş, 2015.

realised.⁴ Taken together, these two points clarify that I am here concerned with how, in the right institutional circumstances, self-interest might contribute to the *stabilisation* of a roughly cosmopolitan condition.⁵

Economic self-interest

A first way to think about self-interest in the global context is in terms of global economic integration. According to some, the best way to lift people out of poverty and reduce global inequalities is to progressively lower trade tariffs, end states' protectionist trade policies (such as subsidies for domestic industries), and free up the movement of capital and labour, thereby creating a truly global marketplace and giving maximum expression to self-interested economic rationality on a global scale (e.g. Bhagwati, 2004; Wolf, 2005).

Such global economic integration is claimed to be of *universal* benefit. Free trade, for example, offers states the opportunity to enjoy the gains of their comparative advantage, where the latter is explained via a simplified two state example, as follows. State₁ should specialise in producing or providing the good that it is *relatively* most efficient at producing or providing, determined by reference to the 'opportunity cost' of producing that good compared to the opportunity cost for State₂ of doing the same, and *vice versa*. Both states should specialise in this way regardless of whether or not they have an *absolute* advantage in the production cost of any good(s), because the price of each state's comparative advantage good will in any case reliably be lower than the price of that good in the other state: resultantly, there will be a market for that good in the other state. The overall effect is to produce gains in access to *both* goods for *both* states. By extension, it is claimed that the effect of instituting global free trade would be to increase 'gross world product' while at the same time eradicating global poverty and reducing global inequality.

⁴ For some thoughts about how world government might come about, see: Archibugi and Held, 2011; Cabrera, 2010; Goodin, 2010; Goodin, 2013, Wendt 2003.

⁵ In making this argument I make a pair of assumptions about feasibility. First, I assume that persons can be expected always to remain partially and importantly self-interested, even in conditions of cosmopolitan solidarity. In other words, I assume that to completely idealise away human self-interest would be to anticipate the impossible. By contrast, I assume that world government is not impossible in the same sense, even if currently clearly impractical. The distinction here is that between a 'hard' and 'soft' feasibility constraint respectively (Gilbert and Lawford-Smith, 2012).

Things are obviously rather more complex than this, and there exists a lively debate regarding the empirical bases of the link between global economic integration and reductions in global poverty and inequality, which I cannot hope to settle here.⁶ Moreover, there lurks a suspicion that the case for economic globalisation is less an impartial blueprint for global equality than a palatable cover for a pernicious ideology propounding the idea that poorer states have no one to blame but themselves if they cannot pull themselves up out of poverty. Such suspicions are given succour by the recognition that the beginnings of economic globalization seem often to be obviously anti-cosmopolitan. Indeed, even Martin Wolf, a supporter of the case, recognises that the actions of rich states within the WTO, asymmetrically enforcing the lowering of trade tariffs in developing states while maintaining their own heavy subsidies, are a “grotesquerie” (2005: 215). Conscious of these concerns, here I will simply grant that full and reciprocally administered economic globalization is theoretically consistent with – and indeed could aid the realisation of – cosmopolitan principles, and ask what follows. My answer is that there are at least four considerations – two practical, and two ethical – that, taken together, point to world government as the most plausible institutional site for the realisation of any such cosmopolitan potential.

The first arises from an acknowledgement that although economic integration might be mutually beneficial if we take the relevant units of analysis to be states, the facts may be otherwise if, in a more cosmopolitan spirit, we take the relevant units of analysis to be *persons* or sub-state groups. States are abstract corporate entities: to say a trade policy is in a particular state’s interest is merely to say that the numbers stack up nicely in the aggregate. But it does not follow that this aggregate-level economic rationalism will be internalised by individual citizens, especially given that an implication of the theory of comparative advantage is that various industries and business sectors – and thus jobs – in any one state should be lost. Admittedly, the theory also assumes that those who lose jobs in those industries will gain them in the industry in which the state has comparative advantage, but the assumption of full employment is a simplifying one that does not accord with reality, and in any case neglects to recognise the fact

⁶ For added complexity, see James (2012: Ch. 2). For an overview of some of the key points of contestation, see Luke Martell (2010: Ch. 8). For a detailed analysis of the contemporary shape and extent of economic globalisation, see Held and McGrew (2007). For scepticism regarding the extent to which global inequality and poverty have been reduced in recent years, see Pogge (2010).

that persons often relate to their jobs in more than economic terms, for example additionally seeing them as constitutive of personal and/or communal identity (consider the 20th century UK mining communities, for instance).

