# Beck's cosmopolitan politics

# **Beck's Cosmopolitan Politics**

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## Abstract

This article evaluates Ulrich Beck's cosmopolitan global politics. I argue that areas where Beck sees bases for communal and cosmopolitan politics are structured by power, inequality and conflict. Beck has a conflict perspective on local responses to globalisation but this is not carried through to his global politics. There are issues that need to be tackled at a global level but I argue that this will have to be done on the basis of conflicting interests, power and nation-states as much as through global cosmopolitanism and co-operation.

Keywords: Ulrich Beck, globalisation, cosmopolitanism, conflict, power.

Ulrich Beck argues for global cosmopolitan politics with a co-operative and consensual approach over state-based and conflictual politics with a 'national outlook'. This article focuses on Beck's books *Cosmopolitan Vision* (2006) and *What is Globalisation?* (2000) and associated articles (eg Beck, 2000a, Beck and Sznaider, 2006). It is relevant also to his books on *Power in the Global Age* (2005) and Europe (Beck and Grande 2007) and, in parts, to other advocacies of cosmopolitan politics (eg Held, 1995, Archibugi and Held 1995, Kaldor 2003). I wish to argue that power, inequality and conflict, and a role for nations, are acknowledged by Beck but undermine his cosmopolitan outlook.

Beck is important for his analyses of modernisation and the development of a 'second modernity'. He has analysed this through studies of ecological problems and the growth of a risk society. The increase in risk is as much in consciousness as reality. Modernisation has brought insecurities, resulting not from natural processes but as the unintended side-effect of manufactured processes. Consciousness of these has brought greater reflexive modernisation, self-consciousness of risk, and this is what makes the second modernity distinctive from the first. Many of the problems that Beck mentions, such as ecological degradation, and the development of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs), require global solutions. Nation-states are not adequate for tackling such problems and what is needed is a system of global governance called cosmopolitan democracy. This is inclusive in the range of actors it involves. By giving them all a say it is equalising and it is envisaged that decisions will be made by dialogue and deliberation between the plural actors involved, both state and non-state. One of the things which makes cosmopolitanism work is common risk consciousness, shared across the world,

and universal ideas such as human rights. A sense of global citizenship and global values provides the social and cultural basis for global co-operation and democracy.

For its advocates cosmopolitanism is possible because of developments of globalisation. Nation-states have been undermined by internal problems such as the privatisation of state assets, sub-national fragmentation, and the collapse of statist systems of communism. Two world wars and the threat of nuclear conflict in the cold war have made people opt for international frameworks that bring states together in co-operation and prevent the likelihood of conflict. The end of the cold war has shifted the world from a bipolar divide to one where world-wide structures and commonality are more possible. Problems to do with the environment, crime, terrorism, human rights, war, health and WMDs are global and require global responses. Global inequality and poverty are major problems. The world economy has been globalised by neoliberalism and capital mobility and is characterised by greater interdependence and instability. Fragmented systems for global governance and regulation of the economy need to be more unified. Transnational migration, communications and culture have led to a greater sense of transnational identity that could underpin global citizenship in a cosmopolitan democracy. Democracy is organised at national levels but important decisions have to be made globally where there are not mechanisms of accountability. So cosmopolitanism is partly about overcoming this democratic deficit and restoring democracy at levels where decision-making has become more relevant. Ideas of state self-determination have given way to greater legitimacy for the mutual interference of states or supranational forces in states' affairs, for instance in pursuit of human rights, what Beck calls a shift from international law to human rights. And cosmopolitan democracy is not a completely utopian idea because there are bases for global governance in existing IGOs, INGOs, regional organisations and even global social movements. What is being signalled here is a shift away from perspectives on world politics that suggest a realist world of competing states, imperialism or global neoliberalism to one of global governance along cosmopolitan democratic lines. (Baylis *et al* 2007 provide an introduction to perspectives on world politics).

My arguments have a wider relevance to other authors' work on globalisation and cosmopolitanism, such as those cited above. But this article concentrates on Beck to ensure a focused and more detailed analysis and to illuminate his influential perspective. My focus is on Beck's most recent works on globalisation and cosmopolitanism. His previous works (Beck 1992, 1999) have been much discussed (eg see Mythen 2004; Rustin 1994). His more recent writings are influential and bring up key themes in his work, but have not been so carefully analysed yet. They also raise issues that are important in public debates, such as climate change, WMDs, and global poverty and development, whether global governance, neoliberalism or state politics are the best way to tackle these and whether cosmopolitanism or conflict are the most likely way they can be engaged with globally.

Ecology, Capital and Civil Society: cosmopolitanism or conflict?

One instance where Beck justifies cosmopolitanism over a conflictual perspective is when he sees counter-cosmopolitanism as possible but not effective. The sociological inevitability of cosmopolitanism, he says, outweighs contradiction or conflict, for instance on the part of states – 'the new globality cannot be reversed' (Beck, 2000: 11, 88). In Beck's political prescriptions adversaries to cosmopolitanism and conflict are ruled out (2006: ch 3, 73-4, 117).

> 'The falling of leaves in autumn can't be prevented by looking the other way, and certainly not by insisting that you hate winter … even the most radical anti-cosmopolitanism can re-erect the old boundaries only in theory, not in reality' (2006: 117).

