

Cosmopolitanism and Difference:
From Liberal Universals to Consensual Universals?
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For nearly three decades, critical theory has acquired increasing prominence in the discipline of international relations (IR). Its achievements fall into two main areas: one epistemological, the other normative and political. Epistemologically, critical theorists argued that hitherto dominant methodological approaches (rationalism and positivism) to the study of international politics were inadequate. They maintained that knowledge is always situated and that it always serves someone's purpose, whether or not theorists are aware of it. Normatively and politically, critical theorists argued that the conviction of possessing scientifically true knowledge led mainstream theorists to put many, if not all, political matters beyond the realm of political debate. Indeed, a scientific truth is not open to deliberation and thus the conduct of politics (and in particular foreign policy) is better left to experts or to those in otherwise privileged positions (such as statesmen). Expertise meant paying lip service to democratic debate and accountability while in fact deciding the fate of the nation (and humanity) behind closed doors.

One manifestation of critical theory in IR has been the re-emergence of cosmopolitanism. For its proponents, the ethos and institutions of cosmopolitanism are particularly well-suited to the globalization that characterizes, in their view, the current era. For David Held and Anthony McGrew, "the term globalization captures elements of a widespread perception that there is a broadening, deepening and speeding up of world-wide interconnectedness in all aspects of life, from the cultural to the criminal, the financial to the environmental. At issue appears to be 'a global shift'; that is, a world being moulded, by economic and technological forces, into a shared economic and political arena" (Held and McGrew 1999). The spill-over of economic and political life from the national into the global would appear to command a corresponding spill-over of political institutions and modes of decision-making from sovereign nation-states to international institutions. Thus many of the laws, regulations and policies that exist in democratic states are now required on a global scale to respond to the challenges of globalization.

In a talk entitled "Reframing Global Governance: Apocalypse Soon or Reform" (Held 2006), a respected cosmopolitan scholar was asked a question regarding the place of gender in his account of globalization and in his model of cosmopolitan democracy. In answering the question he appeared to express scepticism about the direct relevance of gender to his project while not denying its importance as such. He did not see how gender shapes the global social order that is in need of reform and he did not readily recognize the contribution the feminist literature might make in the reshaping of global order. As an example of what feminism contributes to the discussion, he mentioned the right of women to control their fertility as a crucial step toward their emancipation, ostensibly because being saddled with tasks associated with raising (unwanted) children inherently limits their freedom.

The answer given to the question reveals two related limitations of cosmopolitan thinking. The first one is a partial understanding of the forces that make the current order ethically problematic. As a worldview inspired by Kantian liberalism, cosmopolitanism accounts for some sources of exclusion but not others, including gender. The second limitation is that promoters of cosmopolitanism assume that the granting of rights and the creation of formally democratic institutions is a more significant step than it really is. They omit the considerable evidence that rights and institutions in and of themselves do not achieve all that they promise. While it is unfair to demand of cosmopolitanism more than it can provide, it is also unfair to ask others to bracket their priorities. This is in my view exemplified by the way established liberal democratic societies continue to be plagued by inequality and exclusion despite constitutions bestowing rights to all citizens and their official commitment to inclusion. There is therefore a necessity to take the full measure of the problem raised by the questioner mentioned above, and to make

cosmopolitan thinking more receptive to the contribution of those who speak on the basis of subjective experiences.

In reacting to these limitations of cosmopolitanism, I pursue the following goals. First, I seek to explain why cosmopolitanism has difficulty seeing what the questioner was referring to in her question. Second, I show how gender-based exclusion is a significant phenomenon in global politics. Third, I argue that the cosmopolitan ethics' reliance on impartiality, universality, and autonomy stands in the way of the recognition of the significance of gender. Fourth, I defend the position that inclusive dialogue requires the ability to recognize participants' subjectivity and the willingness to engage with them on their terms rather than in the realm of pure reason, as advocated by Held. To do so I rely on emotions-based ethical reasoning to be found in the political psychology of care and empathy.

COSMOPOLITANISM

Since the 1990s there has been a renewed interest for cosmopolitanism. This interest has taken the form of attempts to identify the basic ethical principles that ought to guide political discourse and the kinds of institutions that best embody those principles. At the most general level, cosmopolitanism takes humanity as its referent. It leaves aside differences between individuals, groups, and nations and considers all humans moral subjects by virtue of their humanity (Held 2002: 309). According to promoters of cosmopolitanism, many people already express a sense of responsibility toward non-nationals (Linklater 2002: 141). There exists a trend toward cosmopolitanism that finds expression in the decades-old international human rights texts and in the more recent International Criminal Court. Their existence reflects the emerging norms that *raison d'État* must no longer serve as a defense on the part of human rights violators and that indifference to the plight of others is no longer acceptable because all inhabit the same moral space (Linklater 2002: *ibid.*).

1. The need for cosmopolitanism

Cosmopolitanism appears particularly useful because of the prevailing global conditions. Humanity faces the challenges of massive human rights up to and including genocide, extreme poverty and an increasing gap between rich and poor, and looming environmental disasters. These challenges compound one another in a world that is more crowded and getting smaller. All of these require political solutions and institutions that match the global scope of the problems.

Cosmopolitan discourse is especially prevalent in the area of civil and political rights, but it extends beyond them. Were these rights to be respected in full challenges such as economic injustice, crime, environmental degradation, and terrorism would remain unsatisfactory since they do not fall within the mainstream conception of human rights (Vertovec and Cohen 2002). These new challenges require more than the current international institutions can deliver. In terms of economic relations, all states and all peoples are engaged in trade. The closeness of the ties that bind people to the global economy varies from state to state and from region to region. However, for many of these a large proportion of national income is tied to the global economy. To the extent that there are benefits to be derived from inclusion in the global economy, they are highly uneven. Governments typically try to protect their segments of their population from the effect of global economic processes but they are less able to do so than in the past. For Held, it is

imperative to manage the global economy to avoid its negative consequences (Held and McGrew 2002: 2-3).

The importance of the global economy readily carries over into the environment. Held and McGrew point out that while most environmental issues used to be national or local in scope until the middle of the 20th century, they are now regional or global (Held and McGrew 2003: 4). Consequently, they require decision-making at a corresponding level. For Held there is urgency because the consequences of inaction are potentially apocalyptic. Humanity as a whole faces a common physical and environmental condition and real risk of global ecological collapse (Diamond 2005; Held 2006). The externalities of the current economic model are known and this realization has prompted political, intellectual and cultural contacts as different states and peoples have initiated discussions about them (Held and McGrew 2002: 5). Yet, decision-making remains at the level of nation-states with the attendant collective action problems, especially given the competitive pressures on states to delay action until others act. While it is possible to point to cases of resounding success such as the ban on chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) and antipersonal landmines, other environmental problems such as climate change prove more difficult to address despite some progress. Still others are almost non-issues because there is little to be gained from addressing them or because they are not perceived as global threats (e.g., endangered species).

Power relations are also changing. Formally the sovereign nation-state is the institution in charge of responding to global developments in the name of the national interest, however defined. In practice, however, it is constrained in the policies it can adopt. It stands "at the intersection of a vast array of international regimes and organizations that have been established to manage whole areas of transnational activity (trade, financial flows, crime and so on) and collective problems" (Held and McGrew 2002: 6). Beyond it and the international institutions it created lie many informal networks and sites of decision-making. While laws and policies are adopted by national governments, their content is heavily influenced by non-state actors. State officials formally debate their provisions in parliaments and in international institutions, but the resulting policies routinely fall short of what segments of the public expect. Domestic political arrangements are in a crisis of legitimacy (Held 1995: 102-103). This can be observed in the decline of voter turnout in liberal democracies and the generalized discontent toward politics and politicians are manifestations of the failure of governments to respond to popular demands. It is made even more explicit in the countless demonstrations by opponents to neoliberal globalization since the mid-1990s.

Held summarizes the challenge of democratic global governance in terms of several interrelated disjunctures (Held 2002: 307-308). First, he contends that self-determining national collectivities do not fit within the borders of a single nation-state. Second, it cannot be assumed the effective political action takes place at the state level. Political power does not rest exclusively with national governments. Third, power is relatively diffused, and the actors that possess power do not necessarily reside in any one nation-state. The nation-state is only one actor in a complex network of actors and institutions that span the globe. Fourth, to promote the public good, it is necessary to bring all these actors together for the purpose of coordinating their actions toward a collectively-determined alternative. Fifth, the distinction between domestic and international politics is no longer applicable or even ethical.

