

# Problems of Global Democracy

## A Dialogue

*David Held and Heikki Patomäki*

*HP:* International or planetary democracy was first discussed in the 1940s when the United Nations was founded. During the Cold War years, the topic was all but forgotten. However, in the 1970s, when the Third World demanded a New International Economic Order, it was declared that ‘all states are judicially equal and, as equal members of the international community, have the right to participate fully and effectively in the international decision-making process in the solution of world economic, financial and monetary problems’ (UN, 1975: Article 10).

That was the heyday of state sovereignty. The 20th-century spread of state sovereignty can be conceived as an outcome of the first coming-together of humanity under the rule of industrializing capitalism and the European empires that represented themselves at home, as it were, as ‘national sovereign states’. The institution of state sovereignty seemed, during and in the immediate aftermath of the process of decolonization, to provide a legitimate platform for fighting the imperial rule and capitalist exploitation that the majority of humanity experienced outside the core regions of the world economy (cf. Linklater, 1990: 67–72). Hence, in the 1970s, world democratic aspirations were articulated in terms of inter-state relations.

The topic of planetary democracy re-emerged in the 1980s with the rise of the globalization discourse and, a little later, the end of the Cold War. In particular, your works on critical theory, democracy and state theory in the 1980s, and related early attempts to question the connection between democracy and the state such as John Burnheim (1986), resulted in the theory of cosmopolitan democracy. This theory was first outlined in your essay ‘Democracy, the Nation-state and the Global System’ (Held, 1991) and developed further in the book *Democracy and the Global Order* (Held, 1995). These have been extremely important openings. Yet, it also seems to me that the model of cosmopolitan democracy is based on a rather selected set of

past experiences and reflections on them. In particular, it is based on Kantian–Habermasian critical theory and European experiences of overcoming the tragic dilemmas of inter-state relations by means of integration and development of the European Union. Jürgen Habermas’s social and political theory can itself be seen, in part, as a reaction to Nazism and the Second World War.

Do you see the theoretical underpinnings of the model of cosmopolitan democracy as universally valid? If the idea is to globalize democracy democratically, should we not allow for other, non-European experiences, aspirations and perspectives as well?

**DH:** Thanks for a gentle opener! First, let me emphasize that I’m delighted to be located in the tradition from Kant to Habermas. This tradition provides us with many critical tools that can be used to analyse and disarm coercive power. I would count myself as a self-conscious member of this tradition!

But having said this, your question does raise, of course, fundamental questions about the theoretical underpinnings of cosmopolitan democracy and the extent of their universal validity. In my most recent work (2004a, 2005), I set out a number of principles that I believe can be universally shared, and can form the basis for the protection and nurturing of each person’s equal significance in the moral realm of humanity. Eight principles are paramount. They are the principles of: (1) equal worth and dignity; (2) active agency; (3) personal responsibility and accountability; (4) consent; (5) collective decision-making about public matters through voting procedures; (6) inclusiveness and subsidiarity; (7) avoidance of serious harm; and (8) sustainability. Clearly, the meaning of these principles needs detailed unpacking in order to fully understand their nature and implications. This would take us beyond the terms of reference of our dialogue. But I would like to say a few things now about these principles.

It is important to distinguish two things often run together: questions about the origins of principles, and questions about their validity or weight. Both kinds of questions are relevant. If the first illuminates the ethical circumstances or motivation for a preference for, or commitment to, a set of principles, the second is the basis for testing their intersubjective validity. In this regard, the justificatory rationale of cosmopolitan principles is dependent on two fundamental metaprinciples or organizing notions of ethical discourse – one cultural and historical, the other philosophical. These are, respectively, the metaprinciple of autonomy and the metaprinciple of impartialist reasoning.

The metaprinciple of autonomy (henceforth, the MPA) is at the core of the democratic project. Its rationale and standing are ‘political not metaphysical’, to borrow a phrase from Rawls. A basic concept or idea is political, in this sense, if it represents an articulation of an understanding latent in public political life and, in particular, if against the background of the struggle for a democratic culture in the West and later elsewhere, it builds on the distinctive conception of the person as a citizen who is, in principle,

‘free and equal’ in a manner ‘comprehensible’ to everyone. In other words, the MPA can be understood as a notion embedded in the public political culture of democratic societies and emerging democracies.