There is a role for conflict in *Cosmopolitan Vision*. Cosmopolitanism does not necessarily lead to cosmopolitan awareness (2006: 74) and Beck says that cosmopolitanism has adversaries. He focuses on the Sept 11th attackers. But he says that cosmopolitan reality is irreversible, and that it is cosmopolitan awareness rather than reality that is open to struggle. There is confusion about whether cosmopolitanism is a fact of awareness or reality. Beck sometimes says the former and sometimes the latter (eg 2000: 10; 2006: 73, 87). But cosmopolitan reality appears irreversible even though anti-cosmopolitan awareness is possible. Awareness and action do not have effectiveness in this model, and irreversible cosmopolitan reality overrules them.

But this does not recognise the agency of actors in making cosmopolitanism and who can also reverse it. And it suggests that cosmopolitanism is an external reality that is not subject to agency and, that where contrary awareness exists, it is ineffectual and overridden. There is conflict here but not in the basic structure of cosmopolitanism or where it is going. Conflict is there but not essential to the structure and fortunes of cosmopolitanism and is overriden. Much of this article is about the tension between cosmopolitan co-operation and conflict and the tendency for the former to win out over the latter in Beck's work.

The combination of community and conflict and the tendency for the former to be preferred over the latter in Beck's theory arises in his discussions of ecological problems and world risk community (2000: 38-42). Beck outlines how ecological destruction may lead to armed conflict over resources (such as water), military intervention to stop deforestation, and migration after ecological devastation which can trigger armed conflict (2000: 41, see also Hirst, 2001). World risk society (WRS) is put forward as an antidote to these sorts of conflicts. Beck argues that global ecological problems generate WRS as an unintended side-effect. This involves a common awareness of shared environmental problems which leads on to a cosmopolitan consciousness of community and shared fate:

> 'the fact that the threat knows no boundaries means that for the first time people will experience the common character of a destiny … it is arousing a cosmopolitan everyday consciousness which transcends even the boundaries between man, animal and plant. Threats create society, and global threats create global society' (2000: 38. See also Archibugi 2004: 444-5).

It is desirable to have WRS and global cosmopolitan democracy to counter such problems. These are globally caused problems which if possible need to be counteracted by globally combined responses. Not many states will go it alone in dealing with them if they think they will have to bear the costs of this unsure of whether others will do the same. And the problems have such an effect and global pattern of causes that the combined action of many is needed to solve them. So responses to these problems need to be agreed transnationally. I agree with Beck's emphasis on transnational politics and the desirability of a cosmopolitan outlook.

But such a global consciousness is unlikely. One reason for doubt is the lack of empirical evidence for it. Powerful nations sometimes opt out of shared consciousness or action or make the problem worse. They put economic or national interests before ecological and common consciousness. In action on climate change and nuclear proliferation, for instance, powerful nations try to maintain their energy use and nuclear weapons whilst aiming to ensure others reduce theirs. And diverging economic interests and ideological approaches (from neoliberalism to more regulative approaches) across nation-states make agreement and collaboration unlikely.

Politics and action on the problems that Beck outlines show power, inequality and conflict rather than common global consciousness. So it may be better not to pursue global solutions through consensus when the basis for politics is conflicting objectives and power inequalities that will undermine that. This need not imply negativity, inertia or cynicism but an alternative view of politics. What might be pursued globally could be: an understanding of the conflicts involved over, say, environmental issues; judgements on which sides certain economic interests, political objectives and sought outcomes lie; calculations about possibilities for alliances or multilateral (rather than global) agreements along such lines; and politics around such a view of conflict and alliances. This is an international politics, and can be in pursuit of cosmopolitan and humanitarian objectives, but based on conflict and alliances where they can be sought out and built rather than a hope for global common consciousness in a world divided by divergent economic interests and ideologies (see also Zolo 1997).

Let us take Beck's example of ecological risks. Solutions to conflicts over resources may be best sought not by negotiation at global levels where parties have divergent interests and geopolitical objectives. Instead they can be sought at multilateral levels with a smaller range of international actors involved where the range of conflicting interests and ideologies is reduced. Or actors can choose rather than pursuing global consensus in a context of entrenched divides, to make judgements about which sides in a conflict need their interests defending, and organising around alliances and multilateral interventions in support of those.

In such areas there is often not a common consciousness – there are different interpretations of what causes the problem (eg how climate change is caused), different interests (eg in carrying on with carbon producing activities or reducing them), power inequalities (eg power in the hands of superpower states, corrupt states, or corporations

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who profit from despoliation, and others less powerful, such as local communities, less powerful states, or non-corporate actors, including those who suffer as a result of climate change), and different ideologies with varying views on how best to solve such problems (from neoliberal to interventionist).

So the ecological problems that Beck discusses underline limits to cosmopolitan democracy and WRS consciousness and bring to the fore conflicts in global politics. They show that resolutions at supranational level have to be sought multilaterally, and/or through struggles and conflicts as much as through common consciousness and political structures based around this. A conflict perspective suggests the need for alliances and multilateral action around sides in conflicts rather than aspirations to a commonality of interests.

Beck is aware of conflicting interests but is optimistic about overcoming them. (Fine 2006 and Archibugi 2004 also argue for continuing with cosmopolitanism despite the 'ambivalences' in it). He argues that risk leads to communication and contexts for action between opposing parties – an involuntary democratisation, public debate and participation in decisions which otherwise evade public involvement (Beck, 2006a). But this egalitarian and democratic picture lacks a sense of power and interest differences in such interactions. In it conflicting interests are unravelled in public debate and democratisation. There is a communalist assumption that deliberation will overcome conflicting interests, rather than an analysis of the interests and of the conflicts between them. Another way of seeing it might be as a need for integrated cosmopolitanism, rather than a trend in that direction, and subject to conflict, rather than leading from conflict to integration. Where Beck discusses this issue in relation to transnational integration he outlines conflicts that can arise (2006: 23-4).