As creations of nation-states, current international institutions are ineffective in light of the magnitude of the problems in need of a response (Archibugi 2000: 139). Nation-states that

created them are not necessarily interested in those problems that do not fall within their definition of the national interest (Falk 1995: 167). For example, human suffering in one part of the world may not elicit any action on the part of nation decision-makers if there is nothing to be gained by acting or if that suffering does not ripple across borders and affect them. In these circumstances, it falls to non-state actors (labour, women's, human rights and anti-poverty groups, for instance) to raise political and ethical issues of no interest to state leaders (Linklater 2002: 140-141). They can do so by pressing national leaders for different policies, by lobbying international institutions directly to shape their agenda, or by speaking directly to the public through media coverage.

Because of the transformations taking place in global politics Ulrich Beck claims that the human condition itself has become objectively cosmopolitan as “[b]orders and difference are dissolving and must be renegotiated in accordance with the logic of a ‘politics of politics’” (Beck 2006: 2). Politics itself needs to be rethought on a global scale. Many scholars, cosmopolitan and not, have documented extensively the phenomena that make up globalization and the attendant dangers. Others have challenged the still-prevalent communitarian morality that accompanies the division of humanity into national entities with separate, incommensurable moral codes. Held’s project partakes of both social science and morality through its exposition of the working of globalization and his proposals for a cosmopolitan democratic culture underpinned by the ideals of universality and individual autonomy.

2. An outline of cosmopolitanism: ethos and institutions

From an ethical point of view, cosmopolitans hold that state borders are arbitrary creations based on moral favouritism (Lu 2005: 401; Linklater 2002: 136, 142). The sovereign nation-state has always been a system of inclusion and exclusion predicated on the creation of a domestic space whose residents are privileged and an international space whose inhabitants are either forgotten, considered less, or seen with suspicion (Linklater 1998: Ch. 3). The inside-outside distinction may have once served a legitimate purpose insofar as states were once able to respond to needs of the national community. Borders could be defended on moral and practical grounds. The Westphalian state of 1648 was a practical response to the particularly deadly conflict. Then, within that confined space challenges to monarchical absolutism and other forms of arbitrary rule emerged in the name of citizenship rights and freedoms. Borders made possible state administration and ministrations, including the granting of rights and other benefits of citizenship (Linklater 1998: 29, 44; Linklater 1999: 478-479). The increasingly global character of social life renders this territorial organization and attendant conception of citizenship less fitting. Human communities are not exclusively national; they are also transnational. The political space not exclusively national; it is global, making humanity the moral community in the process. Characteristics pertaining geographical location, colour, culture, sex, or socio-economic conditions are no longer seen to be appropriate in ascribing moral worth to persons. The subject of ethics and the bearer of rights is the individual human rather than the individual citizen.

This entails a leap from national morality to cosmopolitan morality, which Held describes this way: “I take cosmopolitanism ultimately to connote the ethical and political space which sets out the terms of reference for the recognition of people’s equal moral worth, their active agency and what is required for their autonomy and development” (Held 2002: 313). The cosmopolitan individuals whom Held envisages as political subjects is those who exhibit five characteristics in their political engagement (Held 2002: 309-312):

1. Reason displayed by individuals who “can step out of their entrenched positions in civil and political life and enter a sphere of reason free of ‘dictatorial authority’ ... and can, from this vantage point, examine the one-sidedness, partiality and limits of everyday knowledge, understanding and regulations”;
2. A commitment to dialogue defined as a “critical process of communication in which they can come to an understanding with others about the appropriateness of the demands made upon them”;
3. A shared commitment to uncoerced deliberations entailing “the capacity to present oneself and be heard within and across political communities [and as] the right to enter dialogue without artificial constraints and delimitations”
4. Equal respect and considerations for the views of all members of humankind, which “can be referred to as the principle of individualist moral egalitarianism or, simply, egalitarian individualism. To think of people as having equal moral value is to make a general claim about the basic units of the world comprising persons as free and equal”;
5. Impartiality in the treatment of participants claims, “that is, treatment based on principles upon which all could act. Accordingly, cosmopolitanism is a moral frame of reference for specifying rules and principles that can be universally shared”;
6. Insofar as individuals are aware of the consequences of their actions on and/or the suffering of distant others, “avoidance of serious harm and the amelioration of urgent need”.

The ideal of autonomy is a recurring theme in Held’s project and it serve as the foundation for political participation. It has political and economic dimensions. The recurring theme in Held cosmopolitan project is the ideal of autonomy. Autonomy is central both as an ethos to be strived for in social interactions and as the principle that institutional framework to be built to protect autonomy. As conceived by Held, the cosmopolitan order must protect individuals from arbitrary rule, promote citizen participation in decisions that affect them, create circumstances in which for individuals to realize themselves and develop their potential, and provide for wealth redistribution to make the right to participate meaningfully: “If people are to be free”, writes Held, “they must enjoy rights which safeguard their capacities, that is, which shape and facilitate a common structure of political action” (Held 1995: 201).

The kinds of institutions that come closest to actualizing enabling individual autonomy are liberal democratic ones (Held 1995: 145-147, 153-158). Their home, at least so far, is the sovereign nation-state that developed in Western Europe and North America since the Enlightenment. Civil and political rights secured by citizens limit what the state can do and provide for procedures for selecting and removing leaders. Freedom of speech likely stands as the most important one for cosmopolitan since it is the basic condition for participation in public debates: the right to speak one’s mind without fear of retribution by the state. This means no chance of being arrested, fined, jailed, mistreated or killed for expressing views contrary to government views. Recast as a global project it is “to create institutions which enable the voice of individuals to be heard in global affairs, irrespective of their resonance at home. Democracy as a form of global governance thus needs to be realized on three different, interconnected levels: within states, between states and at a world level” (Archibugi 2000: 144).

Held is aware of real-world departures from this ideal as “the principle of egalitarian individualism may be widely recognized, but it scarcely structures much political and economic policy, north, south, east or west” (Held 2002: 316). Its realization can come about only if the obstacles that stand in its way are identified and eliminated. In his analysis of power structures

Held pays special attention to economic inequality, which he considers the main impediment to participation in political debates other than the absence of civil and political rights. It is this attention to material conditions that sets his cosmopolitanism apart from other liberalism inspired blueprint for international cooperation.

3. Economic inequality and autonomy

Held argues that the current phase of free-market capitalism is an impediment to democracy. Held writes that “market relations are themselves power relations that constrain the democratic process” (Held 1995: 247). It is characterized by enormous concentrations of power in the form of wealth that skew the political process. In state-corporate relations, the right and capacity of investors to seek the most favourable conditions to operate affords them considerable leverage on governments and populations alike. Virtual everyone knows that to displease investors can potentially drive them to more business friendly jurisdictions. This increases the bargaining power of investors, and reduces the margin of manoeuvre of governments and populations, even when they wish to adopt stricter regulations of business activity or increase its contribution to state budgets.

Economic inequality is also closely tied to the unequal distribution of life-chances within populations. Life-chances may include class, race, ethnicity or gender and they may vary in their degree of relevance depending on societies. Where they operate, however, they close off the public sphere to certain individuals (Held 1995: 171). Of these bases for unequal life-chances, class inequalities receive the most attention. In an economic system where virtually everything is commodified, a shortage of financial resources translates readily into political disadvantage. Active participation in public life presupposes the time to do so, which itself depends on whether a person earns enough to devote themselves to non-remunerative activities. Moreover, those with financial resources can others to represent them, set up institutions that reflect their interests, and thus shape the discussion and political process. Lobbyists, media corporations, advertising, and think tanks easily come to mind. In so doing, they not only pressure decision-makers directly; they also influence the individual voters’ views on the economic issues of the day.

To counter this, Held calls for the “entrenchment of democracy in economic life”. Democracy does not stand in opposition to private property and the principle of private property. It consists in the creation of a framework of rules that recognizes the primary aim of capitalist enterprise—the earning of profits—while setting limits on how this aim can be pursued nationally and globally (Held 1995: 251-252, 255). Held takes as his starting point existing international organizations, but insists on the need for

revised rules, codes and procedures—concerning health, child labour, trade union activity, environmental protection, stakeholder consultation and corporate governance, among other matters—in the articles of association in terms of economic organizations and trading agencies. The key groups and associations of the economic domain will have to adopt, within their ways of working, a structure of rules, procedures and practices compatible with cosmopolitan social requirements, if the latter are to prevail. (Held 2002: 318-319)

International institutions would transpose at the global level the decision-making and regulatory powers that used to exist at the nation-state level. But it is not a simple matter of delegating more power to main organizations like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, or the World

Trade Organization or to raise the profile of the G-8, G-20, or G-77 state networks. There are significant difference between the economic model promoted there and the one informing the United Nations system. Their approach to labour, education, and health matters privileges laissez-faire over state intervention (Held 2004: 94-96). Moreover, consultations undertaken by international institutions and national government would aim to enlist the support of a wider range of concerned parties, domestically in the form of stakeholder, and globally in the form of better representation for poorer, smaller states who do not usually carry much weight in international negotiations. Held calls his reformed global institutional structure a “social democratic multilateralism” (Held 2004: 107-114) because it is loosely patterned after tripartite political negotiations that prevail in social democratic states common in Western Europe.

