

Pragmatic ethics and the will to believe in cosmopolitanism

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Recent conflicts and crises in international relations have tested the ethical commitments of many cosmopolitans. However, this article argues that cosmopolitanism can be morally compelling and practically useful if it is conceived pragmatically as a set of ideals that guide interactions concerning cross-border problems. It argues that a will to believe in cosmopolitanism can be rationally justified by historical achievements and present tendencies in social conditions. Cosmopolitan beliefs are warranted, first, by demonstrating the empirical relevance of cosmopolitan ethics as a 'living option' in a new era of interaction and interdependence. Second, a pragmatic reorientation of cosmopolitan theory is conducted to widen the basis for identifying cosmopolitan action and permit a reconstruction of its ideals appropriate to today's pluralistic world. Finally, cosmopolitan ideals of equality, critical intelligence, and intercultural dialogue are developed as guides to addressing cross-border problems, drawing on the issue of climate change to illustrate how they become operative. A pragmatic faith in these ideals is thus justified by empirical hypotheses concerning the historical tendencies and latent potentialities of human experience, rather than metaphysical premises attached to a supernatural force or universal Reason.

Keywords: cosmopolitanism; pragmatism; faith; empirical ethics; will to believe

Introduction

International relations in the 21st century have so far been plagued by violent conflict and ongoing economic and environmental crises that have tested the faith of even the most committed cosmopolitans. The conduct of recent wars has threatened hard-won advances in international law and the unyielding pursuit of national interest continues to thwart universal solutions to global problems. In the past decade alone, liberal states have fought wars in Iraq and Afghanistan in the name of democratic peace. Human rights violations have been justified by Western leaders to prevent future acts of terrorism. Progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has been threatened by global financial crises and evaporating

promises to increase foreign aid as developed states prioritize their domestic economies. And perhaps most vividly, national governments still cannot agree on how to share the common burden of mitigating climate change. From this angle, cosmopolitanism might appear to be a misguided faith in a common humanity that is hopelessly disconnected from the contemporary realities of national interest and local identity politics (see Bull 1976; Gilpin 1986; Wight 1996). As Gottfried Herder (1968 [1774], 17) put it, cosmopolitans living in such a world can only be idle ghosts in love with an empty chimera. Today, these cosmopolitan dreams supposedly linger in well-meaning human rights and development organizations, and in the words of comfortable Western scholars flying from conference to conference with beautiful cosmopolitan ideals that have no hope of ever being realized. From this perspective, cosmopolitanism is simply a conceit of the privileged; a luxury reserved for frequent flyers and those in a position to insulate their utopian dreams from sober everyday realities of conflict, inequality, and exclusion (see Boehm 1932; Schlereth 1977). Indeed, contemporary cosmopolitanism supposedly assists in sustaining the privileges of Western hegemony (Rao 2010) and is therefore of limited use as an agenda for creating a more egalitarian world (Wallerstein 1996).

This article argues that despite some imperialistic ventures and other ill-advised turns over its 3000 year lifespan, cosmopolitanism can be morally compelling *and* practically useful in the contemporary world if conceived pragmatically as a set of ideals that guide action on cross-border problems. Specifically, this pragmatic form of cosmopolitanism involves commitments to ideals of equality, critical intelligence, and intercultural dialogue that provide ethical guidelines of *interaction* in a context where global institutions are weak or absent. This means pragmatic cosmopolitanism is concerned with encounters across moral and political thresholds rather than encompassing the world in a universal moral order or designing cosmopolitan political institutions (*contra* Held 1995). Contemporary cosmopolitanisms exist in an interdependent world of ethical plurality that contains many non-cosmopolitan ideologies and practices. Indeed, cosmopolitan ideas in both ancient and modern times have developed alongside, if not directly in response to, the imperatives of a divided world (Lu 2000, 244). In such a world, the immediate cosmopolitan task is to engage with strangers about shared problems in a world of difference.

In this light, I argue that a pragmatic faith in cosmopolitan ideals can be justified based on their empirical relevance as 'living options' or immanent possibilities for addressing cross-border problems. This faith rests in what the pragmatist philosopher William James calls a 'will to believe' that expresses confidence in a set of values as guides for human action (James 1960 [1896]). Indeed, faith is at the heart of any normative orientation that

does not accept the world as it is and seeks to improve social conditions. All ethical thought is characterized by *belief* in the validity of particular moral ideas for creating a better world. The central move in this article, however, is to ground cosmopolitanism in *empirically grounded beliefs* that are drawn from past cosmopolitan achievements and present tendencies in social conditions. It argues that belief in empirical hypotheses concerning past humanitarian advances and unrealized possibilities in contemporary interdependence is a rational motivation for applying cosmopolitanism to cross-border problems in uncertain situations characterized by limited knowledge and competing perspectives (e.g. action to address global climate change). Pragmatic faith is thus grounded in empirically derived beliefs about what to do in situations of uncertainty where knowledge is scarce and definitive evidence about the future success of proposed solutions is absent or contested. As such, it is important to recognize that this faith is not an unreflective adherence to a supernatural force or universal Reason. It is not a nostalgic longing for the certainties of religious and philosophical dogma that must be adhered to at all costs. Rather, pragmatic faith in cosmopolitanism is a rational conviction drawn from the empirical world that suggests cosmopolitan ideals are relevant to solving cross-border problems even though people have limited knowledge of the new boundary-crossing situations in which they must act.

In order to develop these arguments, I adopt an approach called ‘empirical ethics’. Empirical ethics avoids the traditional task of developing abstract and general theories through logical deduction (*contra* Rawls 1971). It instead uses the empirical qualities of a situation to develop contextual normative theories that can be used as tools of criticism and to propose hypotheses about improving social conditions (Bray 2011, 15–23). A contextual approach is more useful as a guide to action than the hypothetical scenarios and abstract thought experiments of the analytic approach because it consists of normative insights that are immanent in existing practices (Carens 2000). This method of ethical theorizing involves empirical, conceptual, and normative steps that seek to demonstrate the moral reasonableness and practical utility of ethical theories. In its application to international ethics, it follows in the footsteps of Molly Cochran’s (1999) method of pragmatic critique, and is part of the growing literature devoted to applying philosophical pragmatism to a range of issues in the discipline of International Relations (see Bauer and Brighi 2009).

In the first section, I analyse the empirical developments in global politics that increase the relevance of cosmopolitanism and make it an immanent normative path for tackling problems of interdependence. The main argument is that there has been a transnationalization of social and political practice in many parts of the world such that patterns of human interaction

and political power are shaped by multiple and intermingling modernities that open up realistic possibilities for cosmopolitan engagements. Belief in these empirical hypotheses forms the primary basis of a pragmatic faith in cosmopolitan ethics. The second section deals with the question of whether the existing vocabulary of cosmopolitanism is adequate in these circumstances of global politics. Here I present a pragmatic critique of cosmopolitan theory in order to permit a reconstruction of its ethical ideals appropriate for today's pluralistic world. This is developed through an analysis of three long-standing criticisms of cosmopolitanism: its Western ethnocentrism; emphasis on abstract individual Reason; and hostility to nationalism. Finally, I outline the core commitments of a pragmatic form of cosmopolitanism and complete my justification for the will to believe in it. Supported by the preceding empirical and conceptual claims (rather than by an abstract thought experiment), the intention is to demonstrate that equality, critical intelligence, and intercultural dialogue ought to frame interactions with others in solving cross-border problems. The method of empirical ethics ensures these ideals are attuned to the historical and social context that frames action, underpinning a belief in their validity where facts are not fully known and the consequences of action are uncertain. Furthermore, these ideals emerge from a particular Western context and their normative force therefore depends on how justifiable they are to differently situated others. This argument for pragmatic cosmopolitanism is premised on the conviction that the *ethics* that guide our interactions in addressing common problems will play a large part in determining whether the overriding character of global interdependence is coercive or liberating.