One reason Beck is optimistic about conflict being ironed out and cosmopolitan communality being viable is that he has a positive view of the cosmopolitanism of capital and civil society (2000: 67-72). Capital is viewed in *What is Globalisation?* as having the potential to be globally compassionate. Beck says that winners from globalisation may have a conscience and not distribute their plenty to rich countries. He argues that compassion is becoming global and that while citizens continue to stay national the bourgeois behaves in a cosmopolitan way and will act beyond the national. Beck is saying that capital will be compassionate in its distribution of profits and that its compassion will not just be national but global.

> 'Whereas the *citoyen* is still trapped in the framework the national state. The *bourgeois* acts in a cosmopolitan manner – which means that when his democratic heart throbs, his action no longer has to obey the imperatives of national loyalty' (2000: 67).

A contestable assumption here is that corporations can be motivated by compassion rather than economic self-interest. This goes against economic self-interest models of the business world from right and left. Such perspectives see corporate global benevolence in connection with their economic interests. Oil companies like BP pursue a more green

path to attract consumers or because of dwindling oil reserves rather than because of a concern with climate change. So more cosmopolitan behaviour by capital will only be found where it meets corporate self-interests.

Beck is also optimistic about the cosmopolitanism of global civil society. One example used to make the case for this is an anti-Shell campaign by Greenpeace (2000: 68-72). It is argued that this represents a 'scene change' from the politics of the first modernity to the cosmopolitanism of the second modernity. The campaign involved alliances of illegitimate and parliamentary forces and:

> 'comes close to the utopia of a cosmopolitan society which Kant outlined two hundred years ago in his *Perpetual Peace* .... It is a global nexus of responsibility in which individuals - and not only their representative organisations - can directly take part in political decisions. To be sure, this presupposed purchasing-power and excludes all those who do not have any' (2000: 70).

I wish to raise three issues. Firstly, Beck has a tendency to rest significant claims on individual illustrations and this is the case here. Secondly, there is contrary evidence to suggest that individuals do not have a sense of social responsibility and act on it. Alongside ethical consumers, widespread egoistic consumer behaviour is behind environmental problems. Insofar as individuals do exercise social responsibility this has as often not had a major effect on big corporations as it has. Thirdly, as Beck notes, consumer responsibility is affected by purchasing power. The focus of his argument about civil society on consumer action limits its applicability. This undermines the suggestion of a 'cosmopolitan society' because, as he says, consumer power is exclusive and uneven.

I have emphasised conflict as an important part of globalisation. Beck asks why conflict must dominate perspectives on globalisation and says that we should be able to see the community in it – 'For while these gloomy prospects must not be covered up or glossed over, it seems to have gone unnoticed that glocalization also produces new kinds of "communality"' (2000: 50-51). But examples given to counter conflict perspectives with evidence of community are ones in which conflict is embedded. A common pattern is reproduced here. Beck takes commonality and starts off from the point of view of finding community in it. This glosses over conflict (though sometimes acknowledging it) which starting out from a conflict perspective would show.

Examples of global community that Beck gives include 'Mickey Mouse and Coca-Cola through the symbolism of poisoned dying creatures (images of oil-soaked seagulls and baby seals) to the first signs of a world public sphere which, funnily enough, manifested themselves in the transnational Shell boycott' (2000: 51). But the striking thing about such examples is that they show power, inequality and conflict more than community. These are not globally shared phenomena. Some of the consumer activities mentioned are more preponderant in richer countries amongst those who have the best access to media and western consumer products. Insofar as they reach a global extent, Mickey Mouse and Coca-Cola, for example, are products of American corporate media power, spread

globally because of such power, which is not shared equally and which produces resistance, for instance in anti-globalisation movements and states, from France to Iran to Venezuela, that want to curb it or provide alternatives (see Kiely 2005).

Images of oil poisoned creatures are given as examples of global community because of shared public antipathy to such phenomena. But the example is more complex and conflictual than this. It is contestable whether there is shared public consciousness about things like oil poisoned animals. Furthermore such creatures are poisoned by leaks of oil over which there are inequalities in access, use and ownership, power struggles (as far as war), and clashes between the needs of oil companies, consumers and environmental concerns. There are wider problems connected to the oil industry such as climate change, itself something that leads to political conflicts over how to resolve it and possibly resource wars over diminishing supplies of water and fertile land. Beneath the image of oil poisoned creatures and globally shared concern there lie power, inequalities and conflicts which belie the realism of an appeal to community.

The transnational Shell boycott is also given as an example of global communalism. But it is a site of global conflict, between protesters and boycotters on one hand and the oil company and its interests on the other, and there are other tensions, for instance between local communities and the corporation. A public space and some degree of communal sentiment may be opened up but within the structure of a conflict over economic interests and diverging ideological objectives. Beck sees community because of a perspective which starts off to find a basis for politics in this. This glosses over relations of power, inequality and conflict which undermine global communalism and imply, instead, a role for multilateralism (rather than globalism) and a politics of conflict in the pursuit of cosmopolitan objectives.