Thus, those groups who stand to lose out as a result of their state re-organising to realise its comparative advantage can be expected to lobby against the latter occurring, and when such groups are sufficiently politically powerful the effect may be to preclude such a move. Agriculture, for instance, is an area of potential comparative advantage for many developing countries. However, the farming lobby in Europe (as in the US) is politically powerful and resultantly continues to benefit from subsidies and tariffs that, as case studies by various NGOs have shown, artificially buoy European farming at the expense of developing countries (e.g. ActionAid 2011; Fritz, 2011; Oxfam, 2004). Potential gains to the economies of poor states and the reduction of global poverty are thereby precluded.⁷ In the economic turbulence of recent years, states, facing internal political pressures, implemented a number of protectionist measures that effectively began to *undo* some of the economic integration that had already occurred, despite a warning from the WTO that such measures “will not solve their [economic] problems” (WTO, 2012).

Importantly, adding a counterfactual assumption of cosmopolitan solidarity, as I have indicated that we must, is unlikely to change this dynamic. Consider that an individual is distraught when they lose their livelihood regardless of whether that is on account of their industry moving elsewhere *within* their own state or beyond their state’s borders. Shipbuilding was ceased in the UK town of Portsmouth in 2013, with the loss of over one thousand jobs; those who lost their jobs were not far consoled by the fact they were reportedly ‘sacrificed’ in order to save the shipbuilding industry in Scotland rather than somewhere beyond the UK. In other words, a sense of political solidarity, which is assumed to hold already between compatriots, is not sufficient to overcome the priority of self-interest in cases like this. It follows that to assume a sense of *cosmopolitan* solidarity does not mean we are entitled to assume, in a global system of separate sovereign states, that there would not remain persistent calls to maintain trade barriers –

⁷ It remains to be seen what the eventual effect of the 2013 reforms to the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy will be, although they have been labelled a “missed opportunity” (Matthews, 2014).

or that there would not be persistent calls to *re-raise* trade barriers in a world in which economic integration had been tentatively achieved.

The upshot of this can be set out with reference to Friedrich Hayek, from whom global economic integrationists' faith in the market draws obvious inspiration. Hayek insisted that 'the abrogation of national sovereignties and the creation of an effective international order of law' is a necessary compliment to the liberal economic programme (Hayek, 1948: 269). And by appeal to an 'effective international order of law', Hayek in fact means a federal order with coercive central power, i.e. a federal (albeit minimal) state. Such a structure was perceived as necessary in order to *constitutionally preclude* economic relations between 'nations organised as trading bodies' (ibid: 226) – with its associated protectionist dispositions – which otherwise consistently threatens to re-arise on account of the sort of dynamic I have just outlined.

Hayek moved directly to the federal state form because he understood this to be 'the only way in which the ideal of international law can be made a reality'; without it, any appeal to international law is merely 'expressing a pious wish' (Hayek, 2001 [1944]: 239). Surveying the situation with the benefit of 70 years' hindsight, and with some distance from the tumultuous period in which he was writing, a fully federal form may seem to us less vital, given experience of the novel institutional form of the European Union. On the other hand, given recent troubles, one might be tempted to enlist the EU as evidence of the desirability of genuine sovereign government in circumstances of economic integration (Verhofstadt and Cohn-Bendit, 2012). But even if the EU is evidence of the possibility of stabilised economic integration without sovereign government (a big 'if'), it nevertheless also points, as a living example of an institutional form that resides conceptually between a confederal and federal order, toward the importance of the transcendence of the state system: the EU's complex institutional structure, inclusive of the European Parliament and European Court of Justice, is clearly far removed the sorts of bi- and multi-lateral trade treaties that Hayek was dismissive of, and while it does not formally remove the right of unilateral exit for any one member state, the costs and risks of doing so are such that they are of a wholly different order to the simple renegeing upon a discrete trade agreement. We

can then at least say that there appears to be a benefit to stability that comes from the enmeshing of economic integration with political integration.

A second way of thinking about this link is to see some amount of political integration as an important *pre-cursor* to economic integration, or to see the genesis of the two as reiteratively connected. Consider this via reference to one of the three main tenets of global economic integration, the free movement of people/labour. Freedom of movement is of course not conceptually incompatible with a system of separate states. Nevertheless, the most fully realised system of open borders extant in the world today – the EU – arose, in its current form, only *after* some extensive political integration had occurred; the law that sustains European freedom of movement is not a series of unilateral commitments, nor a simple multilateral treaty, but rather an EU-level directive that involved the European parliament. This political integration, in its turn, was preceded by initial economic integration. One way of understanding this relationship is to say that the gradual and interactive elaboration of European political and economic institutions has rendered each more politically feasible; they are mutually supportive. Indeed, the free movement of persons is at once a political *and* economic construct; it is both a right held by European citizens, and a central tenet of the idea of economic integration.