The social basis of cosmopolitan modernities

At the heart of cosmopolitanism is the normative idea – influentially expressed by Immanuel Kant – that sharing the world with others requires people to develop regimes of justice that extend to all human beings. Today, this idea extends beyond the Kantian concern with preventing violence and war to a range of cross-border problems, including entrenched global poverty, the spread of infectious diseases, nuclear proliferation, ecological degradation, and human rights abuses. Cosmopolitan principles of moral equality are used to frame these problems as injustices and articulate the remedial action required to change the global order (e.g. Pogge 2008). Political cosmopolitans also argue for post-national forms of governance at a time when collective problems have an increasingly cross-border dimension but the means for addressing them are state based, weak and incomplete (Held 2010, 143). From this angle, cosmopolitanism provides a

normative framework for addressing contemporary problems of justice and governance. But what is it about cosmopolitanism that makes this framework a relevant one in today's world? What are the 'social facts' that ground a will to believe in cosmopolitan ethics?

The argument advanced in this article is that cosmopolitanism is relevant when it provides a normatively reasonable and practically useful set of ideals that contribute to framing and ameliorating cross-border problems. In the tradition of philosophical pragmatism, ideals are seen as theoretical hypotheses that articulate the best elements of our previous experiences and possibilities for human interaction (Pappas 2008, 67). When ideals are useful as critical tools in ameliorating concrete problems (e.g. when cosmopolitan ideals are used in the creation of international humanitarian law that helps to limit acts of state repression), they become valuable tools in helping to guide conduct in future situations. As such, pragmatic ideals are historical products of experience that are always empirically grounded in some way. To be relevant, then, ideals must be suitable for existing empirical conditions in the sense that the action prompted by them must be consistent with immanent tendencies in contemporary social life. For example, proposing a global system of autarkic nation-states would not be a relevant (normatively reasonable or practically useful) ideal in reforming the global economy under current conditions of global economic interdependence. This is akin to saying that the requirement of 'relevance' limits normative choices to feasible transformations of the existing order (Cox 1998, 210).

In this understanding of ethics, the pragmatist tradition emphasizes the role of faith in human action and the requirement for ideals to be empirically relevant to justify our belief in them. In pragmatic terms, the 'will' required to motivate action in situations that are new, uncertain, or otherwise indeterminate due to limited knowledge springs from belief in ethical theories that have been useful in the past. In this sense, these theories are 'living options' that appeal to people as real possibilities that motivate their willingness to act. In these situations, William James 1960 [1896] argues that it can be rational for people to adopt beliefs without prior evidence that they are true. Hypothesis testing in scientific inquiry is an important example where precise evidence for a proposition only becomes available after it is believed. People can rationally believe in their ability to accomplish a new and difficult task because they acquire *confidence* derived from previous successes or an assessment of present probabilities. In the context of ethics, believing in an ideal consists in acting as if it were valid without decisive evidence that it will successfully resolve a moral problem. Indeed, as novelty and uncertainty are more or less present in all human interactions, Fred Dallmayr (2010, 67–84) argues that theological or secular faiths

and ‘inter-faith relations’ underpin all forms of human praxis. Under these conditions, faith is justified when ideals are derived from past experience where they have been morally justifiable and practically useful in similar situations (rather than from abstract logical reasoning or religious scripture). As John Dewey argues, ‘all endeavour for the better is moved by faith in *what is possible*, not by adherence to the actual’ (1934, 32; my emphasis). This practical faith substitutes for absolute certainty about the empirical context in which action is taken.

Pragmatic faith in cosmopolitanism thus rests in hypotheses about the existing tendencies and unrealized potentialities of social life. These are expressed in ideals that are drawn from the lessons of history and the empirical conditions of the present. From this perspective, the first step in the argument for pragmatic cosmopolitanism entails identifying the empirical realities that make it a ‘living option’ or imminent normative pathway for addressing cross-border problems. In this sense, immanence means that cosmopolitanism inheres within the boundaries of possible experience and draws its moral power from ‘social facts’ manifest in the empirically existing world. This section thus involves outlining the key historical and social facts that bear on the prospects for realizing cosmopolitan goals. In what follows, then, I develop empirical hypotheses about: (1) new conditions of human interaction; and (2) the generation and maintenance of political power. Together, these developments constitute the primary social facts that justify a pragmatic faith in cosmopolitanism.

A new era of human interaction

The first hypothesis is that, to varying degrees, the circumstances under which people interact with each other have been dramatically altered since the 1980s in ways that have transnationalized social and political practice. These changes have been captured in concepts like ‘globalization’ and ‘glocalization’, which suggest a mixing of local, national, and global relations stimulated by the invention of new communication and transportation technologies, increasing economic interdependence, and the development of global governance systems that incorporate but stretch across nation-states. Alongside these developments, new global problems associated with economic, nuclear, health, ecological, and technological risks have emerged that tend to bind together the life chances of people across countries in complex networks of interdependency (Held 2009, 542; Beck and Grande 2010, 417). Measuring these changes involves documenting increases in transnational flows of information, news and cultural goods, cross-border economic transactions, and the number and scope of agencies involved in various legal, political, and standard-setting activities

in transnational policy areas ranging from human rights to arms production (e.g. Held *et al.* 1999; Held and McGrew 2007; Hirst *et al.* 2009). Other sociological indicators of transnationalization include: the number and activity of transnational organizations and initiatives (like the Campaign to Ban Landmines); dual citizenship; the activity of diaspora communities; the operation of organized crime networks; proficiency in multiple languages; and mobility of people in terms of immigration, travel and foreign education (Beck 2006, 92–93).

From an interactionist perspective, these indicators suggest that more areas of social and political relations have a transnational quality that involves boundary-crossing. These qualitative shifts touch on the *micro*-level of everyday life (e.g. social networking, environmental conditions, and household consumption) and well as *macro*-level structures involving interdependent global markets and networks of international and supranational institutions (Beck 2006, 93). Consequently, in this new era of human interaction there is an increased number of people whose relations place them beyond their local or national settings without detaching them from their locality (Tarrow 2005, 42). The new opportunity structures of contemporary societies have increased the ability of people to connect and collaborate with others far beyond their immediate physical location. They have opened up *opportunities* to encounter a more diverse range of people, goods, ideas, and collective projects. At the same time, however, it must also be recognized that the development of transnational connections is often involuntary, sometimes coercive, and unevenly distributed depending on the country and social sphere in which people are located. When refugees seek to leave their country using transnational people smuggling networks, this is generally not an uncoerced choice but a response to political repression. And when citizens bear austerity measures required by foreign lenders, this is often not a product of their policy choice but a consequence of global financial imperatives imposed on their leaders. As many post-colonial societies can attest, interdependence is highly uneven and far from symmetrical (Keohane and Nye 2001). Indeed, it can enable stronger actors to exploit others for their own ends (Dewey 1927, 155).

The increased mobility of people, commodities and ideas is thus a central feature of this new era of human interaction in which the territorial borders of most states are now more porous. Boundaries of nationality have been blurred by cultural pluralization arising from migration, ethnic multiculturalism, cultural diversity of all kinds, and the growing demands for recognition of different life choices (Delanty 2009, 127). These changes are often thought of as a democratizing shift in social and political relations from the relatively closed territorial spaces of nation-states to open, networked relations that traverse the entire globe (Castells 1996; Urry 2003).