One reason Beck underestimates the potential for conflict to undermine global cosmopolitan democracy is that he conflates relations in world society with a lack of conflict. However inclusion and relations in world society may happen but involve conflict. This logic occurs in Beck's critique of Zygmunt Bauman's (1998) analysis of conflict at the global level (2000: 54-8). Beck says that qualifications should be made to Bauman's argument that globalisation is leading to the polarisation of rich and poor globally. Beck argues that Bauman shows how the poor and rich are actually bound together, have a closeness and are all included in the second modernity. The poorer periphery and richer core parts of the world are included in each other and have relationships. It is impossible to exclude the poor from society as can be seen from their occupying of luxury streets in Rio. Beck says that Bauman does not explain why globalisation destroys community between the rich and the poor and that a cosmopolitan solidarity cannot be ruled out (2000: 58). In short, where Bauman sees polarisation and conflict Beck says there is community.

> 'Two points qualify Bauman's important argument that globalization is leading to a polarization of rich and poor on a world scale … For at least in *his* perspective as observer, he *binds together* what he depicts as irrevocably disintegrated in trans-state world society: namely the framework, the *minima moralia*, which

make the poor appear as *our* poor, the rich as *our* rich … the formation of a "cosmopolitan solidarity" cannot be ruled out … world societies … create a new closeness between seemingly separate worlds … it is even questionable whether in the second modernity the cultural production of "possible lives" … allows any groups to be excluded … The first world is contained in the third and fourth worlds, just as the third and fourth are contained in the first … This new impossibility of excluding the poor can be seen in Rio, for example, where the homeless "occupy" luxury streets at nightfall' (2000: 57-8).

A specific example is used, at the end of this quote, rather than systematic evidence. As has been mentioned before Beck tends to rely on individual illustrations rather than systematic evidence to support general points. Furthermore the example is of the spatial inclusion of the poor in rich areas. But this does not show the poor occupying equivalent space as the rich – they are sleeping on the streets of rich areas not in the residencies. And this is spatial rather than social inclusion. Sharing geographical space is not the same as sharing the economic, social and political society or having comparable status within it.

There are echoes here of Beck's Durkheimian argument against migration (2000a: 92-4 and 2006: 108-9), that the unskilled poor of the developing world and the skilled rich in developed countries, separated in the international division of labour, will be bound together in cosmopolitan solidarity because of their interdependence. Beck assumes community between the rich and poor on the basis of shared inclusion in the same society and interrelationships.

> 'we cannot exclude the possibility that national "non-solidarity" neoliberalism (globalism) could take a cosmopolitan turn. This could happen if solidarity with fellow nationals or fellow citizens were replaced by solidarity in the context of a global distribution of labour and wealth … New ways of sharing labour and wealth across borders – without migration – are emerging … a cosmopolitan distribution of labour and wealth could arise in the long run in which low-skilled jobs are exported from rich to poor countries: concomitantly jobs requiring higher qualifications would be sourced in countries with low population densities but highly skilled workforces' (2006: 108-9).

But membership of the same society and inclusion does not equate with lack of conflict. Groups can be members of a shared community and have mutually dependent relationships but on the basis of inequality, power differences and conflictual relations, with diverging interests. Data which shows trade and investment concentrated between rich countries (see Hirst and Thompson 1996, Dicken 2007) doesn't suggest that the global rich and poor are part of the same community, or that if they are it is on the basis of great inequality.

Beck acknowledges 'conflict with each other in a variety of hybrid relationships' (2000: 58) and that shared relations can lead to conflict rather than community. But this qualification implies that it is wrong to cast doubt on Bauman's conflictual rather than

community perspective. It is partly on the basis of his communal view of interdependent relations that Beck makes optimistic proposals for cosmopolitan democracy. In phenomena like world risk society he sees communities with shared risks and fates, but assumes on the basis of shared community the possibility of communal feelings rather than conflicts and struggles within that community. There is more of Durkheim's organic solidarity here and less of Marx's sociology of conflict.

Beck says we are at a moment where nations have a choice between: a) a cosmopolitan regime which adapts to the new modernity so that new threats can be countered; or b) a return to a Hobbesian war of all against all in which military might replaces global law (2006: 125).

He has said option (b) is of the first age and has been irreversibly left behind but here suggests it is a choice. This undermines the idea of there having been a paradigm shift to something irreversible.

Beck seals off these two possibilities (a) and (b) from one another as an either/or question. His argument is for (a) over (b). An alternative prescription would be for attempts to solve global problems at a global level (a) but recognition that this will be structured by (b), conflict between groups such as states over the solutions, in which actors would be best off assessing where to take sides in the conflict rather than hoping for consensus. There is a false separation between global politics and the politics of conflict. The first, as Beck rightly argues, needs to be pursued, but within a context that understands it will be a matter of conflict and struggle between competing interests rather than one of consensus.

Beck has faith in transnational politics to solve problems in an age where, for him, national politics can no longer do so. He is right that transnational forms have become more and more necessary. He argues, for instance, that the 'globalised economy can only be regulated globally – only those who fight for regulation at the global level have the remotest chance of success' (2006: 74). But this needs to be embedded in a conflict model of what fighting for regulation at a global level involves, via relations of power and inequality. There are different actors in the world economy – from states, rich or poor, to the World Bank to NGOs – varying ideologies about how to deal with the global economy – from neoliberal to regulatory – and states and other actors have different interests in how it should be run according to what would benefit them, from free trade, to fair trade, protectionism or regionalism. The cosmopolitan model leads to a consensus view of what it is possible to forge at a transnational level rather than a view of conflict and the uneven distribution of resources. Archibugi (2004: 452-3), for instance, sees cosmopolitanism in terms of agonism (competitive spirit) rather than antagonism. For him the conflict of the latter can be overcome. This leaves out contradictory interests and ideological demands that mean pursuing politics at transnational levels is as much about conflicts to be won by some over others as about agreements that can be achieved through a cosmopolitan coming together. So Beck is right to emphasise transnational politics as necessary, but there needs to be an emphasis not just on cosmopolitan

inclusion and agreement but also on conflict and the winning of battles in a situation of dissensus.