When considered as a whole Held cosmopolitan project merges the two main contending political ideologies of the last century and a half—liberalism and Marxism. The project nevertheless remains heavily indebted to liberalism in its focus on individual autonomy as the overriding ethical objective. Although there are references to various forms of social exclusion (race, gender, ethnicity, etc.) throughout Held’s work, it is the traditional themes of human rights and economic exploitation that are the object of analyses and of moral critique. His puzzlement at the question concerning the relevance of gender in globalization and in the cosmopolitan project is therefore not surprising. Nevertheless, for those who think that gender is a fundamental cause of exclusion in social life, it is an omission that casts doubt on the capacity of cosmopolitanism to create a genuinely inclusive public sphere. In the next section, I attempt to explain why gender appears irrelevant from Held’s point of view.

LIMITS OF COSMOPOLITANISM: HUMAN RIGHTS, ECONOMICS, BUT NOT GENDER

This section argues that gender as form of exclusion remains largely invisible in the cosmopolitan literature because the latter suffers from a positivist bias in the identification of social exclusion. Indeed, discussions of human rights and of economic exclusion rely on empirically observable and measurable indicators. This stands in apparent contrast with gender-based exclusion whose recognition seems to rest on subjective interpretations of women’s (in particular, though not exclusively) experiences of globalization, thereby violating the universalist and impartiality tenets of the cosmopolitan ethos.

This is to say that there are no problems with measuring human rights abuses and economic inequality. All societies and all governments set limit on what their members can do. Under certain legislated circumstances, existing rights can be put aside without state actions being widely seen as human rights violations. State actions become human rights violations when they occur without the safeguards of the law or when the rulers’ legitimacy is put in question by the manner in which they seize power or they way they exercise it. Likewise, it is unlikely that absolute economic equality can exist within or across societies. Accordingly, the debate shifts to what is ethically acceptable inequality, requiring no intervention, and ethically unacceptable inequality calling for intervention. Still, the conditions in which some populations live and the lack of access to water, food, shelter, or health services can be documented, thereby producing evidence for the existence of inequality.

In the realm of human rights, the legitimacy of government actions can be ascertained in several ways. First, through an examination of the foundation of authority (competitive elections or not) it is possible to determine whether decisions made by the state enjoy some degree of support by

the population that is uncoerced; that is, when the people appear to support their rulers, it is not the result of fear of retribution but of genuine agreement with the general thrust of their decisions. Second, given the existence of regular, seemingly competitive elections, the electoral process itself can be examined for the presence of irregularities that may cast doubt on the fairness of the result. The practice of sending election observers to states undergoing democratic transitions serves this purpose. Third, even in states with reasonably free and fair elections, it is not uncommon for the due process of law to be subverted. In cases of emergency (i.e., states of emergency) or in periods of heightened fear for national security, both the state and its population are willing to step outside the normal bounds of the rule of law. Whether the state turns out to be a human rights violator depends on whether the legal and institutional mechanisms that preserve civil and political rights allow opponents of government policies to regain control of the process and to revert it to the rule of law.

In the task of identifying problem situations NGOs like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, to name the best-known, play a crucial role (Amoureux and Steele 2006). They possess extensive networks of informers and a staff that can record instances of abuses and diffuse their findings. Though they are very different mechanisms, public human rights bodies like the United Nations Human Rights Council, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and national governments also periodically raise the matter of the treatment of populations by their rulers. The politics of human rights promotion notwithstanding, there is broad agreement that some state practices are questionable even if there are disagreements about specific instances. This agreement in principle underpins cosmopolitans' conviction that there are universals that apply irrespective of geography, culture, ethnicity or gender. For them, violations of human rights are a matter of universal morality and of empirical reality.

The objective existence of economic inequality is in many ways determined even more easily. An examination of the data on economic growth and the distribution of wealth in societies reveals that free market policies are more efficient at creating wealth than at spreading it around. In all societies, modern or premodern, capitalist and non capitalist, income distribution is skewed in such a way that there is a concentration of people toward the bottom of the income ladder. It is not surprising, then, that debates about economic growth, work and working conditions, and living standard rely largely on measurable indicators. The gross domestic product (GDP) remains the key indicator of economic success while more detailed assessments of well-being in the World Bank's *World Development Reports* and the United Nations Development Program's *Human Development Reports* rely on quantitative methods above all. Even the otherwise valuable concept of human development cannot avoid quantification in the form of the Human Development Index (HDI).

To be sure, proponents of the free market can (and do) argue that such skewed distribution is merely reflective of the natural abilities or the moral character of the persons concerned or of the corruption of third world rulers, not of a flawed economic system. This is not a view that cosmopolitan share. Instead the influence of Marxism leads them to consider the control of capital as a significant source of power that impacts the political process. My identification of Held's work as a merger of liberalism and Marxism comes largely from his early political theory work (Held 1980; Held 1982a; Held 1982b). When considering the stated objective of redistributive policies he advocates, it appears that cosmopolitanism updates the stand taken by reform liberals like John Stuart Mill and T.H. Green, who were the first to question the

meaningfulness of civil and political rights for people whose basic needs were not met.¹ The political effect of economic inequality is more difficult to identify empirically, but it stands to reason that people with limited income generally have greater difficulty organizing politically because a greater proportion of their time is devoted to earning a living.

This picture of connection between economic and political exclusion is not false but it is partial. Focus on quantitative methods obscures symbolic aspects of wealth. Wealth is not useful only for consumption or only because it buys political influence. For the founder of free market capitalism, it served decidedly non-economic ends (Smith 2002). Wealth was a means to social, emotional, and moral ends in that it fostered better social relations. Other authors have argued, on the contrary, that wealth serves to create social distinctions between individuals and groups. Thus, conspicuous consumption sets apart those who can afford certain goods from those who cannot, thereby tagging the latter socially inferior (Veblen 2001). Where all can consume materially comparable products, branding sets apart consumers (Bourdieu 1979; Klein 2000). These examples suggest that economics is as much a matter of social identity as it is a way to make a living or to influence the political process.

This is not meant to deny the progressive character of Held social democratic alternative. The promotion of regulations and redistribution on a global scale makes cosmopolitanism a progressive force in the globalization debate. It would alleviate suffering by providing the necessities of life, by creating opportunities for development and by giving the means to exercise their democratic rights to those who currently lack them. This attention to economic inequality built into the structure capitalism indicates, at least implicitly, that societies are not composed of individuals but of categories of people (workers in this case) whose destiny, political views, and priorities are directly influenced by their social experiences.

It would have been easier for Held to understand the significance of gender to globalization if he had approached it the way class oppression is approached in classical Marxism. For the “young Marx”, class oppression was not only about low wages and awful working conditions (problematic as these were) but about workers’ lack of control over their work and their lives. In other words, it was a negation of their subjectivity as human beings whose full realization could only be achieved through work. Given the importance of production to social life (consider the time spent on it) the mode of production is also a mode of living which engulfs the near-totality of a person’s existence (Geras 1983: 65). It defines society and the individual’s place in it. Those who do not control the means of production do not control their own destiny. In Marx’s words, they are alienated from the means of production that allow them, as humans, to shape their life. The political alternative that flows from this understanding of the production process does not call for higher wages or better conditions only. It calls for the empowerment of workers so that they can reshape society.

This qualitative understanding of exclusion is much closer to the feminist definition of it. That said, the recognition of class-based alienation does not necessarily lead to the recognition of gender domination. Nevertheless, it draws attention to more subtle manifestations of power and forms of exclusion. This potential of Marxism as a stepping stone to understanding other social cleavages found its expression decades ago in the identification of women as a “sex class”

¹ One cannot avoid thinking that Mill and Green tried to answer some of the problems raised by Marx and the labour movement without undermining the capitalist system. They were likely influenced by the emerging labour movement and sought to respond to it in a non-socialist way.

(Firestone 1970) and in the attention paid to *reproduction* as a necessary counterpart to capitalist production (Mies 1986; Federici 2008). However, a traditional understanding of class would have been an apt analogy to illustrate the nature of gender as a social problem for feminists.