Another way of characterising the relationship is via reference to functionalist theories of integration, in which institutional ‘contradictions’ generate crises which forcefully present the need for more integration, which then comes as a ‘spill-over effect’ rather than as an initially intended reform (Haas, 2008 [1964]). On this account, economic and political integration remain interlinked, but as a series of crises and resolutions rather than as mutually positively enabling. There is some justification for characterizing the development of the EU in this way (Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, 2006), and indeed for seeing current troubles within the Eurozone at the latest iteration of this dynamic compelling greater integration.

Both of the practical considerations I have presented lean on the single case of the European Union, and neither demonstrate conclusively that there could not be global economic integration without elements of world government. Nevertheless, both point to reasons to consider there to be a positive probabilistic link between political integration and the plausibility

of stable economic integration; the greater the extent of “stateness”, the better (Koenig-Archibugi, 2011). Furthermore, it does seem to me that in any case there could not be *ethically justified* global economic integration without world government; ethically justified, that is, from a cosmopolitan perspective. This is important, because our aim here is to consider the prospects for harnessing self-interested motivations that are potentially *consistent with* moral cosmopolitanism in terms of the actions they motivate.

The first ethical argument concerns the democratic implications of a globalised economy, and is revealed via recognition of what Dani Rodrik (2011a, 2011b) calls the political trilemma of the world economy. The trilemma makes clear that only two (any two) of the following three things can co-exist: separate states; global economic integration; and democratic politics. If we choose global economic integration, and want to retain separate states, then – because increased economic integration requires increased harmonisation of domestic regulatory standards – we must be committed to the shrinking scope of democratic politics; the *demos* in any one state cannot be empowered to select policies that diverge from international standards. States must don, and indeed are already accused of donning, a ‘golden straightjacket’ in order to be business-friendly and attract capital investment (Friedman, 2000).

Giving up on democracy is not a resolution of the trilemma that cosmopolitans are at liberty to select. The options are thus to give up on the idea of extensive international economic integration, blunting the extent to which self-interested economic rationality can aid the realisation of cosmopolitan ends, or to endorse both economic integration and democratic politics by sacrificing the domestic state system and “instituting federalism on a global scale” (Rodrik, 2011a: 68). Either way, it must be recognised that an appeal for global economic integration as a means of advancing cosmopolitan ends must, if it is to be democratically legitimate, at the same time be an appeal for world government. The EU can again be pointed to as an example to learn from, since it is regularly accused of operating with a ‘democratic deficit’ requiring the strengthening of the European parliament (e.g. Habermas, 2012). Global economic integration implemented by a purely intergovernmental organisation like the WTO would be even more susceptible to the democratic critique.

It might however be suggested that Rodrik's trilemma is false, because separate states could each democratically decide to bind themselves to harmonised global regulatory standards: each state, that is, would democratically agree to shrink its own democratic remit. But here a dilemma arises: either the democratic agenda is shrunk decisively in a 'one off' vote in every state, in which case the question arises how this permanent restriction can be democratically justified to future generations; or every state perennially reopens the question of whether they wish to shrink their own economic remit, rendering global economic integration always tentative, volatile and highly vulnerable to the first practical problem set out above. Given that we are also assuming that persons have internalised a genuine sense of cosmopolitan commitment that we can understand as akin to the formation of a global *demos*, it's also not clear that separate states would in any case any longer be understood as the appropriate democratic fora for settling the question.

The second ethical consideration is the need to effectively mitigate a global market's negative externalities. Consider, for just one example, the problem of environmental pollution.⁸ Market transactions can have considerable adverse effects on the environment that are not incorporated into the cost of the transaction by the transacting parties. At the domestic level, governments can protect against such externalities by outlawing polluting practices, authoritatively ordering their rectification, levying taxes on polluting behaviour, and/or instituting and administering novel market-based solutions like emissions trading. At the global level, of course, there is no comparable, competent agency. In its absence, the mitigation of *global* environmental externalities like climate change depends upon state voluntarism and negotiation, which has so far lead to underwhelming results. Significantly, market-based solutions are themselves far more difficult because of this dependence – indeed, while a number of regional carbon 'cap and trade' schemes have enjoyed some success (Caney and Hepburn, 2011), it has not proven possible for states to create a genuinely global market in carbon credits, and hence to

⁸ Another possible negative externality is the economic *inequality* that free markets can give rise to. I do not emphasise this point here however, as I am granting that there may be a cosmopolitan case for economic globalisation.

set a globally recognised carbon price, let alone agree on a global cap in emissions within which a global trading system would operate.