This uni-linear interpretation, however, obscures a much more ambivalent picture. Many communication-based networks on the Internet *are* relatively open, despite varying levels of state censorship and the increasing prominence of content paywalls. But many global and transnational networks, ranging from business groups to criminal organizations, are just as closed and hierarchical as territorial states, if not more so. New functional or informational networks, as ‘differentially organized systems of power’ (Delanty 2009, 63), often create new boundaries where participation depends on advanced education, representative credentials, access to technology, and the broader control of material and cultural resources. Furthermore, it is not clear that the global information and governance networks that have emerged in recent decades are undermining the power of all nation-states. Certainly, many states have lost some degree of political autonomy as a result of transnationalization, as the ongoing economic crisis in Europe demonstrates. But as Marxists have long pointed out, capitalist networks of production and exchange are underpinned by sovereign states, which today allow the social relations of surplus extraction to be extended outwards without territorial expansion (Rosenberg 2005, 23–24). Since the 1980s, neoliberal policies that have increased global capital mobility have been promoted and safeguarded by powerful Western states in their own interest. The state apparatus of the People’s Republic of China has been economically strengthened by liberalization and global trade. In addition to demonstrating how transnational networks coexist and overlap with territorial politics, what contemporary mobility does in fact suggest is the decreased significance of national-territorial boundaries as limits of social interaction. Indeed, a defining characteristic of this new era is ‘boundary fluidity’ where interdependence and mobility has dissolved, blurred, and *created* an array of social and political boundaries. This fluidity generates new possibilities and risks because the distinctions between many social groups are now more diffuse and uncertain.

In this context, cosmopolitan encounters are immanent possibilities that are generated by the interaction of modernizing societies. If modernity is underpinned by a basic impetus to self-transformation, the belief that human agency can transform the present in the image of an imagined future, then it is not merely a Western phenomenon and can be found today in different forms in almost all societies (Delanty 2009, 186–92). In this sense, the modern condition involves a belief in the transformation of human societies through the intervention of ‘free will’ directed towards a better life in the future. From this angle, contemporary social interaction is shaped by multiple and entangled modernities brought together by global forces (e.g. trade, migration, even war) that widen and diffuse systems of exchange and networks of communication. One of its most profound

features is the growing entanglement of Chinese modernization in societies all over the world through trade and investment, development aid, tourism, and foreign students. This condition of ‘intermingling boundaries and cultures’ offers increased and immediate opportunities for boundary-crossing encounters that lead to a transformation of reality (Beck 2006, 68). Today, much of the impetus for this boundary-crossing is generated by economic drivers and the recognition of problems created by global interdependencies, including climate change, infectious diseases, poverty, and terrorism.

However, cosmopolitan solutions do not necessarily emerge from these encounters; these interactions are sites of tension that can lead to the imperialism of the stronger or sectarian violence as anti-cosmopolitan forces (like xenophobic nationalists or religious fundamentalists) attempt to resist the changes underway in their societies. As Kwame Appiah (2006, 8) reminds us, knowledge of or contact with other cultures does not necessarily breed amity and cooperation. Indeed, conflict is an ever-present possibility as cosmopolitan and non-cosmopolitan forces come into greater contact in the physical and virtual spaces of this new era of human interaction. In this context, pragmatic beliefs in cosmopolitanism rest in empirical evidence of transnationalization and the tendencies in modernizing societies that open up possibilities for cosmopolitan solutions to social problems.

Interdependence and political power

The second hypothesis relates to the generation and maintenance of *political* power in this shifting context of human association. Specifically, with increasing interdependence and transnationalization, power is diffused to a wider variety of actors and must be maintained *politically* by recognition of its legitimacy in the eyes of people *outside* the immediate context in which it is exercised. This claim rests on a distinction between ‘social power’, which involves the ability to marshal resources to prevent individuals or groups from pursuing their interests (Dahl 1957; Weber 1978 [1910–14]); and ‘political power’, which involves collective decisions and/or control over the political agenda legitimized by decisive publics (Lukes 2005, 28–29). Ideally, the democratic constitutional state institutionalizes this distinction through a separation of state and society in which democratic procedures ensure that unequal resource-based power in civil society is not converted into collective decisions until it has been evaluated by citizens and parliamentarians in the public sphere (Habermas 1996).

However, as social interaction widens and political boundaries become more porous, legitimate power increasingly emerges within the interdependent relations of a variety of actors rather than being concentrated in a normative relationship between a state and its citizenry. In this context,

political actors must justify their power not only to the domestic audience, but also to other organizations, peoples and individuals. As Richard Beardsworth (2008, 84) argues, without this extension of a power-wielder's legitimacy beyond the domestic audience, 'they lose their power; or rather, their political power is returned to violence and domination, which, in an interdependent world, can only last briefly'. That is, as interaction spreads across boundaries, the actions of power-wielders increasingly reverberate beyond their domestic settings, thereby broadening the audience making consequential judgements about whether power is legitimately exercised or involves unjustified force or violence. Since legitimacy involves matters of normative principle, questions of justice therefore become ever more immanent to questions of power with increasing interdependence (Beardsworth 2008, 85). That is, as interdependence and transnationalization increases, it is more difficult to maintain political power through appeals to a purely local or national sphere of justice. The recent Arab Spring uprisings demonstrate the importance of this external validation of power. Whether the Syrian state is exercising legitimate power or unjustified violence, for example, depends on contested claims of supporters and resisters of the Assad regime, but also on consequential judgements of key states like the United States and China, the European Union, UN Security Council (UNSC), the Arab League and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs).

This shift in power relations since the 1980s can be measured by observing the increased significance of non-state actors and the scope of their political power. An instructive list of indicators includes: structural adjustment policies of global economic organizations; the scope and activity of UN bodies in providing public goods like development resources and collective security; the number and activity of NGOs in service delivery and advocacy; the number and activity of corporations in shaping political agendas and influencing the policies of governments and global economic organizations; and the activity of all these actors in authoritative governance institutions that generate regulative laws, norms or standards. There are also indicators that point to significant 'external' influences on state-society relations, including: practical and normative commitments to humanitarian intervention and the 'responsibility to protect'; post-Cold War Chapter VII interventions and other resolutions of the UNSC; military and non-military 'democracy promotion'; the activity of the ICC; peace-keeping and peace-building operations; the scale and content of international loan and grant conditionality; the number and scope of human rights conventions; and the use of human rights norms in foreign policy and transnational advocacy. These international practices are embedded in a political context in which converting material force into legitimate power hinges on the acceptance of normative justifications by a

range of actors that extends beyond the states directly involved. The IMF's power to gain consent for neoliberal conditionality, for example, is significantly restricted when it is perceived by developing countries and the global justice movement as a vehicle for Western domination that privileges the rights of creditors and violates principles of sovereignty and democratic self-determination. These indicators reveal that interdependence has important constitutive effects on political power in today's world. It is increasingly difficult for states to insulate the exercise of power from the political action and normative claims of outsiders. In this context, interdependence means that all states and societies are to a varying degree *vulnerable* to external changes in generating their own power resources (Keohane and Nye 2001, 11–17).