Current policy proposals assume that political power is primarily a matter of financial resources. Since these are measurable, taxable, and redistributable, they lend themselves to certain interventions. Other manifestations of power, such as gender, are not so easily measurable and cannot be readily altered through redistribution. In fact, the experiences of social democratic and communist countries show that despite official ideology and policy gender cleavages persisted (Sassoon 1987). In welfare states, women did benefit from social policies but they benefited primarily as workers and as poorer citizens (thanks to welfare transfers and labour regulations, for example), not as people whose circumstances were specifically taken into account in devising policies. Consequently, the extension of domestic welfare provisions and economic regulations to the global economic system is unlikely to meet the social needs identified by feminist critics of globalization. In fact, the problem faced by feminist in the globalization debate is less one of visibility than one of incomprehension by people who otherwise consider themselves committed to openness and inclusiveness. The feminist literature on globalization makes this clear.

GENDER AND GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

In an edited collection on cosmopolitanism, Jill Steans (2002) lays the problematique of gender and globalization succinctly and attempts to draw attention to its importance in global governance. She argues that dominant, liberal approaches to the state and international institutions are unreflective about the underlying power relations that determine policies these institutions adopt. There is a link between the gender relations that prevail in societies out of which institutions emerge and the institutions themselves. Institutions are led primarily by men, which tends to result in policies that perpetuate, among other things, gendered relations through public policy-making (Steans 2002: 88). Feminist analysis and women's activism in global politics has sought to highlight these limitations of current models of governance and to emphasize the need to bring feminism to bear on them (Waylen 2004). This has led to the search for alternative models of governance that might address directly the concerns raised by feminists (Eschle 2001; Steans 2002: 89).

1. Gender and politics

Before going ahead with a discussion of gender and globalization, it is necessary to define what gender means for the purpose of political analysis. In everyday speech, the term "gender" is often used interchangeably with the word "sex" to distinguish females and males. According to this usage, a person's gender is synonymous with his or her biological sex. In the feminist literature, however, the term "gender" is used to distinguish between social and behavioural attributes considered masculine or feminine. Most, if not all, political ideologies and cultures associate specific attributes to each sex. It is assumed that femininity is innate to females and masculinity innate to males. Thus females are expected to behave in feminine ways and that males are expected to behave in masculine ways.

Gender is politically problematic because it serves to typecast the sexes and to relegate them to particular gender roles. While the masculine and the feminine both have their place in the social world, masculine traits are privileged in the realm of politics and business, what feminists call the public sphere. By contrast, feminine traits are deemed more appropriate to the realm of

interpersonal relations, reproduction, and care-related work, what feminists call the private sphere (Elshtain 1993). This attribution of natural characteristics to the sexes results in the marginalization of women in discussions pertaining to politics, globalization and global governance. Women can of course access the public sphere but often do so in a supporting role. In order to reach positions of leadership, it is often necessary for them to bracket characteristics acquired through experience and socialization. Likewise, men who depart from prevailing criteria of leadership find it difficult to obtain recognition.

The purpose of gender analysis is to show how conceptions of the masculine and the feminine help shape social actors, political institutions and public policies. The operation of gender is best uncovered by an examination places occupied by men and women in the social order, by how they are affected by it, and how they respond to it. Historically, states were founded by men (“great men” and “founding fathers”) and today most policy-makers and influential business and opinion leaders are disproportionately male (Pateman 1988; Rai 2004: 76; Eschle 2004: 111; Enloe 1988). Access to formal decision-making institutions and responsiveness by those institutions is more limited for women than it is for men. Moreover, on most social indicators, women tend to lag behind men. In terms of access to education, health, employment, and in terms of poverty women do worse than men (Gray, Kittilson and Sandholtz 2006). In even the most democratic states, the social conditions faced by the sexes betray hard-to-see manifestations of power that marginalize women. Ultimately, we can say that no society treats women as well as it does men in spite of formal commitments to equality and democracy (Nussbaum 2000: 220). It may seem surprising to find such large discrepancies between the power, prestige, and benefits accruing to women and to men where equality supposedly prevails. Still, for all the evidence about gender’s influence on politics, attempts to make this a topic of political discussion is undermined by the conviction that it lies outside the realm of politics (Rai 2004: 586).

This is the kind of exclusion that cosmopolitanism is unable to account for, yet it is one that spills over into global politics. International institutions are the product of states and states are the product of social actors. The former formalize the worldview and interests of the latter (Waylen 2004: 559-560; Cox 1983; Cox 1981; Cox 1974). Decisions made by states in their domestic and foreign policies are a reflection of the power of certain actors. Any reform to institutions such as the one proposed by cosmopolitans requires an understanding of the power struggles that led to the existing institutional framework and that will bear on the one to emerge from current power struggles. More inclusive and effective institutions can only come about if they respond to the lived realities of social actors who want to reform them. The simple transfer of state power to international or even supranational institutions will not by itself produce better outcomes.

Because of the interdependent nature of the state, the international institutions, and civil society, there is no absolute separation between the public and the private spheres. Insofar as institutions “act”, they do so because they are led by people who ascertain the world and devise policies believed to be appropriate. Claims to expertise and objectivity notwithstanding, decision-makers bring a wide range of social experiences to bear on their analysis of society and its problems. The standpoint occupied by decision-makers outside (and prior) to their role as officials matters because the sensibilities and priorities they develop as part of everyday socialization shapes their understanding of morality and politics (Harding 1991; Hartsock 1998: Ch. 6). The private and the public, and interpersonal, the national and the global, all belong to the realm social relations. Distinctions between different spheres are largely a matter of convenience as they simplify

complex social relations to make them manageable. In the process, however, they also produce a partial understanding of politics.

This partiality has practical implications. Certain problems may be invisible to those making decisions. In the case that occupies us, not having experienced a particular form of exclusion can lead to a lack of awareness of it and a corresponding failure to address it. Although direct experience is not necessary to know of its existence, the response given a social problem varies according to decision-makers' understanding of it. The principal danger in this case is that proposals to address it will be inadequate (Steans 2002: 92). To use a medical analogy, a misdiagnosed illness will lead to the wrong cure being prescribed. There are also moral implications in that a failure to acknowledge the matters raised by certain social actors in the debate constitutes a marginalization of their subjectivity and agency. To declare that gender is not relevant to the cosmopolitan project shuts out people who have legitimate stakes in the debate.

2. Gender in the public sphere

There is a tension between the moral objectives of cosmopolitanism, the reality of power relations inside civil society, and the aspiration of different people within that civil society. This section considers the gendered power relations in civil society.

For critics of globalization there is widespread tendency to see global civil society as a solution to the failures of the nation-state to meet its challenges (Castells 2008; Scholte 2004). This faith in popular participation and deliberation is shared by cosmopolitans who want to revalue the role of civil society and to expand the public sphere where democratic debate occurs. It is therefore not surprising that cosmopolitans welcome the development of transnational movements, in particular among those that current institutions do not serve well. We can see a considerable diversity of perspectives represented in civil society. It holds the potential for a transformation of the global order into a more responsive one, but this potential is limited by power hierarchies that need to be overcome if it is to be realized (Germain and Kenny 2005; Scholte 2004: 75-83). There, too, gendered perspectives abound and make it difficult for women's and especially feminists' concerns to be taken seriously, even by self-declared progressive people.

The gendered effects of public policies are evident when considering the restructuring of the state that goes hand in hand with globalization. Areas like education, health, elderly and childcare have been severely affected by market reforms since they accounted for a large proportion of many states' budgets. This has resulted in significant job losses for those state employees who performed this paid work. Given the prevailing gender roles in society, tasks no longer performed by paid government employees fell to women to perform as part of their unpaid "natural" duties in the private sphere (Beneria 2003: 116-120; Bergeron 2001: 991; Freeman 2001; Brodie 1995). Other aspects of government interventions like labour regulations and equity provisions were also affected by the state's business friendly policies. In their work outside the home, women faced employers ready to harness gendered stereotypes to limit wages and working conditions of women for the sake of competitive advantage with little risk of government intervention (Freeman 2001: 1011).

Not surprisingly, this has prompted considerable amount of organizing on the part of women's groups (Moghadam 2005; Waller and Marcos 2005; Dufour and Giraud 2005; Timothy 2005; Bergeron 2004: 284-285; Freeman 2001). These efforts have met with success in that they have

become more frequent, gathering more participants and fostering exchanges between women's groups with diverse priorities but a shared commitment to change (Barton 2004; Snyder 2006; World March of Women 2006). Nonetheless, engagements between women's groups and other critics of globalization have been disappointing. When champions of global civil society invoke it, they tend to conflate participation, dialogue, and understanding. It is customary to list women's organization alongside labour, environmental, indigenous, human rights and other activists as though the freedom to participate was identical to the acknowledgement of the relevance of their claims and the inclusion of their demands in the alternative(s) proposed. Feminist studies of the global justice movement show that many participants in the movement are unreceptive to analyses and demands formulated from a feminist perspective. To be sure, *women* are present but *gender* is not, since as far as non-feminists are concerned gender is either non-existent or not relevant.