The difficulty of neutralising negative externalities without government can be further elucidated when we recognise that such neutralisation amounts to the provision of public goods, the latter being at the heart of the argument from prudential self-interest.

Prudential Self-Interest

Daniel Weinstock suggests that there are at least three prudential reasons for states to seek to limit inequality. These are:

the spread of infectious disease ..., the development of networks of global terrorists increasingly emboldened to carry out destructive actions in affluent countries, and ... the degradation of the natural environment and the depletion of global natural resources. There are, in other words, “global public goods” – that is, goods that the world’s richest countries cannot obtain unless the needs of the global poor are catered to as well.

(2010: 183)

We have reason to be concerned about living conditions in poorer states because, first, ‘there is a high correlation between poverty and poor hygienic conditions, and poor hygienic conditions are efficient breeding grounds for the proliferation of infectious diseases’ (ibid: 183) which spread across borders. Second, ‘it has been fairly well established that poverty and poor environmental practices co-exist in many countries in a vicious cycle, the impacts of which are impossible to contain within national boundaries’ (ibid: 184). Finally, there might be a causal link between global inequality and political extremism which would give affluent states self-interested reason to be concerned to alleviate that poverty (see also Held, 2004: 144). Weinstock concludes that therefore there may be ‘prudence-based arguments to be made for a global egalitarian agenda’ that do not necessitate ‘institutional bootstrapping’ (2010: 184).⁹

⁹ It is only the last prudent motivation Weinstock offers that actually speaks specifically of inequality. Nevertheless, any successful attempt to raise persons worldwide above a sufficientarian threshold must *limit* certain inequalities, lest they widen to the point at which, for example, the purchasing power of poorer states sinks below a level sufficient to secure certain goods (Ypi, 2012). Moreover, there are prudential arguments one can make that speak more obviously to a relational dimension. For example, immigration: citizens of rich countries who consider immigration into their country to be undesirable, and yet also recognise that a major reason for that immigration is the poorer standards of living in the immigrants’ countries of origin (even if above some minimum threshold), have self-interested reason to help improve those standards.

It's not clear however that this is the case. As Weinstock recognises, better-off states are not concertededly acting upon the prudential logic he demonstrates, and are instead attempting to protect themselves against these effects by, for example, stockpiling antiviral drugs and tightening border controls. Why is this? Part of the reason will likely be that, as I have been emphasising, a self-interested motive *alone* is not sufficient to sustain actions in accordance with cosmopolitan justice. This is especially likely to be the case where a moral motive is not just missing but is, so to speak, pointing in the opposite direction. In general, persons not only do not accept a moral obligation to realise cosmopolitan principles of justice, they in fact have explicitly *particularist* moral commitments, in which the moral significance of the nation and/or state is emphasised, and on which basis cosmopolitanism is rejected. In such cases, there is a conflict between the self-understood moral motive (which rejects the idea of cosmopolitan justice) and the prudential motive of self-interest (which may endorse it). Another reason these sorts of prudential arguments may not carry water is a lack of belief in the efficacy of inter-state 'aid'. This belief may in some instances be well-grounded, but in other cases may stem from the suspicion and distrust characteristic of a lack of cosmopolitan moral solidarity.

Given that we are assuming, counterfactually, that a widespread commitment to cosmopolitan principles pertains, we can set the above worries aside. An additional explanation is simply that the prudential arguments are not yet widely known and accepted. Weinstock himself believes that 'would-be global demos builders' should make such arguments explicit and 'draw up policy proposals that speak to them' (2010: 190), the assumption apparently being that if such arguments were widely disseminated, they would and *could* be endorsed and acted upon.¹⁰ But such a conclusion cannot be so straightforwardly drawn, *even in* circumstances of cosmopolitan solidarity. For it is not within any one state's power to act upon the logic of the prudential arguments autonomously - at least not at reasonable cost to itself. A given state may come to understand the prudential argument for narrow global inequality, but nevertheless have

¹⁰ The former UK International Development Secretary Andrew Mitchell in fact articulated the prudential message particularly clearly: 'If we had tackled the deep causes of poverty and dysfunctionality in Somalia and Afghanistan, we would not have to grapple with the symptoms today. These problems affect us here – terrorism, the drugs trade and illegal migration. If we want to tackle these problems at home, we have to understand and address their root causes abroad. Some people say we can't afford to engage in international development, but we can't afford not to' (quoted in Grice, 2011).

neither the resources nor the organisational capacity, nor indeed the motivation, to do so unilaterally.