This leads us back to classical sociology. Sociology from the 'first age' of modernity, from Marx and Weber, to the Frankfurt School and neo-Marxism and neo-Weberianism stressed conflict models of society and politics, often in opposition to consensus views. More recently sociologists of globalisation, such as Bauman (1998) and Crouch (2004), have continued in such traditions analysing the power and inequality underpinning transnational politics. Beck is stronger than Bauman in making suggestions for transnational politics. Bauman does not delve too far into such questions in his book on globalisation. But Bauman's critique of inequality and conflicting interests, which, as we have seen, Beck discusses (2000: 54-8), could be infused into Beck's politics. Crouch also has drawn attention to imbalances in power and transnationalism between classes which are accentuated by globalisation.

A Conflict Model not Followed Through

I have suggested that Beck is conscious of conflict in social relations but does not apply this to the basic structure of his analysis. This pattern happens in Beck's critique of David Held's (eg, 1995, 2000) model of cosmopolitan democracy (Beck, 2000: 94-5). Beck's doubts about Held's scheme could apply to his own theory and are an example of undermining contradictions which are not carried through.

Beck outlines Held's scheme of cosmopolitan democracy – global power networks, cosmopolitan democratic law, transnational parliaments and courts and individuals as citizens at different levels. While it is important to align politics with the transnational nature of problems and forces in the world, Held's scheme is optimistic about what global fora can achieve, and it focuses on political institutions and relations, with less attention to the political economy that affects political institutions.

Beck recognises these issues in Held's work in a way which if applied to his theory would show problems with that also. Beck asks the question of whether 'powers and tendencies' would support or block Held's cosmopolitan democracy, and raises the issue of how normative visions in the past have been linked to 'imperialism, colonialism, two world wars, the Holocaust, the Stalinist gulag'. He hopes that Held's normative vision will not be 'torn apart' by its own 'contradictions and adversaries'. But he argues that 'for social science and politics, hope is too little' (2000: 95).

Beck recognises that real powers and tendencies may undermine cosmopolitan democracy but does not apply this to his own cosmopolitan politics which is vulnerable to the same problem. Calling Held's scheme a 'picture book vision' brings out its optimism and he argues that 'hope is too little', but these apply also to his cosmopolitan vision which is based on a hope that it is feasible and possible with less attention to its embeddedness in powers, conflicts and inequalities that affect its feasibility or could take it in directions which favour the interests of the powerful more than others. There is a

self-undermining aspect to Beck's critique of Held. It applies to Beck's theory as well as Held's politics of cosmopolitan democracy.

Problems for his analysis being brought up but not followed through arise in other areas too. Beck sees conflict as part of cosmopolitanism, specifically as part of 'procedural universalism' (2006: 59-61; also see 2006: 94). He says that violent disputes cannot be 'consensually resolved' by the negative cosmopolitanism of intervention to stop them, they can only be pacified. He argues that cosmopolitanism 'is another word for conflict, not consensus' and that the ideal speech situation of Habermas needs to be given a 'realistic twist' and developed as a conflict theory. Here it is suggested that the 'realism' in cosmopolitan realism points to embedding cosmopolitanism in a sociological rather than purely philosophical or normative perspective and that the former shows that cosmopolitanism is structured by conflict (see also Archibugi 2004: 457).

However this approach is not followed through in his advocacy of cosmopolitan democracy. This aspires to agreement without an analysis of the economic and political interests involved which would show how cosmopolitanism is affected by conflict between them. The need for the latter is highlighted in Beck's theory but not developed in his advocacy. This makes it hopeful about fair and accepted agreement without an analysis of the conflictual bases that make this problematic.

Elsewhere Beck mentions the clash between normative or political cosmopolitanism as being between idealism on one hand and *realpolitik* on the other (2006: 44-7). The goodness of the good he says is not enough to make the case for cosmopolitanism. It must also be realistic, and an optimist of the cosmopolitan outlook can also be a pessimist of the cosmopolitan mission. He says that analysing the problems of cosmopolitanism involves looking at its ambiguities and ideological misuses. But this is not carried on with in a developed way. There is a tension here between a developed theory of human rights cosmopolitanism and an undeveloped mention of issues of power and misuse that could be involved in it. The latter is seen as an addition to the theory rather than as problematic for it.

Beck rightly emphasises the empirical-analytical dimension and sociological cosmopolitanism but does not go on to look for problems with cosmopolitanism at this level in its economic, social and political underpinnings and the power, inequality and interests behind it. He talks of weaknesses of cosmopolitanism where it lacks a political theory behind its normative outlook, where empirical-analytical issues are not featured enough and where there are ambiguities in the cosmopolitanism of reality (2006: 46). But these approaches are not built into his prescriptions.