The public spaces invested by civil society actors are not equally accessible to all. From demonstrations to highly attended events like the World Social Forum and its regional counterparts, political activism requires formal organizational skills, time, and financial resources. Their uneven distribution creates hierarchies of power between participants (Conway 2003: 127-130). The agenda for the events and the "official" communiqués reflect the most powerful participants' views. In this "movement of movement" (Mertes 2005) critical of the prevailing order we find competing reform agendas in which gender struggles for recognition.

Women's participation in the social forums process helps reveal this characteristic of the movement. Many of the exclusionary practices that the forums formally oppose exist in their midst (Willis and Roskos 2007). Although ostensibly founded on participatory and inclusive principles, social forums are organized by committees of only a few, with men holding key positions. Access to key decision-making posts and core spaces like plenary sessions is difficult in spite of the formal commitment to the visibility and diffusion of all participants' views (pp. 524-526). In effect, the core agenda is predetermined by organizers. Insofar as participants speak to the core themes outlined by organizers, they are included and put in evidence (Willis and Roskos 2007: 533-534; Barton 2004: 173-175; Waylen 2004: 570-571). If they address gender of women's issues specifically, they are relegated to workshops of like-minded people with more limited reach.

Ideologically, one of the main obstacles to feminism is the long shadow cast by both liberalism and Marxism on social analysis and criticism. According to Catherine Eschle the fact that the study of globalization—both positive and critical—is conducted within the sub-discipline of political economy makes it resistant to feminism, which engages in cultural analysis. Accordingly, critiques of globalization are significantly influenced by Marxism and cluster around themes like corporate globalization, US empire, and economic exploitation (Waylen 2006: 146; Eschle 2002: 322; Eschle 2004: 108-109). The priority given to material over cultural analysis means that feminist analysis has difficulty finding a place. It is overlooked as a key cause of inequality and social exclusion. What is required to understand the nature of the problems that face humanity according to Nancy Fraser is a post-neoliberal and a post-socialist outlook (Nancy Fraser in Conway 2003: 14). At its best, Held's cosmopolitanism reconciles liberalism and socialism in a social democratic alternative (Held 2004). Thus, in the analysis that leads to this proposal human rights violation and economic marginalization are self-evident problems and they are addressed directly. By contrast, marginalization grounded in gender dynamics is overlooked.

The relative obscurity in which gender is maintained reduces its visibility to others in the debate about the reconstruction of global order. An opportunity is thus missed to address and persuade others that gender ought to be a key concern in the construction of an alternative. Rather than being on the foreground of the debate along with other major social problems, gender remains a parallel concern of committed feminists. For this reason feminists express doubts concerning the relevance of social forums and, more generally, about the potential of the public sphere as a space to develop alliances and promote understanding (Willis and Roskos 2007: 538-540; Eschle 2004: 110-111). Cosmopolitanism suffers from the same problems and it generated a similar reaction on the part of Held's audience when he answered the gender question.

Political debates do not happen in an intellectual vacuum. Scholars who research global politics have a considerable impact of political discourse. Intellectuals like David Held and other cosmopolitans aim to speak to a wide audience that includes, ultimately, the citizens and decision-makers who will shape the future. Politicians are advised by experts who see themselves as neutral analysts in their field and who claim to maintain an arms-length relationship to politics. Moreover, state and international bureaucracies are staffed by graduates from various disciplines whose curriculum is steeped in the dominant approaches to social science (Eschle 2004; Booth 1997; Smith 1997). The mass media, which are the source of information for most people, is also populated by people trained in the canon, to say nothing of the business side of the profession. It is in this that the cosmopolitan project has the potential to change how politics is understood and how it is recast. At the same time, the limitations of cosmopolitanism have significant consequences for those whose worldview it does not accommodate because it does not "see" them. For Gillian Youngs (2004), "women and gender are essential to understanding the world 'we' live in" and calls for an "ontological revisionism" in the study of international politics (Youngs 2004: 77ff; see also Murphy 1996) since the study of virtually all things international focuses disproportionately on men and their motivations, actions, and experiences. Cosmopolitans' will to be more inclusive notwithstanding, their project still rests on more limited an understanding of society than its normative goals call for.

GLOBALIZATION AND ETHICS

The cosmopolitan ethics is liberal ethics writ large, where humanity is the moral community and individuals are the moral subjects and the bearers of individual rights. Such an ethics requires "treatment based on the equal care and consideration of agency, irrespective of the community in which they are born or brought up" (Held 2004: 170). To that extent, ethical behaviour consists of an extension of the best treatment to all humans irrespective of differences that had hitherto been grounds for discrimination. Held argues that moral reasoning needs to take a universalist standpoint; that is to say that individuals in conversation must reason from the point of view of all humanity and not simply from that of any one group.

Held's choice to use words like care and consideration to describe the attitude of people involved in political discussion is welcome. It must, however, lead to an examination of what these words mean in the context of ethics. The objective of inclusiveness is at odds with the method proposed to achieve it. This section maintains that subjectivity, particularism, and situated ethics have an epistemological, an ontological and a normative relevance in understanding global politics (Murphy 2001 in Wyn Jones; Cox 2001 in Wyn Jones). To the extent that critical theorists in IR are concerned with the exclusion of certain people from participation in a global order that affects them, these are important resources to draw on in trying to create a more inclusive order.

Here I consider the literature on empathy and care and its potential to foster genuine dialogue between the subjective claims of the participants in the globalization debate.

1. Universalism and particularism: a false dichotomy

Considering the origin of liberal thought, the revolutionary nature of this exhortation is obvious. According to Joan Tronto, universal ethics was a result of the need of eighteenth-century moral philosophers to ground ethical behaviour at a time of increasing social distance (Tronto 1993: 37ff). Until then, the prevailing morality was closely linked to bonds of mutual obligations in tightly-knit communities. The advent of individualism and the creation of financially mediated relations between individuals on the market dissolved the sentiments-based traditional morality associated with classical conservatism. The universal morality that emerged in the form the categorical imperative no longer required close interpersonal or community relations to operate. It applied in principle indistinctively to all men because they were men.² A concomitant effect of the privileging of reason has been the relegation of sentiments—which did not disappear—to the private sphere (pp. 52-56).

Given that the public sphere has been overwhelmingly occupied by men, it is not surprising that public morality would reflect their understanding of social relations rather than those of women. Ethics is as likely to be influenced by gender as other way of thinking about social relations since ethics is itself a reflection on social relations (Tronto 1993: 62). To limit morality to what can be justified from a universal standpoint is to obfuscate other aspects of moral life associated with concrete relations and the attendant sentiments. From the cosmopolitan ethical point of view, therefore, it would seem that all that is required for exclusion to cease is the adoption of a cosmopolitan ethics by all individuals (p. 73), without attention to forms of exclusion beyond those identified earlier.

To require all to behave and speak according to the universal cosmopolitan ethics is to deny subjective experiences that are crucial to subjectivity and agency. Feminist critiques of globalization and their attendant alternatives to globalization are necessarily subjective because agents are situated. Yet, the knowledge they glean from their subjective experiences is negated for this very reason. Unless critiques are framed with reference to universal principles, such as women's rights as human rights, they fall on deaf ear and go unheeded. It is necessary to reduce all human experiences to the cosmopolitan conceptualization of the human condition to be understood or recognized. The upshot is that the much-vaunted public sphere remains closed to the views of those who do not abide by its rules.

The task of ethical thinking in a global condition is to overcome social and geographical distance without resorting to abstract morality. As empirical research on globalization shows, the interconnectedness of lives is extensive and deepening (Held and McGrew 2000), which makes the expansion of the moral universe all the more imperative. A conscious effort is required to understand “how human suffering and exclusion are shaped by a series of collective social, political, and economic decisions and social and economic relations” (Robinson 1999: 32). By contrast, cosmopolitanism's moral outlook is limited only to those forms of exclusion it sees.

² Until well into the twentieth century, the word “men” was to be understood literally. It did not refer to all human beings as is generally accepted today. It did not even apply to all men as those without property and foreigners were excluded from the moral community.

The recognition of the agency of social actors entails a recognition of their self-understanding as actors shaped by specific experiences that are not reducible to the liberal individual and autonomous subject that is the starting point of cosmopolitan ethics.

To be a moral person requires much more than the recognition of others' autonomy and the adoption of rights legislation and enforcement mechanisms. Ethics is also embedded in everyday life as actors respond to others' needs (Tronto 1993: 126; Robinson 1999: 27, 33). To be ethical is not to delegate one's capacity to do good to an institution (the law, the courts, and public servants), and to get on with the pursuit of one's own needs. More ethical social practices would in fact obviate the need for many interventions that currently take place under the guise of the administration of justice or other forms of compensation. Ethics cannot literally be institutionalized; it is the practices of people inside and outside the institutions that constitute an ethical community. This requires constant attentiveness to the needs of others rather than the sole listing and enforcement of their rights after a violation has occurred. Attention to needs also directs thinking and behaviour toward differences between different social agents and to the way these differences shape their experiences so as to create a social order which prevents suffering in the first place.