The MPA is part of the ‘deep structure’ of ideas that have shaped the constitution of modern political life. It has roots in the ancient world, although many elements of its deep structure were not part of classical thinking, marked as the latter was by a very restricted view of who could count as a citizen and by a teleological conception of nature and the cosmos. It was not until modern times that the MPA became more firmly entrenched. It became entrenched in the pursuit of citizenship, which has always been marked by ‘an urge’, as Marshall put it, to secure ‘a fuller measure of autonomy’ for each and every person; for autonomy is the ‘stuff’ of which modern citizenship is made. Or, to restate the point with reference to the principles listed earlier, it has been marked by an urge to realize the core elements of an egalitarian conception of the person (with its emphasis upon people as free and equal, capable of active agency and accountable for their choices), of the democratic regulation of public life (including consent, deliberation, voting and inclusiveness) and of the necessity to ensure that, if people’s equal interest in self-determination or self-governance is to be protected, attention must be focused on those who lack the capacity to participate in, and act within, key sites of power and political institutions (that is, that there must be a measure of social protection).

Another way to put these points is to say that the MPA is the guiding political thread of modern democratic societies and that the first seven cosmopolitan principles, suitably unfolded from a commitment to self-determination and autonomy, are the basis for specifying more fully the nature and form of a liberal and democratic order.<sup>1</sup> In short, these cosmopolitan principles are the principles of democratic public life, but without one crucial assumption – never fully justified in any case in liberal democratic thought, classic or contemporary – that these principles can only be enacted effectively within a single, circumscribed, territorially based political community (see Held, 1995). The cosmopolitan principles do not presume, as principle 6 indicates, that the link between self-determination, accountability, democracy and sovereignty can be understood simply in territorial terms. Hence, it is possible to have a modern democratic rendition of the Stoic aspiration to multiple forms of affiliation – local, national and global. The cosmopolitan principles are the core element of democratic public life, shed of the contingent link with the borders of nation-states.

It could be objected, as you do, that the language of autonomy and self-determination has limited cross-culture validity because of its Western origins. But a distinction must be made between those political terms and discourses which obscure or underpin particular interests and power systems, and those which seek to test explicitly the generalizability of claims and interests, and to render power, whether it be political, economic or cultural, accountable. What the language of autonomy and self-determination generates and, in particular, the language of the MPA, is what

might be thought of as a commitment or pre-commitment to the idea that all persons should be equally free – that is to say, that they should enjoy equal liberty to pursue their own activities without arbitrary or unwarranted interference. If this notion is shared across cultures it is not because they have acquiesced to modern Western political discourse; it is, rather, that they have come to see that there are certain languages that protect and nurture the notion of equal status and worth, and others that have sought to ignore or suppress it.

To test the generalizability of claims and interests involves ‘reasoning from the point of view of others’. Attempts to focus on this ‘social point of view’ find their clearest contemporary elaboration in Rawls’ original position, Habermas’s ideal speech situation and Barry’s formulation of impartialist reasoning. These formulations have in common a concern to conceptualize an impartial moral standpoint from which to assess particular forms of practical reasoning. This concern should not be thought of as over-demanding. As one commentator aptly put it: ‘all the impartiality thesis says is that, if and when one raises questions regarding fundamental moral standards, the court of appeal that one addresses is a court in which no particular individual, group, or country has *special* standing’ (Hill, 1987: 132). Before the court, suggesting ‘I like it’, ‘It suits me’, ‘It belongs to male prerogatives’, ‘It is in the best interest of my country’, does not settle the issue at hand, for principles must be defensible from a larger, human standpoint. This social, open-ended, moral perspective is a device for focusing our thoughts and testing the intersubjective validity of our conceptions of the good. It offers a way of exploring principles, norms and rules that might reasonably command agreement. I refer to it as the metaprinciple of impartialist reasoning (MPIR).

Together the MPA and MPIR provide the grounds of cosmopolitan thought. The MPA lays down the conceptual space in which impartialist reasoning can take place. For it generates a preoccupation with each person as a subject of equal moral concern; with each person’s capacity to act autonomously with respect to the range of choices before them; and with each person’s equal status with respect to the basic institutions of political communities, that is, with an entitlement to claim and be claimed upon. It provides motives, reasons and constraining considerations to help establish agreement on reasonable terms. The MPIR is the basis for pursuing this agreement. It is a device of argument that is designed to abstract from power relations in order to disclose the fundamental enabling conditions of active agency, rightful authority and social justice. Of course, as a device of argument, it can be resisted by those who reject the language of autonomy and self-determination; but then we must be clear that this is precisely what they are doing.

In short, my answer to your question, ‘Should we not allow for other, non-European experiences, aspirations and perspectives?’, is yes, of course. But we should not confuse entering into a dialogue with either Europeans or non-Europeans, and learning from their experiences, with an account of

the fundamental requirements and conditions of democracy and democratic justice. These experiences might be significant in all manner of ways but, to the extent they seek to claim to be democratic, they have to fulfil certain conditions – respect for the autonomy of each and every person, respect for the moral worth of all, recognizing the indispensability of consent (not coercion) in democratic public life, and so on. We must not confuse, then, the authenticity of other voices with the nature and meaning of democracy. Unless we make this distinction we cannot fully understand why it is (to paraphrase Bruce Ackerman, 1994) that there is no country in the world without a woman yearning for equal autonomy, no culture in the world without a man who seeks to refuse the demands of deference, and no place in the world where people do not wish to be free of unmet physical need so they might go about their business and choose their own fate and fortunes.