Of course, Weinstock's argument is intended to convince rich states that they should work *together* in this regard. But notice that Weinstock, in setting out of the prudential case, characterises it with explicit reference to the idea of global public goods; there are various global public goods the realisation of which depends upon improving the economic, social and infrastructural circumstances of poorer states (i.e. 'weakest link' public goods). This, however, amounts to saying that improving the economic and infrastructural circumstances of poorer states 'is *itself* a global public good; and one that, because it requires financing, is open to free riding' (Barrett, 2007: 12). The phenomenon of 'free riding' is self-interest taken to its logical conclusion: collaborating with others to realise a mutual interest is good, but having those others realise that mutual interest *without* your having to contribute is even better. Thus, the appeal to prudence faces a well-recognised theoretical problem in current global institutional conditions, namely the difficulty of collective action to realise public goods in the absence of government.¹¹

Hypothesising cosmopolitan solidarity does not obviously help avoid this conclusion. In order for the collective action problem to be solved, it is necessary not just that each relevant agent be guided by the appropriate cosmopolitan motivation, but also that each agent be assured that *every other agent* is similarly motivated. Where agents cannot be so assured, they are liable to refrain from contributing themselves, even when they were initially minded to, both because they expect that the good won't be realised without the contributions of those others, and because they want to avoid being the 'sucker', i.e. the agent whose contributions others free ride upon. The pertinent question is what it takes for agents to be sufficiently assured. Here John Rawls is instructive:

The sense of justice leads us to promote just schemes and to do our share in them when we believe that others, or sufficiently many of them, will do theirs. But in normal circumstances a reasonable assurance in this regard can only be given if there is a binding rule effectively enforced... The need for the enforcement of rules by the state will still exist even when everyone is moved by the same sense of justice (1999 [1971], 236)

¹¹ For two analyses of the problem of delivering global public goods with specific reference to international aid contributions see Steinwand, 2011; Mascarenhas and Sandler, 2006.

'Binding rule effectively enforced' is thought necessary because the internalisation of a particular sense of justice and willingness to act upon it does not and cannot itself bring with it an assurance that others are similarly motivated and willing. Indeed, in order for collective action problems to be reliably solved without the aid of institutional coercion, a deep level of relationship, of genuine *friendship*, seems to be required (Majolo et al, 2006). The 'trust' that purportedly pertains to a sense of political solidarity (Miller, 1995) is not qualitatively equivalent.

Of course, the international 'state of nature' is disanalogous to its individualist equivalent, because states, as political-legal standing achievements, have apparently been able to realise a legal condition 'horizontally', via the innovation of international law. Yet even if we grant that international law deserves its moniker *as law* (for doubts, see Goldsmith and Posner, 2005), what's missing is "supranational power above competing states that would equip the international community with the executive and sanctioning powers required to implement and enforce its rules and decisions" (Habermas, 2006: 132). For those, like Habermas, who reject global sovereignty, it's not clear how this circle is to be squared. In lieu of an answer, international law struggles to provide global public goods as best it can, but remains in many instances ineffective (Goldin, 2013).

Indeed, one might suggest that 'binding law effectively enforced' is all the more likely to be important in the context which concerns us here than the Rawlsian one. For while Rawls was concerned to stabilise just outcomes via reference to a shared sense of justice alone, here we are considering, additionally, self-interested motivations – and if self-interest is explicitly part of the shared public justification for contributing to global public good provision, agents will be mutually wary of the possibility of that self-interest tipping over into a desire to free ride. Furthermore, it seems unlikely that any sense of moral commitment that eventually arises in the global context will be more potent – more like friendship – than that which has arisen in the domestic context, given that resources such as a shared cultural identity would not obviously be available, as they are claimed to be in, say, the national context. In sum, we should recognise that even with the addition (missing in Weinstock's account) of a widespread genuine sense of cosmopolitan motivation, it is not obvious that the prudential argument for the provision of

global public goods will be successful in the existing institutional constellation. In order to activate the logic of the prudential arguments, some form of genuinely binding global law that, unlike international law, is impartially created and reliably enforced, would be of significant benefit (Lee, 2010).