The imperative for political actors to explicitly calibrate politics and morality under conditions of interdependence opens up possibilities for the cosmopolitan transformation of global politics. In this context, cosmopolitan norms like human rights become salient to perceptions of legitimacy that create and maintain political power across borders. This salience is increased to the extent that globalization induces new moral relationships that transcend national boundaries. These moral connections are driven by the recognition of 'global' problems like climate change, infectious diseases, financial regulation, extreme poverty, and nuclear proliferation. They are evident in justifications and practices of global cooperation and in the 'duties beyond borders' that some states have incorporated into their foreign policies (like commitments to human security in the foreign policies of Japan, Canada, and the European Union). Importantly, this broadening of moral concern leads to the development of publics that extend beyond national spheres of communication and re-cast individuals as fellow rights-bearers, for example, rather than foreigners beyond moral obligation.

These are the developments that have reshaped social interactions on a global scale and underpin a pragmatic faith in cosmopolitanism. States, NGOs, corporations, indigenous groups, scientists, criminals, and even terrorists face new conditions in which they must enlarge their frame of reference beyond territorial borders and actively compare and accommodate a range of diverse perspectives (Beck and Grande 2010, 419). This reflexivity is an inherent feature of interacting modernities that leads to diverse forms of transnational activity. To the extent that these actors are actively involved in promoting or opposing interdependence and transnationalization, they are engaged in the politicization of boundaries that shape patterns of interaction. To argue for cosmopolitanism in this context involves moral beliefs derived from the empirical world that frame the social tendencies and latent possibilities in this new era of interaction. They draw on the path already partially cleared by human rights and

environmental regimes, organizations like the UN and ICC, and the transnational advocacy networks campaigning for global justice in various issue-areas. These developments establish the moral power of cosmopolitanism as an immanent framework of possibilities, allowing people to build on the prominent but tenuous foothold it has gained in the normative structure of global politics.

A pragmatic reorientation of cosmopolitan theory

So far I have treated cosmopolitanism as a general ethics that is a living option in the transnationalization of social and political practice. But as indicated above, a pragmatic faith in cosmopolitanism can only be justified if its normative content suggests action consistent with contemporary social life. The second step in my argument for pragmatic cosmopolitanism is therefore to evaluate whether today's conceptual and normative vocabularies of cosmopolitanism are adequate for addressing these new circumstances. In this section, I provide a critique of cosmopolitan theory centred on its Western ethnocentrism, commitment to universal Reason, and hostility to nationalism that have limited its normative purchase and practical utility in the contemporary world. I argue that a pragmatic reorientation of cosmopolitanism overcomes these problems and permits an empirically grounded and politically engaged set of cosmopolitan ideals that provide for wider moral inclusion and prospects for social reconstruction (Cochran 1999, xix). This pragmatic critique suggests that cosmopolitan principles of moral inclusion are not 'out there' waiting to be discovered and agreed upon before we act, but are to be created in practical cross-border engagements that grow the moral imagination through experimentation, dialogue, and learning (Cochran 1999, 204–11). The argument builds on two existing trends in cosmopolitan thought: (1) the development of cross-border ethics of interaction in the absence of a universal conception of justice (e.g. Shapcott 2008; Baker 2013); and (2) the various projects to bring the state back into cosmopolitan theory (e.g. Caney 2008; Ypi 2008; Brown 2011). This reorientation justifies a will to believe in cosmopolitanism by providing an empirically relevant framework for identifying and supporting cosmopolitan action in circumstances where a diverse range of states, nations, and cultures continue to frame global politics.

Western ethnocentrism

Perhaps the most common criticism of cosmopolitanism is that, despite claims to universality, it remains wedded to principles developed from Stoic philosophy and the European Enlightenment. It is often noted with some

irony that cosmopolitanism is actually quite parochial because it is derived from moral experiences that are distinctly Western. This means that cosmopolitanism sits uneasily at best or lacks validity at worst in non-Western societies, ruling out any possibility for global principles of justice (Walzer 1983). From this perspective, any attempt to act on cosmopolitan principles in non-Western contexts would be a destructive form of ethnocentrism and imperialism (Caney 2000, 528). Cosmopolitanism thus begets a politics of coercion that ends with a nightmarish quest for hegemony (Lu 2000, 251; see also Rao 2010, 35–64).

However, cosmopolitanism does not necessarily imply a homogenous moral order or the eradication of difference. For Beck and Grande (2010, 413), contemporary cosmopolitanism does not mean that the world ought to converge on a homogenous and universal model of Western modernity. Nor is cosmopolitanism an exercise in seeking a general and universal understanding on a wide spectrum of specific ethical issues like abortion, animal rights, or euthanasia (Held 2010, 76). Rather, contemporary cosmopolitanism is aimed at the much more limited but enormously difficult task of creating common frameworks for dialogue, problem-solving and dispute resolution that reflect equal moral concern and respect for ‘legitimate difference’ (Appiah 2006, xv). This task of collective agency is essential in situations of cross-border interaction where people will conflict over a range of moral–political questions. Indeed, cosmopolitanism loses moral credibility and practical relevance if it chooses to be blind to difference or eradicate it through appeals to a Western moral order to which all of humanity must subscribe. In this context, respect for human diversity means that cosmopolitans cannot expect everyone to adopt Western norms on every substantive issue. Those who wish to freely and exclusively associate with people in their own immediate community (like the Amish in the United States) should not be forced to adopt an external moral code. However, what cosmopolitanism does require is that when people happen to cross their communal boundaries they interact with others on the basis of moral equality and respect for difference. Crossing territorial, moral, political, and cultural thresholds is an inherent feature of sharing the world with others in a context of interlinked modernities; global problems (climate change or financial crisis) do not respect political boundaries and isolation from such problems can only be bought by shunning these modernities and ignoring their global effects.

In this sense, equal moral concern and respect for cultural diversity are twin cosmopolitan commitments that shed light on the *challenges* faced by interacting societies. But these two principles often clash. For example, liberal cosmopolitans are often compelled to intervene in other societies to prevent human rights abuses, but this intervention is complicated in

practice when the protected groups turn out to be decidedly illiberal. Such cases highlight that cosmopolitan principles do not automatically provide definitive answers to ethical problems. In fact, these principles often collide in complex moral situations that frustrate the philosophical desire for neat *a priori* solutions. Indeed, cosmopolitanism in action often entails an element of *tragedy* in the Hegelian sense of collision between two goods. When someone is motivated to act on cosmopolitan principles, what appears as order and harmony in the abstract ethical world becomes, through the performing of an act, a transition into opposites in which universal will confronts the particular reality and each proves to be the negation rather than the confirmation of the other (Hegel 1977 [1807], 279). From this angle, moving cosmopolitan principles into action can entail a tragic self-division; a collision between good and good that appears in practice as a conflict in the ‘spirit’ of cosmopolitanism. In highlighting the erosion of the right to asylum in France, for example, Jacques Derrida (2001, 9) identifies a contradictory imperative in European cosmopolitanism because it must offer unconditional hospitality to newcomers, but also limit and police the rights of residence to safeguard the existing political order.