Attention to the multiple causes of suffering is no easy feat considering the breadth of problems that people face. As Joan Tronto writes, "Attentiveness, simply recognizing the needs of those around us, is a difficult task, and indeed, a moral achievement" (Tronto 1993: 127). The threshold between, on one hand, lack of attention and passive injustice and, on the other, direct culpability for the suffering of others is not easy to identify. It is a political choice because it defines values according to which the people of a community relate to one another and to the group and because it does not flow from a rule that can simply be applied (Shklar 1990: 5). There is a considerable role for moral imagination in the process of determining where the threshold lies. Cosmopolitan ethics is to a considerable extent a rules-based ethics where the rules answer to universal reason, not to socially embedded actors facing complex dilemmas. To avoid causing harm to others, more is required than rule-following. A more sustained inquiry into the causes of others' suffering is necessary and an effort to understand how one's behaviour may contribute, albeit inadvertently, to that suffering.

Thus attentiveness is only a first step. It needs to be followed by appropriate action. What counts as "appropriate" depends on the ethical lens through which others and their conditions are apprehended. Following a rules-based ethics, people may ask themselves what reason or what the law requires, since the process by which this law was drafted and passed itself followed the rules of discourse ethics. But since there can never be rules for all contingencies (Shklar 1990: 35), moral qualities such as care and empathy to recognize and address ethical dilemmas that present themselves in politics. A situated ethics of the sort proposed in this paper is one where social agents ponder the relationships that exist between them and how conflicts might be resolved creatively.

Precisely because the actors and the problems they face are many, it is tempting to think in abstract terms for the sake of simplification. This is a temptation that must be resisted. Besides, the simple presence of women in the public sphere, which was achieved with women's formal enfranchisement, has been a partial success only. There is an abundant literature on gender and globalization, yet its critique runs on a parallel track to the cosmopolitan literature. As a result, there tends to be a ghettoization of concerns like gender despite the fact that it is a component of many of the problems cosmopolitans seek to mitigate. The remainder of the paper examines the

process by which the awareness of others' difficulties can produce the desire to understand them in their own terms.

2. The agency-subjectivity nexus

A decade and a half ago, one IR scholar introduced empathy as a source of moral and political agency. She wrote: "Empathy brings heretofore 'instances' into politics on their own (fractured) terms and it also makes us think critically about our relations to the stories we hear, about our social constitution as men and women, our I-to-i connections. Above all empathy is the capacity to participate in another's ideas and feelings" (Sylvester 1994: 166). Since then, the idea of an emotions-based ethics applicable to world politics has acquired greater profile in IR literature with care ethics. As a distinct ethics from the Kantian categorical imperative, care "involves a recognition that moral response is not a rational act of will, but an ability to focus attention on another and to recognize another as real" (Robinson 1999: 46). Both empathy and care theorists maintain that the devaluation of emotions-based ethics relative to reason is not warranted. In addition to negating a basic human trait, the privileging of reason over emotions leads to a lack of attention to the diversity of political subjects and of their specific needs.

To overcome this, relational conceptions of subjectivity are preferable to the liberal one because they focus attention on the needs of others without assuming that others have the same needs as the self. As Joan Tronto writes, "Care implies reaching out to something other than the self: it is neither self-referring nor self-absorbing" (Tronto 1993: 102). Likewise, psychologists who study empathy as a source of moral agency argue that it is an emotional reaction that is more consistent with the situation of others than with the situation of the empathizers. Emotions, feelings, and sensations experienced when exposed to others' suffering have little to do with the audience's own immediate condition (Eisenberg and Strayer 1990: 5; Hoffman 2000: 30).

There is evidence that this emotional response to suffering has a spontaneous and innate quality, which is often felt physically. As such it appears to stand in opposition to a more "cerebral" response. Moreover, its innate and reflexive character positions it in a non-rational category of thought. This probably explains why the claims of people perceived as "emotional" are considered less valuable than those of people seen as "rational", independently of any examination of the foundation of their claims. This marginalization of emotions is a mistake because emotions are a fundamental mode of relating to others. People are born into and can only thrive thanks to emotional bonds. No community can exist without bonds of mutuality that are emotional rather than contractual as communitarians understand well (Eckersley 2007: 681; Tronto 1993: ??). It is also a mistake because the belief in abstract reason presupposes the existence of good that is already known and that can be realized by following rules. Rational people who are confident in the accuracy of their views need not listen to what others say. At best, non-rational claims are translated into rational categories rather than taken as distinct experiences to be understood and addressed in their own terms.

This is at odds with Held's exhortation to recognize everyone's agency. Agency is the ability of social agents to make sense of their own conditions; to speak to them competently; and to act to change them. In fact, much of what is known about the consequences of globalization is the direct result of subjective accounts of world politics by the actors themselves. The introduction of "critical" perspectives in the field of IR was possible only by putting in perspective putatively scientific claims that dominated the discipline and to reveal that they were always subjective and partial (Cox 1996; Der Derian and Shapiro 1988). The complexity of class relations (Cox 1987),

the gendered relations between women and men and within the sexes (Enloe 1988; Pettman 1996; Steans 2006), and the mixed effects (at best) of Western modernity on the planet's population (Said 1978; Said 1991, Darby 2006) were all identified by paying attention to those who experienced them. That there is even a debate about the need for an alternative order is also a consequence of the actions of social actors and more amorphous movements like the global justice movement (Stiglitz 2002; Barlow and Clarke 2001; Mertes 2004; Yuen, Burton-Rose and Katsiafikas 2004). More than liberal conceptions of human rights animated these actors, and more than contractual relations between autonomous individuals underpins their collective action.

The task of a critical theory in international relations is more than the identification of those individuals whose rights appear to be violated. Visibility can be a poisoned gift if those made visible are portrayed in ways that are negative (like violent demonstrators, who are few; or when those who suffer are blamed for their suffering). It can also be pointless if their concerns are deemed not relevant to the discussion because they do not follow the rules (as in Held's handling of women and gender). Finally, visibility does not provide a way out of ethical dilemmas that pit the well-being of some against that of others, or the well-being of different people who have equally legitimate, yet divergent claims. The quip that “one person's rights end where another's begin” is of little use in these situations. Nevertheless, visibility holds a potential that can be nurtured. The moment of contact between different people provides a glimpse into their respective condition *if* they are open to the experience. Openness in this context refers to an acknowledgement of the specificity of others' situation, even if it does not accord with one' a priori understanding of it. What people bring to the public sphere in the globalization debate is a long list of grievances that deserve careful attention. Most political debates take place between individuals whose diverse experiences represent in some measure facets of human existence.

The person who is seen to suffer is not an isolated individual but possibly one instance of a broader social phenomenon (Hoffman 2000: 83-85). It is not only individuals who are in chronically difficult circumstances; it is also groups. This commonality of experiences makes them into collective subjects worth recognizing. The previous section's emphasis of the failures the welfare state with regard to women's political and economic status illustrates the point. Women *as women* and men *as men* are in distinct circumstances because of gender. Researchers and activists using feminist theory highlight and analyze these circumstances. Much feminist research turns out to be on solid ground empirically—if, that is, one takes the time to examine feminist arguments and remains open to the possibility that they might be right about major aspects of global politics. But it is necessary to admit a priori the legitimacy (and the inevitability) of subjective views before taking feminism seriously, and before being able to see the relevance of its contribution. This appears to be a tall order for cosmopolitanism. There is irony in praising pluralism and defending civil and political rights, and then questioning the relevance and legitimacy of the associations that form through the exercise of these same rights. These associations are collective actors who represent necessarily subjective views, not universal ones. Presumably, the universality of cosmopolitanism contrasts with the partiality of the feminist claims that define feminists (and the women they represent) as “special interest group”. But how is anyone to become aware of gender's existence and relevance if not by taking seriously feminist subjectivity? Could Held have come to take seriously material aspects of exclusion without the contribution of Marxism and class analysis?³

³ One can also trace back this liberal concern to reform liberalism, but reform liberalism was a response to Marxism and to the worker mobilization it fostered. Assuming that reform liberalism was not in any way a liberal means to

3. Ethical dilemmas: impartiality meets complexity

The recognition of subjectivity poses a unique dilemma for anyone faced with a wide range of actors who all claim a unique insight into the global condition. This true as much for intellectuals and policymakers who try to devise and implement a new blueprint for global order as it is for participants in the public sphere who wish to be as accommodating as possible of others' needs. There may be agreement in principle that rights must be extended, that certain regulations must be adopted, and that redistributive policies must be implemented, but opportunities for conflict abound.