Democratic Self-Interest

In this last section I want to underscore the instrumental value of global democracy to cosmopolitan ends, specifically by way of reference to self-interest. I mean here to say nothing about whether the value of democracy, global or otherwise, can also be defended in intrinsic terms. Nor do I say that the instrumental argument at hand here is the only one available. The point is only to make clear that one particular instrumental argument for global democracy can be made both *positively* and *negatively*, and that when the negative version is recognised, the instrumental importance of global democracy (and hence world government) to cosmopolitan ends is felt all the more keenly.

Democratic societies maintain for their citizens the right to vote – enabling the citizenry to select (and de-select) representatives – together with a number of other related rights such as the right to free speech, assembly, and legal challenge. “In such an institutional context, individuals are enabled to appropriately *challenge* political power holders through forms of protest and expression, and to *chasten* them through formal electoral processes and, significantly, in courts or through ombuds processes” (Cabrera, 2014: 236). Empirical evidence can be marshalled to show that these rights and mechanisms make a difference to the protection of widely recognised human rights (Sen, 1999; Christiano, 2011). This can be couched in terms of the positive pursuit of self-interest: a democratic system allows all to lobby for their own interests in a way that is instrumentally useful for the realisation of at least a sufficientarian distributive outcome.¹²

¹² Of course, real world democratic regimes do not produce exactly the results one might expect them to on paper. Consider, for example, that poorer citizens in democratic states, even where they apparently form a potential majority, often fail to use their votes in ways that would serve their own interests optimally, or indeed to use their votes at all. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that one would wish to deny that a democratic political system – even the imperfect, far from ideal systems we have experience of in practice –

But democracy *where?* Globalised democracy can be understood in two senses. The first refers to the reiterative democratisation of separate states, with no transnational or globally extensive democratic institutions implied. The second refers specifically to a vision of democratic processes replicated at the global level; a global parliament, with global representatives of a global constituency of world citizens with democratic rights and freedoms. When the instrumental argument for democracy is considered only in the above positive form, there is no obvious reason to favour truly global democracy over the a world of separate democratic states: if democracy protects basic rights, then why should it matter whether there are lots of separate democracies, or one? But there is also a negative version of the instrumental argument to be made: *without* democracy in a given political context, the self-interest of some can overcome the interests of others in a way that hinders the latter from realising their basic rights and/or precludes a just outcome.

Such an argument is set out a global level by Luis Cabrera, who emphasises the problem presented by ‘a set of interconnected biases, naturally arising in a states system’:

The biases serve as powerful forces working against distributions not only of resources and opportunities to outsiders, but also against extending fully fair terms of trade and investment, equitable aid conditionalities, responsibilities to address climate change and other threats. Biases include an electoral or stakeholder one, where domestic leaders have strong incentives to tend to the interests of their own constituents first and routinely ignore those of outsiders. Self-interest and a more subtle own-case bias arise at the level of the collective or polity. Polities are left to be the judges of their own obligations in a global system lacking a neutral suprapstate judge or forum where salient decisions can be challenged from outside the states taking them. Thus, they face few systematic challenges to acting from plain self-interest (Cabrera, 2014: 240).

The upshot of the negative argument is that truly global democracy is necessary if the dynamic expressed by the positive version of the argument is to be accessible in the global context.¹³

is preferable to a non-democratic system, and part of the reason for this is its tendency to produce superior outcomes from the perspective of justice relative to alternatives.

¹³ Obviously, any global democracy is also likely to be imperfect in practice – but again, my thought is that even an imperfect global democracy is better than no global democracy. One may in fact be tempted to argue that global democracy faces more difficulty here on account of the current lack of a plausible ‘global demos’, by which is meant that the global population does not understand itself as a political community and so global democratic institutions will not be accepted as legitimate (e.g. Miller, 2009). But that would

Cabrera claims that biases are ‘naturally arising’ in a multi-state system, and it might be thought that that is too strong a statement. More specifically, given that I have been at pains to emphasise the assumption of a sense of genuine cosmopolitan commitment, might it not be the case that the negative dynamic can be overcome without radical institutional implications? Consider, for example, a theory of ‘statist cosmopolitanism’ that emphasises the possibility that separate states undergo reiterative transformations such that each becomes a committed agent of cosmopolitan justice (Ypi, 2012). In this vein, one might argue that where a genuine cosmopolitan commitment was internalised the present instrumental appeal to democratic self-interest would be unnecessary (even if global democracy still has other instrumental and intrinsic value). However, enabling each individual to democratically pursue their self-interest is useful for cosmopolitanism not only because it can encourage authorities to react to the needs of the citizenry, but also because, in political contexts, self-interest is almost always a more potent sentiment than interest in others, *regardless* of the additional presence of moral motivations.