Consequently, cosmopolitanism should not be measured by consensus on abstract (Western) principles, but by the concrete action generated by a variety of practical commitments. In this regard, shared commitments to practical *goals* can generate wide coalitions for cosmopolitan action on global problems. For example, different cultural and religious traditions might come to a cosmopolitan position on eradicating global poverty as a result of overlapping ethical commitments (Caney 2000, 539ff). Specifically, secular, Christian, Islamic, Buddhist, and Jewish perspectives can agree on the MDGs that divert resources to the impoverished and promote reform of the global economy even though they might have different reasons for doing so. Secular liberals use justifications based on human rights or the unfreedom of the poor; Christians might emphasize charity or love of thy neighbour; Muslims might draw on notions of *sadaqah* (duty of charity to the needy) or *zakat* (compulsory taxation to alleviate poverty); and Buddhists can invoke universal compassion and the impediments of poverty in reaching nirvana (Caney 2000, 539–40). In Jewish theology, the word *tzedakah* entails both charity and taxation to help the poor (Walzer 2011, 70–73). The point is that these traditions can agree about *what* to do even when they do not agree on *why* (see Appiah 2006, 67–85). For all their differences, religious actors use theology to justify helping the global poor (believers and non-believers alike), producing beneficial consequences that chime with secular cosmopolitanism.

This suggests that it is not necessary to have a rationally derived philosophy to act in ways that promote cosmopolitan goals. This holds for

states as much as religious organizations. A state's support for cosmopolitan initiatives like human security policies, human rights conventions, or the MDGs is almost always entwined with self-interest. States sometimes even sign human rights documents for completely strategic reasons. For example, the signing of the Helsinki Accords by the Soviet Union was intended to ease Cold War tensions and secure territorial gains in East Europe, but the human rights provisions were later used as a manifesto for the dissident movement (Gaddis 2005). Recognizing these practical dimensions shifts the measure of cosmopolitanism from the *origin* and convergence of value-systems to the *validity* and overlap of cosmopolitan practices. To be sure, agreements among governments, NGOs, and religious communities that share particular cosmopolitan objectives but otherwise have different values are likely to produce unstable and fluctuating coalitions of interest. But it is in these coalitions that new spheres of transnational action are opened up in which new interdependencies force actors to broaden their horizons and struggle with others to shape the symbolic parameters of contemporary social life (Beck and Grande 2010, 435). In these struggles, cosmopolitan encounters involve 'the will to transcend ethnocentrism' in cooperation with strangers on shared problems (Cochran 1999, 210). Pragmatic faith in cosmopolitanism thus rests in the potential for cosmopolitan transformation in practical coalitions promoting shared humanitarian goals, rather than in a utopian hope for universal consensus on cosmopolitan principles.

Universal reason

Cosmopolitanism in the Stoic tradition tends to be premised on the idea that reason is the defining feature of human beings. It is this shared capacity for reason that allows humans to transcend their parochial identities and enter a universal human community. This tradition is carried forward by cosmopolitans like Martha Nussbaum (1996, 4) who argues that universal duties derived from the reason inherent in every human being should command 'our first allegiance and respect'. Despite their claims to inclusion, however, when cosmopolitan approaches define the essence of humanity in this way they tend to become bases for political *exclusion*: world citizenship depends on demonstrating or committing to a particular form of Western rationality involving abstract universal duties, impartiality, and rule-governed justice.

Furthermore, this understanding of Reason is usually ascribed to individuals as part of the *pre-social* personality of all humans (Beitz 1979, 1983). These claims have led communitarians and others to criticize cosmopolitans for their allegiance to a universal community of human beings that are born

with an original bundle of rights and rational capacities in abstraction from their local associations. To put this kind of individualism at the core of cosmopolitanism is problematic because it overlooks the fact that social attachments start at home and then grow outward. As Benjamin Barber (1996, 34) writes, '[t]o bypass them in favour of an immediate cosmopolitanism is to risk ending up nowhere – feeling at home neither at home nor in the world'. It is not surprising, then, that being a citizen of the world in this sense is often a lonely business (Nussbaum 1996, 15). In this light, Martha Nussbaum (2008, 80) now argues that Stoic cosmopolitanism and its denial of particular attachments 'leaves life empty of meaning for most of us'.

A pragmatist response to this abstract universalism highlights the historical and cultural contingency of its understanding of 'Reason' and explores the broader conduct that can underpin cosmopolitan engagements. This involves a shift of emphasis from universal moral rules to diverse inclinations that compel people to construct and fulfil obligations to distant strangers (Meyer 2000; Dobson 2006). In this regard, various post-modern, feminist and critical approaches have shed light on the affective component of cosmopolitanism and the emotional responses to global issues that drive an expanding moral consciousness, particularly the role of empathy, compassion, and solidarity that lie at the heart of humanitarian concerns (Dallmayr 2003). This cosmopolitanism is 'post-metaphysical' in the sense that it centres on channelling diverse inclinations into moral *praxis* on the basis of, for example, the pragmatics of communication oriented towards mutual understanding (Habermas 1994); an *ethos* of freedom that involves caring for others (Foucault 1986); or an openness to and engagement with the perspective of the Other (Delanty 2009).

Pragmatic forms of cosmopolitan theory must also begin with 'situated selves' or 'social individuals' in particular communities and ask how wider cosmopolitan loyalties might be generated (Eckersley 2007, 25; see also Cohen 1995; Robbins 1998; Erskine 2000). Cosmopolitanism can develop in particular communities rather than requiring people to completely transcend them. Indeed, in an empirical study of cosmopolitan attitudes in the United Kingdom, Szerszynski and Urry (2002, 474) identified the emphasis on abstract notions of universal community, duty, and belonging as one *problem* holding back more compassionate attitudes to non-nationals (rather than the spatial distance between people). Cosmopolitan sentiments seemed to require a *particular* focus, with people describing their ethics in terms of specific iconic figures (like Mandela or Gandhi) or organizations (Red Cross), and preferring to fill a shoebox with gifts for a particular child rather than donate to a charitable cause where there is an anonymous generalized beneficiary (Szerszynski and Urry 2002, 474–75). In this vein, INGOs like Amnesty International use personal testimonies

and case studies to generate a cosmopolitan consciousness grounded in particular instances of human rights abuse. This suggests that cosmopolitan action is often generated by a shared interest in particular problems that involve people with diverse motivations developed within their own communities. From this angle, the traditional emphasis on Reason and abstract duties to humanity unduly narrows the basis for identifying cosmopolitan action. Any faith in this traditional form of cosmopolitanism can only rest in a forlorn metaphysical belief in universal Reason.

Hostility to nationalism

Finally, many cosmopolitans have laid the blame for world's injustices at the door of nationalist chauvinism. Nationalism is thought to entail an exclusionary logic that justifies (or at least condones) immoral conduct towards non-nationals and inhibits the development of wider loyalties to humanity. As such, any weakening of nationalism is something to be celebrated because it removes the constraints on cross-border solidarities. This view constructs a zero-sum situation in which cosmopolitan justice can only be advanced to the extent that national loyalties decline. The temptation is therefore to eradicate or override nationalist sentiments, which only breeds frustration when cosmopolitans are faced with the continuing prominence of national interest in global politics.

Pragmatic forms of cosmopolitanism reject this antipathy between nationalism and cosmopolitanism. Indeed, recent scholarship has sought to demonstrate that they are not so different (Calhoun 2008); have been 'interwoven in ways that are both banal and unexpected' (Smith 2009, 63); and that plural loyalties must lie at the heart of any cosmopolitan orientation (Rorty 1998; Cheah 2006). People are capable of developing non-exclusive attachments to different communities – including their nation – in ways consistent with a cosmopolitan outlook. Not all forms of nationalism are chauvinistic or expressions of particularist evil (Cohen 1995, 227; Wallerstein 1996). Nationalist movements have certainly been harnessed to promote cultural homogenization, political exclusion, ethnic cleansing, and violence towards foreigners. But many forms of nationalism have also represented values of justice where human rights or anti-colonialism are central to their self-identity. Indeed, the Enlightenment idea of a human republic based on freedom appeared as a form of humanitarian nationalism in the French Revolution in contrast to an unchecked, inward-looking nationalism (Schlereth 1977, 109). As Mitchell Cohen (1995, 228) points out, it is therefore historically spurious and politically hazardous to paint all nationalist movements and sentiments with one brush. The problem is not nationalism *per se* but *absolute* loyalty to the nation and the disavowal or

eradication of all other allegiances in the search for singular answers to social problems (something cosmopolitanism has also been accused of). As such, a pragmatic reorientation of cosmopolitanism recognizes the legitimacy of national attachments but only in the context of plural loyalties that allow people to stand in many other circles when different situations demand it. It is possible to be nationalist, for example, when seeking to protect one's language from the homogenizing influence of global English; but also to be cosmopolitan when calling for economic redistribution to alleviate poverty in foreign countries.