Take the topic of international human rights. How are we to adjudicate between claims made on the basis of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child—to name a few? All of these can be considered equally legitimate, but they refer to different subjects of rights. Political debates using these texts as justification consist of a repetition of the terms of one text as a refutation of the terms of the other texts; or they consist of restating the terms of one text without acknowledging the implications of the other texts, lest they force a reconsideration of the initial claim. Add to this the fact that rights are by nature non-negotiable, and the disputes become even harder to resolve. With respect to economic inequality how much regulation and redistribution satisfies the ethical requirement is debatable. The need to protect “the most vulnerable members of society” or to help “those who need it most” or the necessity to meet “basic needs” do not say much. How vulnerable is vulnerable enough to require protection? Who is a person in need—as opposed to a free rider? What are basic needs? How can competing claims—ours and theirs, and “theirs and theirs”—be reconciled when there is little concrete that is agreed upon?

This leaves one grasping at straws as one struggles to devise an appropriate response. The apparent incommensurability of competing claims is especially problematic given the urgency of the situation (the prospect of “apocalypse soon”). In the best of times simple attentiveness to others is a difficult moral achievement. With current economic and ecological crises we may very well see a shift to self-preservation or to a narrowing down of allegiances to family, friends, or nation, or other kin group, especially if sacrifices need to be made (Woodbridge 2004; Dyer 2008). Crises focus the mind and appear to require “tough choices” impelled by “necessity” or the “realities” of life, which, after all, is “tragic”. Even seemingly universal rights are unlikely to resist the pressure of circumstances and attempts to redefine them in narrower ways. Furthermore, the fact that rights come with responsibilities means that rights are conditional on some kind of merit. There is no shortage of loopholes in rights and the list of rationalizations for not responding to those in need is long (Pogge 2008: Ch. 3; Hoffman 2000: 94). In the matter that occupies us here, it is possible to argue that feminists have not earned a place in the discussion because their claims are at odds with the universal reasoning demanded by cosmopolitanism.

The ethical outlook that flows from care or empathy is not rule-bound. Ethical obligations originate in the relationships that bind people. They are felt in the form of a desire that others' welfare be enhanced whether or not there is an external compulsion to act (Shogan 1988: 19). To

stave off communism, it was likely a response to horrendous living conditions that reform liberals could observe. Are we to believe that liberals have no emotions? If they do have emotions, why is there such a reluctance to admit openly their existence and to elucidate their contribution to ethical thought and action?

be sure, avoidance of harm, the extension of rights, and the wealth redistribution cosmopolitans advocate show some awareness of a widespread suffering that requires some kind of action. But the type of action taken matters. How best to respond depends on the nature of the difficulties faced by others (Robinson 1999: 29). If those who are harmed are to be included in the dialogue, their understanding of their predicament and their aspirations are legitimate arguments even if they violate the impartiality norm.

While cosmopolitans are aware of the diversity of people who inhabit the world they are unable to identify how specific actions (or non-actions) have specific effects on specific people and to say of what, precisely, their critiques consist. An ethically appropriate response requires the identification of relevant differences between people, not the assumption, for strategic reasons and for the purpose of universality, that differences are irrelevant (Shogan 1988:20-21). Avoidance of harm is of course a commendable objective, but it necessitates knowledge of how harm comes to people.

Emotions-based moral thinking, as distinct from universal reason, holds more promise in this task. To eliminate it as soon as one goes beyond interpersonal relations limits scope ethics by blunting the very sensibility that is needed to overcome social distance. Women's *rights* may allow them to speak, but only the willingness to understand the position from which they speak can provide a better understanding of how gender operates. While cosmopolitanism acknowledges women as individuals, it makes little effort to understand what is specific to their circumstances, what globalization's role might be, what constitutes them as a distinct subject, and why they do not recognize themselves entirely in cosmopolitanism.

If emotions are important to social relations beyond the interpersonal, how do they enter the realm of globalization? There are obvious reasons why emotions manifest more readily in interpersonal relations. In cases where people interact directly and regularly, they learn to recognize distress in others and develop concern for their well-being. They are also in a position to see immediately the consequences of their actions (or even words) on others when they are the cause of that distress. Apologies are the most obvious expression of the acknowledgement of harm done. Provided they are sincere, they are not just spoken, they are felt as sorrow. None of this is automatic, however; it simply happens more easily. Globalization, too, is social relations, albeit on a larger scale, and with greater geographical and social distance. While no one meets everyone else on the planet, everyone is tied to everyone else in some way. The interconnectedness that is so often mentioned denotes an awareness of the empirical ties that binds different parts of the world. There exists a kind functional interdependence between different people, but no comprehensive account of their plights (note the plural), and no moral vision that incorporates their diversity (McCullough 1991: 44).

Interconnectedness is an interesting concept. It has a rather technical resonance as "connectedness" is not quite the same as "relation". The former tends to focus on what lies between people (the product, the circulation of money, telecommunications, means of transportation, or the atmosphere—that is, objects) rather than on the people who are connected (the subjects of globalization). The latter highlights the fact that social relations between people constitute globalization. They manifest themselves though in news stories that make others relatively more visible than they would otherwise be. Readers, listeners, and viewers may rely on the means of communications (the objects) but what interests them is the people (the subjects). Visibility, especially when it exposes suffering, makes a moral claim on the audience. Distress and suffering may be readily observable, as it sometimes is in pictures, or it can be heard in

accounts by the people themselves. By focusing the attention on what others say, audience members can look at globalization through lenses different from their own (Peterson & Runyan 1999: Ch. 2). Whether understanding of others develops is dependent on one's receptivity to others' views.

How images and stories of others are received is not neutral (Sontag 2003: 13). Most people have some prior awareness, however scant, of world poverty, of distant ecological disasters, of war and of the situation of women. They likely have opinions or beliefs about the nature and causes of these phenomena. Exposure to suffering can give rise to a number of responses, including the reflex of blame or other forms of distancing. Or it can elicit an empathetic response that prompts an examination of the kinds of social relations that bind the audience to the people made visible. Martin Hoffman distinguishes between several types of relations that may bind people (Hoffman 2000). The transgressor and virtual transgressor standpoints appear particularly likely to foster helping behaviour since audience members know or wonder about their responsibility for others' difficulties. Note that "helping" as understood here is not reducible to the application of rules or the implementation of known policy. Rather it entails a genuine consultation with others as to what they want.

Two other types of situations, the multiple-claimants and care-justice dilemmas, pose additional problems. They involve at least three parties with potentially divergent views of the problem and of the desirable response. It is precisely these types of situations that make impartiality an appealing principle. It cuts through complex dilemmas about who, of the many excluded individuals and groups, and which issues, of the many issues that face the planet, need to be addressed in priority, and which response, of all the possible responses, ought to be selected. In the end, it results in what David Campbell aptly describes as policies of "institutionalized humanitarianism ... that have limited the principle of humanity to standardized practices within formal international parameters" (Campbell 2003: 78).

Held's exhortation to think from behind the veil of ignorance when trying to imagine a reconstructed global order strikes me as inappropriate. It requires feminists to pretend not to know something that is known, and it requires others in the audience to overlook something that can be known if only they are willing to ask certain questions. It leads to intellectual and moral impoverishment rather than to moral progress. Thus, an effort of understanding of the different conceptual worlds people inhabit is necessary to make an accurate diagnosis of the problems faced by humanity. Then, an effort of moral imagination is required to answer the challenges of globalization in a way that accommodate the variety of actors.

4. Complexity and moral imagination

Responding appropriately to complex moral situations is no simple matter. Neither laws nor rules of dialogue can account for all situations (Shklar 1990: 35; McCollough 1991: 2-5). The increasing pace of economic, social, political, and ecological transformation puts all inhabitants of the globe in a kind of "boiler room" situation (McCollough 1991: 7) that not amenable to rules-based thinking. An inclusive social order is one where diversity and complexity are acknowledged and provide the material out of which alternatives are fashioned and refashioned. This process calls for a maximum of flexibility and draws on the entire range of human capabilities.

According to Thomas McCollough, there is no real distinction between private decisions and public ones and ethics of interpersonal relations is not separate from public ethics. For him “public decision making discloses some of the features of individual decision making. It reflects the character and personal and community history of the persons making the decisions” (McCollough 1991: 9). The private morality of emotions is also appropriate for the public sphere because both types of decisions are made in concrete situations that demand an assessment of the different claims made by stakeholders. The agents who struggle to reshape the global order need addressing by anyone who would propose an alternative, cosmopolitan or not.