To see this, first consider the distinction Elaine Scarry (1996) has made between ‘imagining’ and ‘including’ others. Scarry characterises an appeal for a cosmopolitan ethic as an attempt to persuade us to extend our imagination to include distant others, bearing in mind their ‘full weight’ and ‘solidity’ – the fact that they are real agents, have life goals, have loves, feel injury, suffer – when making decisions that are likely to affect them. While these are obviously worthy intentions, the problem is that ‘imagining’ or ‘remembering’ others in this ongoing manner is in fact highly psychologically demanding. To demonstrate this, Scarry first refers to Jean-Paul Sartre’s study of the imagination, in which he asks the reader to close their eyes and attempt to conjure up in their imagination the face of a loved one. Scarry then asks us to:

Transport the problems of trying to imagine a single friend to the imaginative labor of knowing the other – not an intimate friend, not any single person at all, but instead five, or ten, or one hundred, or one hundred thousand; or x , the number of Turks residing in Germany; or y , the number of illegal aliens living in the United States; or z , the estimated number of Iraqi citizens killed in our bombing raids; or 70 million, the scale of population that stands to suffer should the United States fire a nuclear missile[.]

(Scarry, 1996: 103)

be to ignore the assumption we are working with here, which is that there does indeed exist a widespread sense of cosmopolitan commitment which can enable a global population to understand itself as a demos.

Clearly, the ‘imagining’ that is required here is different to that in the case of bringing to mind the face of a friend. But just as the face of a friend is inevitably faded and two-dimensional in our mind’s eye, so it proves difficult to empathetically and consistently ‘imagine’ the lives of millions of others, *regardless* of an earnest intention to do so. And where our imagination falters, we are liable to neglect the effects on others of our actions and omissions.

This calls to mind Adam Smith’s infamous statement that a ‘man of humanity in Europe’ is nevertheless more readily upset by a ‘paltry misfortune’ to himself than the ‘ruin of a hundred million of his brethren’ in China (2002 [1759]: 157–8). Smith’s point, as Fonna Forman-Barzilai puts it, is that ‘we are sentimentally near-sighted’ (Forman-Barzilai, 2010: 50). This near-sightedness is chronic; it applies already *within* states as well as across them, which is to say that any sense of national solidarity and moral commitment that pertains within a state will not in itself be sufficient, absent the state’s coercive institutions, to stabilise outcomes consistent with the demands of justice. It is incredible that the suffering of unknown others, even great suffering, could affect us with the same intensity as our own suffering, or even our own worries, concerns and preoccupations. That is particularly so of those others with whom we have little interaction and are thus rarely ‘reminded’ of in the first place.

In this vein, Jacob Schiff has outlined three aggravating psychological factors for the problem of *ongoing* acknowledgement of global structural injustice and our political responsibilities to distant others, factors that persist even where such injustice and responsibility is accepted in moral-intellectual terms. These are: the Arendtian problem of our ‘thoughtlessness’, or failure of conscience, which is both fostered institutionally (as when sweatshops are “insulated from public view” by the distance placed between producer and consumer) and is also a “quasi-natural, practically necessary feature of political life”, because it shields us against a reality which would otherwise be psychologically overwhelming (2008: 104); Sartre’s notion of ‘bad faith’, our continued susceptibility to deliberately mislead ourselves about the reality of, and our implication in, moral wrongs; and Bourdieu’s concept of misrecognition, in which our everyday lived experience of structural injustice renders it habitual and ‘ordinary’, and “as it becomes thoughtlessly taken for granted and naturalised, causes our harmful activities to recede from view

– to be *forgotten*” (ibid: 101). Like thoughtlessness, these last two psychological ‘modes of covering up’ are understood to be in some sense essential features of human experience.