Indeed, a pragmatic reorientation of cosmopolitanism sees potential for cosmopolitan action to be hard-wired into national identity. In this vein, Robyn Eckersley (2007) argues that the most promising basis for advancing cosmopolitan goals is through the development of cosmopolitan national identities that are respectful of cultural difference and pursue international justice (see also Nielson 1999; Martell 2011, 625). While national communities presuppose some kind of differentiation from others, it does not follow that the community's relationship to others must necessarily be one of antagonism, hostility, ignorance or neglect (Eckersley 2007, 683). Cosmopolitan nations would seek to shape their country's interactions with the rest of the world through foreign policies (concerning trade, aid, debt relief, and human rights advocacy) focussed on responsibility to non-nationals and alleviating *systemic* injustices. Crucially, this requires a nation-building effort that is 'actively produced by cosmopolitan social agents within the nation to the point where a commitment to cosmopolitan justice is embedded in national institutions' (Eckersley 2007, 689). For Martha Nussbaum (2008), this 'purified patriotism' could be cultivated through education and example to produce a self-sacrificing nation committed to foreign aid and global justice. Crucially, then, the cosmopolitanization of nationalism requires strong leadership by government representatives, political parties, media, NGOs, unions, academics, and celebrities in globalizing and relativizing their nations. This leadership is required to expand national horizons by diagnosing injustices, prescribing action, and mobilizing constituencies for change in order to transform politics (see Bray 2011, 178–82).

In sum, a pragmatist view challenges the notion that people must abandon attachments to particular communities in order for cosmopolitan sentiments to grow and flourish. As Jeremy Waldron (2000, 231) writes, it is 'wrong to imply that immersion in the particular culture of society in which one has been brought up is incompatible with what Kant would call a cosmopolitan attitude to sharing the world with others'. Indeed, Immanuel Kant was the quintessential local citizen in never having travelled outside Königsberg (Delanty 2009, 37). Furthermore, despite emphasizing

humanity's 'deep core' of reason, Kant was concerned with minimal pragmatic conditions of hospitality that could underpin further engagements to negotiate cosmopolitan justice. Pragmatic forms of cosmopolitanism are thus confident that plural loyalties will be developed as citizens become enmeshed in transnational interactions (often without leaving their homes) and develop the capacity to view their society from another perspective. The conflict and harmonization of these loyalties lies at the heart of contemporary social life and is a primary challenge for all cosmopolitans.

Taken together, this pragmatic reorientation of cosmopolitanism opens up possibilities for an empirically grounded cosmopolitanism that allows observers and practitioners to identify and support a wider array of cosmopolitan action. Shifting the vocabulary of cosmopolitanism in this way brings into view a range of motivations and practical considerations that expands the measure of cosmopolitanism from consensus on abstract principles to a range of cosmopolitan action to address the problems of interacting societies. So far, then, I have justified a faith in cosmopolitanism by demonstrating its empirical relevance and undertaking a pragmatic reorientation of its conceptual vocabulary. All that remains, then, is to provide an outline of the specific ideals of pragmatic cosmopolitanism.

Pragmatic cosmopolitanism and moral faith

A pragmatic form of cosmopolitanism is based on ethical guidelines that stipulate how people ought to engage with non-nationals in situations of shared problem-solving. This means that pragmatic cosmopolitanism is primarily grounded in an ethics of relational conduct rather than a theory of just institutions concerned with developing universal rules. The logic for prioritizing this 'interactional cosmopolitanism' over 'institutional cosmopolitanism' lies in the claim that a broad ethics is required to underpin a range of problem-solving interactions in global politics beyond creating or reforming institutions. Interactional ethics assigns direct responsibilities to persons for their conduct towards others and can be compatible with variants of institutional cosmopolitanism that stipulate ground rules regulating human interactions in specific contexts (Pogge 1992, 50). Moreover, interactional cosmopolitanisms can be used to develop foundational principles of justice that apply to the creation and reform of institutional schemes. However, the interactional ethics developed here is focused on the broad dynamics of cross-border relations, while leaving open questions about how it might be supplemented by a form of institutional cosmopolitanism.

In what follows, I outline the ideals of pragmatic cosmopolitanism that can be used to guide contemporary practices of problem-solving across

borders and complete my justification for a will to believe in these ideals in cross-boundary situations of plural interaction. In so doing, I briefly draw on the problem of climate change to illustrate how these ideals become operative. Climate change is an important case study for cosmopolitanism because it is both a basis for cosmopolitan consciousness and a universal problem that requires global political cooperation (Martell 2011, 624). In the context of anthropogenic global warming, our starting point for thinking about cosmopolitanism must not only recognize that we exist ‘unavoidably side by side’ (Kant), but also that we live ‘unavoidably one after another’.

My pragmatic ethics of cosmopolitanism has three key ideals:

Equality

Problem-solving engagements must first recognize the basic moral equality of all human beings in formulating the right ends for their communities. In practice, this means people affected by a problem cannot be excluded from participation or representation on the basis of an inferior status in a moral hierarchy or the superior moral knowledge of a single person or group. Despite the differences in ability, strength, position, or wealth, each person has an irreplaceable individuality that requires equal consideration with all others (Dewey 1998a [1919], 77–78). Conceived in this way, equality does not imply a deadening formal sameness. On the contrary, the distinctive individuality of all human beings provides the novelty and knowledge required to creatively and effectively solve social problems. In pragmatic terms, inclusion and equality are epistemically valuable because they improve the capacity to identify emerging problems; ensure that different and uneven experiences of a problem are given due weight; produce a broader and more informed range of diagnoses and prescriptions; and provide channels for policy consequences to be more accurately anticipated and reported back to decision makers (Bray 2011, 151; Page 2011, 53–55).

This ideal of equality suggests some institutional and emission entitlements proposals for tackling anthropogenic climate change. First, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) institutionalizes a formal equality of states that must remain the procedural and epistemic bedrock of the regime to ensure its effectiveness and input legitimacy (despite the slow progress that often results). Widespread participation and compliance is essential for the success of national and international responses to climate change and this is unlikely if large numbers of people feel excluded from the policymaking process (Page 2011, 53–54). That is, drawing on my reflections on power above, equality is a pragmatically valuable ideal for a climate change treaty because its universal legitimacy in this context increases the political power of the

treaty to secure widespread participation and compliance. As such, any proposal to create ‘mini-lateral’ frameworks that bring together the major emitters and most vulnerable countries (e.g. Naim 2009; Eckersley 2012) must remain inside the UNFCCC system and be directed at overcoming deadlocks in negotiations. This contrasts with the proposals of David Victor (2011) who argues for a ‘carbon club’ of great powers running parallel to the global regime.