**HP:** I agree that questions about the origins of principles and questions about their validity or weight are different questions, although not totally inseparable. It is important to emphasize that my call to incorporate also non-European experiences, aspirations and perspectives is not based on the relativist idea that only a representative of a particular identity (woman, Asian, Latin American, black, Islamic or whatever) can say something adequate about the experiences, aspirations and perspectives of that identity. Moreover, the question of the truth or, more generally, validity of any claim cannot be settled only or principally on the grounds of the identity of the speaker or author. Rather, in various transcultural global dialogues, we must try to be as impartial as possible.

Yet we are limited historical beings. Or, more ontologically, as persons, when we enter into a dialogue, we are pre-formed, complex, intra- and inter-related systems whose capacity for learning and trans-contextual judgments is structured through our geo-historical experiences. We also know from the history of colonialism what it might mean to posit the a priori or even a posteriori superiority of (any particular) Western understandings and political theories. Therefore I cannot help being suspicious about your way of formulating the necessary and apparently strictly universal preconditions for entering into a dialogue with you or any other cosmopolitan democrat. You say that ‘to the extent they seek to claim to be democratic they have to fulfil certain conditions – respect for the autonomy of each and every person, respect for the moral worth of all, recognizing the indispensability of consent (not coercion) in democratic public life, and so on’. In fact you list eight different principles along the same lines and I am confident that you have carefully specified your understanding of their meaning as well. The specification is important because in politics meanings are often both vague and ambiguous.

I feel that your procedure of democratic conversation has problems at numerous levels. Metatheoretically, it seems to amount to a form of foundationalism: ‘Here is the secure ground that is beyond discussion.’ The core beliefs of political morality form a closed system. Yet the point of dialogue

is in learning and openness. Furthermore, your interpretation of the meaning of impartiality seems to imply a far-reaching ontological split. Rawls' original position, Habermas's ideal speech situation and Barry's formulation of impartialist reasoning are all based on abstracting from anything that may be concrete about ourselves and others as pre-formed, complex, intra- and inter-related systems whose capacities are structured through our geo-historical experiences (I should say, however, that Habermas's theory of communicative action is more sensitive in this regard than Rawls' original theory of justice). Instead of real concrete others and actual dialogues with them, this kind of notion of abstract impartiality presupposes the possibility of disembodied and de-contextualized beings, i.e. something akin to Kantian angels, and a merely imagined dialogue with them. Thereby it presupposes a split between the world of impartial and pure morality and the real world of geo-historical determinations. This split – ultimately a result of accepting empiricism, actualism and the Humean notion of causality as constant conjunctions – is both ontologically untenable and ethically a sign of unhappy consciousness, which cannot locate and resolve moral problems in this world and thus tends to turn to other-worldly solutions in search for rationality and morality. (For a more detailed argument to this effect, see Patomäki, 2002a: 32–4.)

Moreover, from cultural (Galtung, 1990) and ethical (Derrida, 1988) points of view, a closed system of political morality may well imply violence. For Galtung, cultural violence is 'any aspect of a culture that can be used to legitimize violence in its direct or structural form'. Examples of cultural violence include modern political ideologies that entail a distinction between chosen and unchosen, self and other. One way the distinction between the chosen and unchosen can emerge is by way of postulating the assumption that certain nations are modern or carriers of civilization and the historical process more than the others. My protest against the Eurocentrism of the model of cosmopolitan democracy (Patomäki, 2003: 352–6) should be read also in this light. Your vision of cosmopolitan democracy is explicitly modelled on European developments and based on a rather Eurocentric story of world history. When you said in your recent talk 'Future Globalizations' (Held, 2004b) that you would like the 21st century to be a European century, instead of American, I do not think you meant that the EU should dominate the rest of the world (like some angry voices in the audience, mostly from different Southern continents, seemed to assume). Rather, you were simply setting European integration as the model for the whole world. The whole world should be integrated and made democratic, and the EU is showing or should show the lead. What you may not have noticed is how this notion already contains the idea that Europeans are more (post)modern and carriers of civilization and the historical process than the others on our planet. When you combine this idea with your 'realism' about the necessity to build also joint military forces, first for the EU and then also for the united cosmopolitan-democratic part of the world, we seem to have a recipe – or at least real potential – for global-democratic wars and imperialism, despite your peaceful intentions.