Let us look at this in relation to the specific example of human rights cosmopolitanism. Beck mentions potential problems of a human rights regime and says that humanitarian intervention can lead to a proliferation of military conflicts and perpetual war rather than conflict regulation. But having mentioned *realpolitik* he does not follow this through and look at underlying economic and political power inequalities and how these feed into human rights cosmopolitanism. Human rights cosmopolitanism can be something that

western regimes powerful in military and other senses use when it suits their interest but do not when it does not (for example, in the cases of Guantanamo Bay and US reluctance to be involved in the International Criminal Court). This raises questions about how powerful states can define what is meant by human rights in such cases, dominate definitions of who are identified as being the culprits and where intervention is necessary, and can undermine the cosmopolitan system by partiality and a lack of following the same standards themselves. In this context human rights cosmopolitanism loses legitimacy in the eyes of those on the receiving end, or who are less equal in deciding its shape. Human rights cosmopolitanism is looked at by Beck as undermining nation-states and despotic rule, but not in the way that nation-states are behind it, can use it to increase power or spread their influence and as method for enforcing despotism.

Beck rightly mentions that there are authorities who decide whether human rights are respected or violated, have the power to grant legitimacy and expose some places to military intervention (2006: 47). It has to be assumed he means entities such as the UN security council. It is not discussed whether the authority granters are states, or dominated by core states, and he does not analyse the power structures behind such authorities, their definitions of human rights, and their interests, though he says that the boundary lines and selectivities of human rights cosmopolitanism 'conform to the logic of power' (2006: 47). There is a tension here between a developed justification for cosmopolitanism and an undeveloped raising of some of the issues of power and interests behind it. The latter could undermine the former but this possibility is not carried through.

So Beck could develop the qualifications he makes about power and conflict in global politics, that at present remain qualifications rather than structuring principles in his analysis. He could also model his consensual model of global politics on his more critical evaluation of domestic state responses to global neoliberalism, where there is a stronger sense of conflict, power and inequality (eg 2000: 1-8, 57-63, 118-9).

Beck is more of a radical on the domestic impact of globalisation, in tune with his background in Germany. Here there has been a regulated social model, the social market, which is less in accordance with global neoliberalism than Anglo-Saxon capitalism is. Discussing the domestic impact of neoliberal globalisation on welfare, democracy and politics, Beck argues that global neoliberalism brings a recapture of power by corporations from the politics and welfare of the postwar settlement between labour and capital (2000: 1-8, see also Crouch 2004 on post-democracy). Their aim, he says, is to shunt state and labour out of the way to bring about a free market that can be exploited by capital for their own gain. The economy has grown, yet despite this unemployment has increased because the gains of growth have been creamed off into corporate profits with the downsizing of labour. Tax avoidance by big corporations has been made more possible by globalisation. Beck argues that the conflictual logic of capitalism has been re-emerging while the state has been losing its power to pursue justice and mediate conflict (2000: 62). Owners in capitalism are increasing their profits, marginalising employees and the welfare state. Not only are the working class and welfare being undermined but also politics and democracy. Transnational corporations are mobile so eroding the chance

of democratic welfare states to mould society. They play off national states against one another, and states and labour are still organised at national levels while capital is organised transnationally (2000: 65).

This attunement to power imbalances, conflicting interests and unequal benefits in the domestic impact of globalisation does not get transposed to analysis of politics at the global level. An understanding at the state level in which taxation, collectivism, a social model, and democracy are central is accompanied by a liberal and optimistic analysis at the global level where cosmopolitanism is proposed as a hopeful, most adequate and only viable, form of politics. Issues of power, inequality and conflicting interests are acknowledged as complications for this prescription, but not as structuring principles of politics in the way they are seen to be at the level of the local economic impacts of globalisation on class, welfare and politics. Radicalism and political economy locally are accompanied by liberal and consensual assumptions globally.

This mismatch between conclusions concerning local or global levels is accompanied by a disjuncture also between what is said about economic and political dimensions. Beck is more critical about economic globalisation than political globalisation. Beck's critique of economic globalisation (eg 2000: ch. 4) does not match with a greater utopianism about political globalisation. There could be more crossover of being critical across different areas and linkage of global politics back to the economic and the conflicts there.

Beck argues that economic globalisation is often actually internationalisation because transnational trade, production and investment relations are restricted to certain parts of the world and within and between them – North America, Asia and Europe (2000: 120, see also Hirst and Thompson 1996). This demonstrates power and inequality in economic globalisation. But how this power and inequality and conflicting interests suffuse through global cosmopolitan politics is lost or is added as a qualification rather than a structuring principle which would undermine optimism about global cosmopolitanism.

Critical analysis is applied at the economic level but less so at the political level, or is fundamental in the former while an add-on in the latter. And economic globalisation is separated out from other dimensions of globalisation so that they are analysed in abstraction from the way that they are affected by the economy. This may be an attempt to avoid narrowly economistic approaches but causes a loss of insight from the economy across to other dimensions.

Beck analyses cosmopolitan democracy in terms of a consensus model but this is less the case in *What is Globalisation?* when focusing on globalisation economically where it impacts with politics at the level of the state or states (Beck 2000: introduction). Here globalisation is analysed as a process of neoliberal expansionism which involves conflicting interests between capital and other classes in society. Beck distinguishes neoliberal globalisation by calling it 'globalism' and contrasting it with broader concepts of 'globalisation' (a more processual idea) and 'globality' (or world society) (2000: 9-13, 117-9). In doing this he sets up the possibility of looking at cosmopolitanism in these latter two concepts in a way that does not draw in so centrally the class conflict of

economic globalisation (or 'globalism'). Economic neoliberal globalisation is separated conceptually from other forms of globalisation. Yet this is a false distinction because these economic class conflicts infuse the broader processes, 'globality' and 'globalisation', too.