Second, this ideal suggests that a framework of equity ought to guide the distribution of emission entitlements. There are many competing visions of equity in the climate justice debate, but the common approaches involve postulating that all countries should converge on an equal per capita emission entitlements (Singer 2002, 14–50), or that everyone has a human right to equal emissions (see Hayward 2007). However, a more fine-grained analysis is needed because despite their intuitive appeal these approaches are not necessarily just. Henry Shue (1993), for example, points out that the *sources* of emissions have moral weight: it is not equitable to ask poor people to reduce emissions that produce basic necessities so that rich people can retain luxuries. Simon Caney (2005, 770) argues that we have good reasons to prioritize the interests of the poor so ‘the least advantaged have a right to emit higher GHG emissions than do the most advantaged of the world’. Different circumstances concerning the harms and burdens of climate change are basic moral considerations that can justify deviations from equal emission entitlements. This ‘equitable differentiation’ thus requires people to look *inside* states to judge the fairness of the present distribution of greenhouse gas emissions and the targets adopted by respective governments.

Critical intelligence

Cosmopolitan problem-solving must also harness a shared capacity for critical intelligence. This is not an appeal to a pre-social and universal Reason, but instead refers to the way in which people are capable of intelligent social action when faced with new, unexpected or uncertain situations. In pragmatist philosophy, intelligence is a method of reaching practical judgements about problematic situations in which connections are found between old habits, institutions, beliefs, and new conditions (Pappas 2008, 166). These situations disrupt ordinary habits of conduct and require intelligent reflection on how to act under new conditions. At its core, this involves *assessing* the problematic features of the situation, *imagining* alternative means to solve it, and *anticipating* the consequences of employing these means so that practical judgements are made about what course of action is desirable (Dewey 1998b [1915]; MacGilvray 2000). Pragmatists argue that in a rapidly changing world, societies must develop

the active habits of critical intelligence to recognize and shape new conditions. John Dewey contrasts this intelligence with the practice of guiding social life by authority, custom, coercive force, imitation, caprice or drift (Pappas 2008, 166). From this angle, intelligence is a method of *action*; not an attribute of thinking in accordance with abstract Reason. Indeed, critical intelligence has an important affective dimension in the sense that emotions associated with injustice, compassion, and empathy shape judgements about the nature of social problems and motivate actors to realize imagined solutions. As such, collective deliberation about social problems subjects rational arguments *and* emotional appeals to public scrutiny as the basis for forging new cooperative solutions.

This emphasis on critical intelligence highlights the ongoing importance of scientific knowledge in responses to climate change at all levels. Decades of scientific inquiry concerning anthropogenic global warming have been pivotal in identifying and predicting the problematic consequences of burning fossil fuels. The authoritative basis of this knowledge is a set of scientific norms of hypothesis testing, empirical observation, evidence-based research, scepticism, and peer review. In modern societies, this expertise is used to inform publics of causes and consequences of actions in determining the right ends for their societies. This information is then publicly evaluated where it is subject to a host of political and economic forces that shape practical judgements about what courses of action are possible and desirable. In this way, scientific knowledge can challenge the status quo and break old habits of conflict and cooperation (see Hopf 2010). In this context, the ideal of critical intelligence provides a method for judging interactions, arguments, habits, and emotional appeals in terms of their verifiable contributions to solving a public problem. Specifically, it implies that the global framework of climate policy should be guided by the methods of scientific truth-seeking in order to generate empirically accurate diagnoses and prescriptions. It means that policy should be based on the established weight of scientific evidence and local observations of impacts rather than unsubstantiated contrarian beliefs or abstract ideological commitments of all persuasions. Particular actors have, of course, sought to deny or shape climate policy by casting doubt on the science (Oreskes and Conway 2010), or appealing to self-interest as mitigation imposes uneven economic costs. This leads to deadlocks and compromises at all levels that can be judged against the ideal of critical intelligence in improving climate change policy-making.

Intercultural dialogue

Intelligently dealing with cross-border problems thus requires an emphasis on inclusive dialogue rather than formal authority or coercive force.

According to Kant, participation in a cosmopolitan community involves entering a world of open and uncoerced dialogue (Linklater 1998, 2005). Cosmopolitan right in this sense is the capacity to present oneself and be heard within and across national political communities (Held 2010, 42). Taking this broad view, Habermasian deliberation is only one contingent ideal of dialogic contestation directed at achieving a rational consensus. In intercultural situations, aiming for this ideal unduly narrows the terms of communication by excluding the emotional tone in all dialogue, different types and modes of speech (e.g. greeting, narrative, simile, and metaphor) and the non-verbal affective, symbolic, and stylistic aspects of communication that can play an important role in problem-solving and are significant features of non-Western discourse (Young 2000, 65). As such, the problem-solving logic of intercultural dialogue ought to be aimed at achieving practical cooperation from the different cultural perspectives that people bring to the table, rather than to construct an abstract consensus that is conditional on leaving these perspectives at the door. From this angle, normative convergence on concrete problems can be developed *through* different normative systems – religious doctrines, local customs, claims of indigenous peoplehood, Western notions of rights – rather than by ignoring or eradicating them (Delanty 2009, 155–56). Moreover, in finding solutions to common problems, people taking different positions are forced to address each other in a process of cultural translation (Delanty 2009, 193–98). In the cosmopolitan ideal, this is a transformative process in which new horizons are created that relativize standpoints and promote communicative exchanges in which conflict resolution and overlapping agreements become possible (but are never guaranteed).

This ideal of intercultural dialogue highlights the insufficiency of a purely top-down or scientific approach to addressing climate change that relies on state authority, scientific arguments, and international treaties. Communities around the globe have vastly different interpretations of the problem of climate change based on their particular experiences and values. Scientific knowledge can accurately define the technical problem in terms of global aggregate emissions, but what this actually means in terms of social, cultural, and environmental impacts varies dramatically across different communities. Intercultural dialogue is thus required to reach agreement between localities, governments and non-state actors about the nature of these impacts and the right policies to ensure that mitigation and adaptation is appropriate and effective. For example, in low-lying island countries the problem of climate change is a matter of sheer survival as a result of sea level rise and changing weather patterns that threaten freshwater resources and food security (IPCC 2007, 687–712; Nichols and Cazenave 2010). The emotive appeals of countries like the Maldives – including its government's

decision to hold an underwater cabinet meeting in 2009 – are important moral contributions to the climate change dialogue that help to relativize the positions of richer societies that focus on threats to their economic growth and global competitiveness. Furthermore, intercultural dialogue is pragmatically valuable because it is required to harness local knowledge of conditions to develop effective environmental strategies, distribute lessons to other communities, and determine appropriate resource allocation. In small islands like the Maldives, adaptation burdens are high because options are limited and costly (IPCC 2007, 705). Many of these places are developing countries that must consider reallocating resources from poverty alleviation or disease prevention to climate adaptation (see Caney 2005, 752). For some indigenous communities, connection to land inhibits migration or ‘population consolidation’ that involves abandoning islands. Negotiating these difficulties requires agreements between local communities, states, NGOs, and international organizations concerning the fair distribution of burdens, appropriate environmental management, and transfers of financial and human resources. In this sense, intercultural dialogues are crucial to climate change action at all levels.

These ethical claims are offered as contingent foundations for guiding problem-solving encounters across borders. They emerge from a particularly Western context and so their normative force depends on how justifiable they are to differently situated others. As such, these ideals cannot entirely avoid the biases associated with Western forms of cosmopolitanism, but they do constitute an empirically grounded and politically engaged basis for cosmopolitan ethics that overcomes some of parochial abstractions of traditional approaches.