The unprecedented character of the crises that humanity faces calls for moral imagination, which Thomas McCollough defines as

the capacity to empathize with others and to discern creative possibilities for ethical action. The moral imagination considers an issue in light of the whole. The whole is not only the complex interrelated functional aspects of society, economic, political, social institutions. It is also the traditions, beliefs, values, ideals, and hopes of its members, who constitute a community with a stake in the good life and a hopeful future. The moral imagination broadens and deepens the context of decision making to include the less tangible but most meaningful feelings, aspirations, ideals, relationships. It encompasses the core values of personal identity, loyalties, obligations, promises, love, trust, and hope. Ethical judgment consists in making these values explicit and taking responsibility for judging their implications for action (McCollough 1991: 16-17).

Held's commitment to an explicitly public conception of morality steeped in reason only limits the scope of dialogue. It consecrates the irrelevance gender and contributes to a perpetuation of a pattern of exclusion. Cosmopolitanism only allows a female subject that is no different from the male subject of cosmopolitanism, except in the matter of reproduction where reproductive rights are required for women specifically. Interestingly, the fact that reproductive rights need to be granted specifically to women reveals the troubling reality of male-female relations in the realm of sexuality. The need for women's right in this area is “caused” by the presence of gender in men's thinking and behaviour in their relations with women, for men are implicated in reproduction. The raising of children, a consequence of pregnancy and birth, itself brings into the picture another series of gender-laden interpersonal and social relations. Held's remark on reproduction was assuredly true, but it barely scratched the surface of gender relations. These go well beyond reproduction and child-rearing in the family or community and it extend to global politics.

I speak of moral imagination because something of a transformation is required in Held's view of globalization to go beyond reproduction. I suspect that Held's capacity to recognize reproductive rights as a special, yet legitimate, interest was the culmination of a process that had little to do with either reason or universal ethics. Instead, it was the capacity to fathom how unwanted pregnancies and the requirements of child-rearing may be constraining women. In bringing up reproduction, he conceded the relevance of biology. Still, gendered interpretations of sex differences limit women in other aspects of social life. Just as Held is unwilling to accept the social implications of women's biology in matters of reproduction, feminists are unwilling to accept the implications of meanings given to women's sex in other matters. As in the cases of blatant human rights violations and material poverty, which can be measured empirically, the materiality of pregnancy is obvious enough that this otherwise subjective aspect of women's

existence was readily identified as relevant. Less visible experiences of women were not, however. It is the other experiences that gender analysis helps reveal.

How much imagination is required to bridge the gap between reproduction and other issues? Probably not very much. The simple bracketing of universality and autonomy allows for other modes of thinking to manifest themselves. Cosmopolitan thinking stands in the way of this because of its apparent moral clarity consisting of individual autonomy, rationality, and universalism. The event that prompted this paper is banal but it illustrates well the obstacles that gender analysis faces in public sphere: one participant raised concerns that did not conform to the rules of conversation and her concerns were marginalized, albeit with what looked like a genuine expression of uneasiness on the part of he who marginalized them.

What people contribute to political debates usually reflects their core concerns. To sideline these concerns is to sideline the very subjectivity of the people who express them. Unsurprisingly, Held's response elicited disappointment and prompted conversations after the event between those in attendance who experienced it vicariously a sleight (the word is not too strong) because they identified with the questioner (some also felt embarrassed for the presenter!). In the end, the event was an exemplar of the way exclusion occurs despite the commitment to a democratic political culture. Although participants are included in the discussion, their views are excluded when they express them (Young 2000: 55).

This is the near-universal experience of not being taken seriously as a knowledgeable and moral subject. Social actors are their subjectivity, so to speak, and genuine dialogue without recognition of this is ludicrous. Recognition by others—without which social life is impossible—is not something that can be granted in form of a right. The upshot is the exclusion of “the knowledge and experience of the day-to-day world inhabited by ordinary people” who have “the ability to cope with problems that require practical know-how and resourcefulness; the cognition of one's vulnerability and dependence on others; sensitivity to others' feelings and points of view; nurturing skills and pleasure in helping others, especially the young; independence of judgment based on one's situation and not bound to the status quo” (McCullough 1991: 86).

Emotionally available, as distinct from primarily rational, people recognize more easily moral situations precisely because they are attuned to relations with and differences in others (Shogan 1988: 68-71). They can assess situations not only from an objective point of view, but also from a subjective one because they imagine what it might be like to be others. This means more than acknowledging that they suffer or that their rights are violated, which can pass for an objective statement. It means picturing the situation from within with its peculiarities, its sense of occasional despair, frustration, and will to resist and change social relations. Wendy Hollway writes of introjective identification to describe the thought process of the person who cares about others and wants to understand them (Hollway 2006: 51). Introjection consists of trying to internalize others' feelings to obtain a sense of what it is to be them. It contrasts with projection, whereby a person attributes to others his or her own feelings, or what he or she deems universally valid. The positing of a generalized rational, autonomy-seeking subject leads to the projection into every other person what one considers the desirable subjectivity (characterized by rationality, individualism, and universal thinking) and aspirations (autonomy).

Subjective identification (Shogan) and introjective identification (Hollway) are conscious efforts to overcome the geographical and conceptual distance that operates in global social relations. Thus, cosmopolitan authors ought not only to invoke the existence of women who participate in

demonstrations against the global order (an objective fact), but to listen attentively to the substance of their criticism (an expression of their subjectivity) especially when it differs from what cosmopolitans believe the reality of globalization to be. Moreover, insofar as they have the luxury of time, intellectuals like Held they can avail themselves of the abundant literature on gender and globalization. For the person unfamiliar with gender analysis, imagination is crucial at least initially because the recognition of gender and the recognition of feminist subjectivity does not result from simple observation of violence and economic inequality.

A simple commitment to take feminist arguments about globalization seriously produces a richer understanding of globalization and the role of gender in it. Indeed, I suspect that most people who become interested in social problems are so because they were exposed to it. The fact that so many people show concern for the well-being of others when they are themselves relatively unaffected demonstrates the human capacity to care about others. There is little doubt that Held cares about the people he discusses, whether implicitly (“humanity”) or explicitly (in mentioning specific groups). But care and consideration for others acquire their full meaning in action. It is the transition from “caring about” and “caring for”, which, in political life, means acknowledging the specific circumstances and wishes of others and trying to reconcile divergent claims.

CONCLUSION

None of the foregoing is meant to give the impression that cosmopolitanism is to be rejected outright. Nor it is to claim that individual rights are useless. The far-reaching transformations that have occurred in the last two centuries are closely associated with modern individualism and rights discourse. The fact that many people successfully invoke rights shows the power they and modern democratic ideals possess. At the same time, one cannot help but notice how quickly people who claim rights for themselves resist the extension of rights to others. This is especially the case when the latter need or want something that the former do not. Different social experiences lead to different priorities and different conception of rights.

The abstract character of liberal ideals is at once a blessing and a curse. It is a blessing because anyone who identifies as a human can invoke the letter of liberalism and claim equal moral worth, autonomy, and individual rights. The fact that many political statements are couched in the language of rights shows how useful a concept they are. Yet, the abstract character of liberal ideals is a curse because it allows each person to define rights in a way consistent with their own experiences and aspirations and pretend that these are basic rights. Others’ claims, if they differ significantly or if they require sacrifice, can easily be dismissed as going the basics. As I have pointed out above, this is the whole debate between different categories of rights. Rights discourse provides little guidance to resolve the conflict between them.

If politics is an art rather than a science, then it requires all the creativity that the human experience and human intellect can generate. Emotions are a crucial way to apprehend the world and they play an important role in ethical reasoning. Few, if any, care and empathy theorists claim that emotions should replace reason or that rights are not needed. Instead, they argue that emotions and reasons complement each other. However, given the emphasis on reason and impartiality in the public sphere, the defenders of emotions-based ethics can be forgiven for their impatience. I suspect that the people in attendance at Held’s talk on “Reframing Global Governance” were initially sympathetic to his project. They must have known about his work’s heavy reliance on liberalism. I also suspect that they did not foresee this answer to the “gender

question”, hence the wave of disappointment in the audience. As one colleague remarked, one wonders how many women he managed to lose with his remarks.

Should one be cosmopolitan or not? The answer largely depends on one’s conception of cosmopolitanism. Ulrich Beck (2006) uses the expression “banal cosmopolitanism” to denote a general sense of responsibility and openness to those outside of one’s community. As a disposition toward virtual strangers, it is compatible with the ethics presented in this paper. If cosmopolitanism takes the form of rules of dialogue and strict decision-making procedures, it stifles the moral imagination that is necessary to deal with novel situations and a wide range of viewpoints. What matters most in political debates besides participants’ own interests and needs is the attitude they bring to the public sphere. Conflicts cannot be eliminated altogether but they can be resolved ways that respond to more grievances. Care and empathy-based ethics is as valid in interpersonal relations as it is in global politics.

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