A related issue concerns the state in global politics. Beck has a picture of power and the dominance of capital and of capital as having different interests to labour and the state. A logical response to this is for labour and state to be organised transnationally in cosmopolitan democracy to counteract capital at the global level at which it is organised. But this supposes that labour and state have similar interests which run contrary to capital and, organised politically at transnational levels, can counter capital. The reality is that states sometimes share ideologies with capital (eg neoliberalism) which go against state welfare. Beck assumes a social democratic perspective at the level of states organised in global democracy rather than a conflict between neoliberal and other ideologies and between states who are allied with transnational corporations and those that wish to constrain them. Global politics involves conflicts between ideologies and economic interests rather than convergence around social democratic and humanitarian norms. This issue about the role of the state globally leads into my concerns in the next and final section of this article, about the continuing role of the national outlook in global politics.

The 'National Outlook' and Global Politics

I have argued that power, inequality and conflict need to play more of a part in Beck's analysis of global politics. I wish to argue also that there is too much pushing out of the national outlook in what is seen as a paradigm break to a more global and cosmopolitan order.

Beck's global democracy rests uneasily with the fact that nation-states are building blocks of global politics, and that there are differences of culture, ideology and economic interest along national and other lines. These undermine possibilities for negotiating global agreements. In an aside from his main arguments Beck says (2006: 47) that as long as there is no human rights cosmopolitanism via world government it is states that enforce it on other states, countries and regions. In short, human rights cosmopolitanism is a state-oriented business where there is no world government. Where there is world government it is, for reasons I have outlined, unlikely to operate in a communal way and likely to be marked by state power and conflicts.

Beck is scathing about national, realist perspectives which emphasise US power, oil, national interests, hegemony, and imperialism over human rights or terror as motivations for US global interventionism, and which focus on the US as violating international law and having the status of a war criminal. For example he dismisses explanations of the war in Iraq which highlight oil interests as stuck within a national-imperialist view which will not accept a cosmopolitan humanitarian view of US intentions and a global cosmopolitan view of the world as one that has changed (2006: 137, 156-162).

'The national outlook …. fails because it cannot comprehend the new logic of power in global society. Anyone who believes that the global policeman NATO or the USA is merely pretending to play the role of global policeman while really pursuing American economic and geopolitical power interests in the powder keg of the Balkans or the Arab world not only misunderstands the situation but also overlooks the extent to which the politics of human rights (like the imposition of "free markets") has become the civil religion, the faith of the United States itself … a new kind of postnational politics of *military humanism* is emerging' (2006: 137).

This alternative view in which power is subordinated to global responsibility is contestable. It is a striking view given the countervailing literature and the inconsistency of the US in pursuing human rights – for instance in Guantanamo Bay, relations with China, in its policy on international justice, and in past interventions in democratic politics in Latin America and elsewhere. US interventions globally, or the choice about where to make them, have been affected by whether they are in US geo-political interests and are not in line with a consistent pursuit of human rights that this being their 'religion' would show.

Beck says that the defence of human rights overseas can co-exist with geostrategic, economic and hegemonic interests. This may be so in theory but in practice the latter has often overridden the former in US foreign policy. It has often been more the case that human rights are used as a legitimation of geostrategic interest and pursued when in such interests, but not pursued (for example, in relation to China or Guantanamo Bay), or even gone against, when not.

There is a lack of referencing to who expresses the national outlook (2006: 155-60). Whether referring to its argument as unwilling to acknowledge anything has changed (2006: 155) or its style as expressing a 'sense of superiority' and 'cool intellectual confidence' (2006: 155) there are not references to expressions of this view other than an article in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*. This means it is not possible to test the fairness of Beck's representation.

Beck summarises criticisms of cosmopolitanism and advocacies of the national outlook as 'protectionism and nostalgia, postmodernism, indifference, cynicism, or at best irony' (2006: 161). However this leaves out a more sophisticated position, which recognises global and international forces but sees them as embedded in and inseparable from nation-states. This view is not of protectionism or isolationism (although there are significant instances of these in world politics), postmodernity, or a globalism which is beyond the national outlook. It involves a globalism or internationalism which is embedded in nation-states or, to put it the other way round, a nation-state outlook which recognises nation-states as integrated into international or global systems.

Beck criticises this internationalist variant of the national outlook for being too national. But the internationalist view is not dissimilar to his of global regimes embedded in national state compositions of them, alongside the continuing existence of national states

and societies (2006: 158-9). Beck's concept of the role of the nation and nation-state in the global era has commonalities with what he describes as the internationalist version of the national outlook. In effect he affirms the internationalist national outlook which he has said is redundant in a second age of modernity.

Beck's arguments come back to an acknowledgement of the role of the state and power in global configurations. He argues that streams and networks outlined by authors like Castells (1997) are not independent of national, transnational and political-economic structures. Social science should shift from such latter entities to networks (2006: 80) but national spaces and their institutional manifestations remain the centres of structuring power. Beck says that streams are processes which are promoted or inhibited by the agency or impotence of particular groups of actors and that the stream metaphor can mislead us into neglecting analysis of relations of power. He reintroduces a model of states and power in networks which conflicts with his model of global cosmopolitan politics that dismisses the national outlook.