All forms of cosmopolitanism require faith in their ability to successfully guide action in uncertain circumstances. This will to believe in the above ideals, however, is drawn from past successes and present tendencies in human experience rather than metaphysical premises that rely on a body of propositions that are true as a result of their origin from a divine transcendent author (Dewey 1934, 20). Instead of traversing the metaphysical distance between God or Reason and the real world, pragmatic faiths must engage with practical tensions between past and present, self and other. For example, a widely held faith in democracy shapes political rhetoric and policy responses to social problems in Western countries (Deneen 2005; Little 2008). This faith is shaped historical lessons about the catastrophes of tyrannical rule and benefits of democratic inclusion, but it also tends to cling to a national conception of the *demos* involving a strict distinction between citizen and non-citizen that sits uneasily in an increasingly interdependent world. For Ernst Bloch (1985), the past contains catalogues of suffering, failure, success, and unrealized hopes that illuminate the present

and suggest what to avoid and to redeem in the future. History is a repository of possibilities that are living options for future action. In this sense, the will to believe in cosmopolitanism involves a hope for ‘something better’ and an ‘anticipatory consciousness’ that harnesses the emancipatory potential in the past and present (Bloch 1985), although it is primarily grounded in the immanence of cosmopolitan interactions with strangers rather than an institutional vision of a future utopia.

Consequently, this faith involves a rational conviction drawn from discernible historical achievements and contemporary social conditions that cosmopolitan ideals ought to guide cross-border problem-solving even though people have limited knowledge of the world and the new situations in which they must act. Mitigating cross-border problems like climate change requires agreements at multiple levels in situations where knowledge is incomplete, consequences are experienced as risks rather than certainties, and values are contested among differently situated actors. Cosmopolitan action in these risk-situations requires a will to believe in the potential of human beings to overcome their differences and cooperate in addressing their common problems. This will leads people to reach beyond existing boundaries and imagine cosmopolitan solutions despite their limited knowledge of others. As John Dewey (1934, 18–19) points out, the ‘limited world of our observation and reflection becomes the Universe only through imaginative extension’. Cosmopolitans do not know for certain whether their commitments will be reciprocated or result in success in solving shared problems. They will often interact with others who do not share their ethical commitments. Old habits of conflict and cooperation in international relations are hard to break because they provide ingrained practices for eliminating uncertainty (Hopf 2010). Pragmatic faith in cosmopolitanism involves the confidence to move beyond existing habits and seek cosmopolitan dialogues that can negotiate differences and promote new cooperation on shared problems.

This suggests that, although contemporary cosmopolitans owe a great philosophical debt to Stoic and Kantian ideas, the pragmatic willingness to pursue cosmopolitan action today rests in how these ideas have been successfully *used* to morally justify and practically realize cosmopolitan forms of justice and governance (rather than merely in their abstract moral or rational appeal). As indicated above, these successes are evident in post-Second World War legal and political developments that include: the creation of a global human rights regime; humanitarian limitations on state violence; global justice and de-colonization movements; and an unprecedented array of regional and global initiatives to deal with human security, environmental, and nuclear risks that take human beings and their ecosystems as starting points (Held 2010, 50–58). However, it must also be

pointed out that cosmopolitan ideas like human rights can be misused or have unintended consequences when employed to subject national societies to external evaluation, control and intervention, particularly when mixed with the strategic aims of great powers (e.g. the 2003 US-led war in Iraq). A pragmatic faith is therefore grounded in a will to believe in ideals that articulate the best traits of previous experiences, but also involves recognizing and learning from past failures and injustices in order to reconstruct ideals and apply them in new situations. Moreover, if ideals prove to be inadequate because they suggest transformations that are not remotely feasible or have disastrous consequences in practice, then faith in them must be abandoned (as many people abandoned communism during and after the Cold War; or now question free-market liberalism as an article of faith in the midst of recent economic crises; or doubt the Cornucopian faith in technology as the answer to rapid ecological degradation). This aspect of pragmatic faith contrasts with purely metaphysical faiths based on a commitment to scriptures or abstractly derived principles that are relatively immune to changes in empirical conditions.

This argument linking faith and cosmopolitanism sits uneasily within the contemporary literature on international relations that emphasizes political judgements and rational choices based on objective facts. In highlighting pragmatic faith, my intention is to demonstrate that practical judgements in cross-border interactions are based on limited knowledge and shared risks, and therefore imagined consequences of different solutions and belief in ideal ends come to shape policy decisions. As Gerard Delanty (2009, 162) points out, modernity has two key features that mix in contemporary Western societies: belief based on faith, and belief based on evidence-supported knowledge. Faith and reason are thus intermingling elements of ethical discourses and policy debates concerning modern social problems. This suggests that problem-solving in a context of interacting modernities is not a question of eradicating faith, but where to put it. This article seeks to highlight the practical faith that underpins all ethical action, but advances an ethical framework in which this faith can only be rationally justified by developments in the empirical world.

Conclusion

I have argued that a pragmatic ethics of cosmopolitanism is a morally compelling and practically useful guide for addressing cross-border problems. Importantly, this ethics does not require people to inhabit cosmopolitanism at all times or commit to an abstract moral order that always prioritizes the global over the local. On the contrary, pragmatic cosmopolitanism is a

situational ethics for problem-solving interactions across existing moral and political boundaries that can be used to critique existing practices and suggest conditions for improving them. Cosmopolitanism might develop more extensive forms such as a universal system of cosmopolitan law, or a global parliament, or indeed relationships based on friendship, recreation, or vocation rather than problem-solving (which of course already exist). But at this historical juncture, cosmopolitan values exist in a world of intermingling modernities that contain many non-cosmopolitan forces. The immediate task in this partially globalized world is therefore to engage with strangers in addressing shared problems. The ethical nature of these interactions will influence whether new cosmopolitan institutions emerge or lead to deeper relationships that go beyond the particular problem at hand.

But one should not underestimate the significant obstacles to cosmopolitan forms of cooperation. Any survey of the contemporary world will reveal that exclusionary nationalism and religious fundamentalism, for example, are also living options for states and people buffeted by the forces of globalization. However, these options are built on reactionary politics where the future is envisioned through nostalgia for a glorious past to be defended against the new realities of interdependence. From this angle, the new era of interaction seriously challenges the 'realist' faith in the rational game of state sovereignty and the chauvinist faith in national homogeneity as habitual responses to cross-border problems. Indeed, Hirst *et al.* (2009, 231) provocatively argue that given contemporary realities 'inward-looking nationalism and cultural fundamentalism are, to put it bluntly, the politics of losers'.

Under contemporary conditions, then, broad partnerships between governments, NGOs, international organizations, religious communities, and individuals are necessary to generate cosmopolitan action and operationalize these rival approaches to global problems. This means that cosmopolitan politics is likely to produce shifting coalitions of interest rather than a single movement based on widespread value consensus. These forms of politics must navigate the tensions produced by different cosmopolitan commitments that colour interactions with people that hold different and sometimes opposing values. In this regard, questions of violence hang over contemporary cosmopolitanism because in defending moral equality and respect for difference, cosmopolitans make enemies that cannot be checked through dialogue alone. Pragmatic cosmopolitanism thus recognizes the persistent conflict, confusion, and mistrust that characterizes many contexts of cross-border interaction in which violence is present as both the antithesis of cosmopolitan ideals and a method of protection against people who wish to destroy them. These pragmatic tensions lie at the heart cosmopolitan politics in the contemporary world.

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