There is also psychological evidence to suggest that imagining the other may not necessarily reliably lead to altruistic behaviour, depending on precisely how that imagining is conducted. For instance, although directly ‘imagining how the other feels’ can lead to empathetic concern and related motivation to alleviate suffering, imagining *oneself* in the other’s place may lead to personal distress on the part of the imaginer (Batson, 2009). And while one *may* be lead one to undertake ‘altruistic’ action in order to end such personal distress (Cabrera, 2010: 242), one may alternatively be motivated only to remove oneself from the situation in which they are confronted with the suffering (Batson et al, 1987). What seems to make the difference here is the ‘ease of escape’ from observance of the other: when escape is not easy, one suffering personal distress will be motivated to act ‘altruistically’ in order to minimise their own negative affect; but when escape is easier, it is likely that the observer’s reaction will simply be to exit the situation (Klimecki and Singer, 2012: 372). Unfortunately, as regards the suffering of often very distant others with which cosmopolitanism is concerned, escape is very easy: it may involve little more than turning over the TV channel, or even just avoiding making an effort to find out about that suffering in the first place.

It follows from these sorts of worries about our ongoing capacities of imagination that it is at best highly inefficient to leave ‘the fate of another person to be contingent on the generosity and wisdom of the imaginer’ (Scarry, 1996: 106). For Scarry, in the domestic context at least, the appropriate response is instead to structure society such that ‘no group any longer occupies the position of legal other’ by activating the ‘principle of self-representation’ (ibid: 107). Democratic inclusion negates the need for over-optimistic sole reliance on the successful imagining of one group by another. However, Scarry does not follow her own argument through as one might expect in the global context, claiming that ‘[w]hile it is possible to eliminate the legal position of the Other within a country, it is not possible to do so for people outside its borders’ (ibid: 108). But of course it is only true that the position of legal other is ineradicable if we assume that borders (circumscribing differing legal regimes) are themselves ineradicable. Admittedly that is

the sensible assumption to make if one is attempting to offer a short- to medium-term practical political proposal. But nevertheless, state borders are not natural facts about the world that cannot be changed. It is not genuinely impossible to eliminate the position of legal other; the institution of global democracy could achieve just such elimination. (This is not to say, of course, that there could not also remain distinct *demoi* below the global level, as there are in federal units in a domestic federal state.) And if one is engaged not in the development of any political proposal, but instead, as we are here, in consideration of cosmopolitan institutional ideals, then Scarry's institutional conservatism, in which she speaks only of the 'self-revision' of states in order to 'prepare for a more generous [i.e. more cosmopolitan] future' (ibid: 110) – clearly calling to mind Ypi's 'statist cosmopolitanism' – is inappropriate, since it amounts to a rejection of the idea of *self-representation* which was fundamental to her earlier argument, and in essence falls back upon the idea of 'imaginatively' including others.

Whether democratic self-representation at the global level must imply a global state (e.g. Marchetti, 2008), or instead only an intermediary institutional construct that sits somewhere between a global state and a multi-state system (e.g. Archibugi, 2008), is not something I can go into here. Either way, a central aspect of world government – a substantive democratic legislature – is required if democratic self-interest is to be a positive rather than negative factor with respect to the realisation of cosmopolitan ends.

Conclusion

If cosmopolitanism is ever to be a plausible ethic, there must come to pertain a widely shared attachment to cosmopolitan moral principles that can help motivate and sustain actions in accordance with cosmopolitan morality. I have said nothing here about how and whether that could come to pass. Rather, I have suggested that there potentially exists an additional, complimentary, and overlooked source of motivation for action in accordance with cosmopolitan obligations, namely self-interest. However, I have also argued that, in three instances, if self-interest is to play this complimentary role, some form of world government is implied or necessitated. This may feel like an excruciating conclusion, combining a pragmatic initial thought

with a radical institutional form. But recall that many cosmopolitans *already* believe that the realisation of cosmopolitan principles points in the direction of world government; for such people, the argument in this paper can simply be understood as an additional reason to support that conclusion.

Things are trickier for those cosmopolitans who are ambivalent about or have explicitly rejected the need for world government. I have highlighted a number of self-interested motivations that, so I argue, will be much harder to usefully harness without a world government, and indeed in such circumstances may point in an *anti-cosmopolitan* direction. And one might well suggest that, however impractical and idealistic a world government seems, it is less idealistic than assuming either that cosmopolitan ends could be sustained without the pragmatic bolsters provided by motivations of self-interest, or more optimistically still, that humanity could at some point be rid of self-interest entirely, and reliably act from pure cosmopolitan moral motivation. This, at least, is a dilemma – between institutional and motivational idealisations – that cosmopolitanism must grapple with.

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