In discussing political responses to globalisation Beck lists ten. Two are international or transnational, but with nation states as basic units. The other eight are not inherently transnational, and are as likely to be pursued by national governments (2000: ch 5). His discussion is coloured by the German social market experience, which adds to the national dimension to these responses to globalisation. This goes against a cosmopolitan or global perspective normatively. Beck's proposals are at a level where national responses are important. This is rightly so because national states are significant, and some of the most critical and powerful arguments Beck makes are at the level of national-political responses to global neoliberalism. But it belies the argument about the second age of modernity and normative proposals needing to be post-national, cosmopolitan and transnational.

A first response that Beck recommends is *international co-operation* between nation-states to limit global firms' ability to escape tax obligations and to pursue a regulatory framework, for example through bodies such as the EU, G7, OECD, IMF, or WTO. He says this does not involve a supranational mega-state or world state but a closing of ranks amongst national states (2000: 131) to stop TNCs playing countries off against one another. It renews political influence, and could modernise and revive social democracy via international cosmopolitan forms (see also, for instance, Held, 2004; Martell *et al* eds, 2001; Jacobs *et al* 2003). While called cosmopolitan democracy this is inter-national, based on nation-states collaborating rather than a global state which is supra- or above and beyond national states. The national state is outward looking and collaborationist on an international level and the focus is still on the nation-state and not a post-national age.

A second response to global neoliberalism is the *transnational state or inclusive sovereignty*. Here nation-states are still the essential units. Beck says this proposal is for interstate collective action. What is proposed is said to be not international, multilateral or multi-level, all of which take the nation-state as a point of reference, but interstate alliances in a new form of state. Sovereignty is developed beyond the national level, for instance in European wide initiatives. Exclusive sovereignty switches to inclusive

sovereignty. Here there is something which is post-national and supra-national. But it is composed of national-states and allows them to 'regain their capacity for action and their power to shape events … renew their sovereignty within the frame of world society … national players *win* political room to shape events … through transnational cooperation' (2000: 133-4).  So it goes beyond the international to the supra-national but is constituted by nation-states in which their power is revived.

The other eight responses to global neoliberalism that Beck outlines involve state policies to counteract the effects of globalisation. These could be pursued at national or transnational levels – workers' social ownership, investment in education and training for the knowledge society, consumer power, strengthened civil society activity, new forms of production and markets, and recognition of social exclusion. As well as being applicable to national as much as transnational states, they are policies which could be responses to globalisation or relevant if there was not globalisation. Some are aimed at specific conditions in one nation, Germany, reinforcing the significance of national differences in a globalized world.

Beck concludes his discussion of strategies by saying that economic development escapes the reach of national politics whereas resulting social problems can be tackled within the safety-net of the national state. He adds that a world state and world system of social security are not impending. But Beck has advocated policies on economic development for a particular national context which could be enacted by a national government (and have been in some cases). This undermines his case that economic development escapes the reach of national politics. And he says that social security is for national governments, so stating a place for the national government in what he has elsewhere argued is a post-national epoch.

Issues here are characteristic of other of Beck's arguments that I have discussed in this article. There is a tension between outlining what it is said can only be global and then saying the same things are national, or *vice-versa*. And there is the common sequence of stating arguments of a post-national nature and then inserting qualifications that undermine the global claim.

Conclusions

Beck has tried to avoid neoliberal and postmodern responses to globalisation and to see the importance of the global level. He has attempted to find social and humanitarian paths transnationally, rather than bowing to neoliberalism or retreating from politics. The importance of looking for ways down this path should not be underestimated.

But there are flaws in Beck's work in this area, and some are exposed by contradictions in his arguments. He separates out spheres of globalisation. Economic globalisation (globalism) is separated from globality (world society) and globalisation (the process) so that the latter two are not reduced to economic determinism. But the consequence is that an analysis of economic globalisation does not get carried through to prescriptions for global politics where, consequently, issues of economic interests, power and inequality

are left out. What remains is an optimistic picture of communalism in global politics. The national outlook and a role for the state is left out by Beck in a desire to establish a globalist outlook, with the consequence that state power, and interests and ideologies in state politics, are not seen as bases for global politics around which strategies need to be geared, as many of his concrete prescriptions suggest. Instead a benign co-operative view of cosmopolitan politics is outlined, so much so that the US under the Bush Presidency is seen as a force for democratic humanism rather than geopolitical interests.

Some flaws in global cosmopolitan politics are evident in qualifications and inconsistencies in arguments for it. Beck draws attention to conflict, inequality, power and the role of the state in global politics. But he does so as a qualification or clarification to a picture of global cosmopolitanism rather than as structuring principles which undermine global cosmopolitanism. Where cosmopolitanism and conflict are both seen Beck tends towards the former.

The basis of an analysis of global politics can be found in Beck's outline of state reactions to global neoliberalism. These contain strategies to counteract the power of capital and pursue the interests of labour, welfare and social goals. In concrete analysis of the localisation of global neoliberalism and how it may be counteracted his focus is on policies and levels other than global communalism, in a context of conflicting interests and diverging ideologies in which he takes some sides over others, the social democratic state and welfare over capital and neoliberalism. Here global cosmopolitan communalism does not seem the most promising basis on which the approaches he advocates could be pursued. Beck is at his strongest in analyses which recognise inequality, power and conflict, which cause problems for cosmopolitan globalism, and it is with the power of these analyses that Beck should be returned to. Continuation of an analysis along such lines at a global level might see the basis for global politics in movements such as the global justice movement or anti-neoliberal state politics in, for instance, Latin America. In such instances politics is international but on the basis of multilateral alliances in a politics of inequality and conflicting interests rather than in an overarching global communalism.

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