I agree with Derrida (1988: 112) that violence may ‘remain in fact (almost) ineradicable’. Yet we should not merely accept the necessity of some violence but also avoid it to the extent possible. Derrida goes on to argue that reflective analysis of violence and its conditions in one’s own categories are among ‘the least violent gestures’ (1988: 118). I could not agree more. Similarly, I would argue also that the uncovering of those ontological, epistemological and geo-historical assumptions that may be both partial and limit our capacity to enter into a proper dialogue with different others, and re-imagine democracy under global conditions, is very much part of what it means to be impartial. For instance, instead of assuming that global political space must form a hierarchy of territorial layers (like within the modern European nation-states), and time a linear upwards movement from the European Middle Ages through the era of centralized nation-states to the era of cosmopolitan democracy (like in typical modern European world historical narratives), we should rethink, dialogically, the nature of time, space and the emancipatory process.

Instead of continuing my line of argument in the abstract, however, let me just briefly indicate what all this might mean in practice. What should global democracy mean from the ontological and ethical point of view of part-taking in concrete, open-ended geo-histories? At NIGD (Network Institute for Global Democratization, a Helsinki-based transnational NGO, a kind of an organic collective intellectual), we developed a project to study various global democracy initiatives, with practical-political intent (the project was funded and supported by the Department for Development Cooperation of the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs). Various discussions in autumn 2000 led to the development of a three-phase plan for a North–South dialogue on global democratization. The planned three steps were: (1) a brainstorm session on global democracy initiatives; (2) a systematic evaluation of these initiatives; and (3) a large inter- and transnational conference where the best initiative or initiatives would be selected for concrete action, with the conclusion perhaps formalized by means of an international treaty or charter. In the course of the first two phases, it became obvious that, instead of mere selection of initiatives, it is necessary to forge links between different reforms and develop a systematic and holistic strategy on that basis.

The first two phases have been realized. The transnational brainstorm session, with participants from various parts of global South, was held in Helsinki in June 2001 (see Rikkilä and Sehm-Patomäki, 2001a, 2001b). The main ideas that came up in the brainstorm session were evaluated by four Southern research institutes, representing Africa, Latin America and South Asia, in winter and spring 2002 (see Rikkilä and Sehm-Patomäki, 2002). The evaluators of global democracy initiatives – the Third World Forum, IBASE, CSDS and Flora Tristán – agreed that it is hopeless to try to reform the Bretton Woods institutions. Also the UN system appears practically undemocratizable, not least because of the institution of veto power. Yet many in the South are still attached to the UN system and would

sincerely hope that it could be reformed. These and a number of other relevant global democracy initiatives were also analysed and assessed by NIGD itself (see Patomäki and Teivainen, 2004; Patomäki and Teivainen with Rönkkö, 2002). Although the third phase of our plan has not materialized as yet, the resulting NIGD strategy for global democratization, based on both explanatory and normative analysis, has been discussed and debated on various occasions organized very often in the global South, including in events related to the World Social Forum process.

The strategy developed by NIGD and its partners starts with the idea that global democratic change is not possible without a transformist global political movement, consisting of both civic actors and states. However, the empowerment of such a movement must be based also on a programmatic vision. In the first stage of this NIGD strategy for global democratic change, a global currency transactions tax and a debt arbitration mechanism should be established, also in order to create autonomy and political space for other reforms. In the second stage, following these financial reforms, the world trade regime should be reconstituted on an entirely new basis. The logic of the expansion of 'free trade' to cover and dominate all aspects of social life must be replaced with a socially oriented democratic system. By cultivating democratic pluralism, the new trade arrangements would also strengthen the ground for future reforms in various fields. Indeed, if a reform is to be worth the effort and struggles it will take, it should be designed to enable – in a cumulative fashion – further world political reforms. This strategy is conceived in open-ended processual terms, rather than as a closed model, and it has been developed in the course of various concrete, actual dialogues with others. The strategy is also based on the idea that it is possible to realize these key reforms peacefully and democratically, despite the resistance of some of the great powers and multinational corporations and financial institutions.

**DH:** The lines of agreement and disagreement between us are becoming sharper and more puzzling. I am pleased at least that there are areas of common emphasis. We both agree that the ideal of impartiality is a precious one in transcultural dialogues, and that we must reach to be as impartial as possible. We both accept that humans are limited historical beings with preformed views. We are all bound to our culture, time and social world. In addition, we both emphasize in various aspects of our work that, in numerous ways, the West is not the best! This does not mean that one cannot learn enormously from the traditions of the West, but it does mean that origins and validity must be kept separate, as you accept.

But do you really stand opposed to the principles of equal liberty, the equal moral worth of each human being, the priority of vital need and the indispensability of consent to non-coercive relations among groups and collectivities? You say that you are suspicious of such notions. On what grounds exactly? And why? You claim that you seek to defend democratic pluralism. Can you consistently defend such a position while not advocating many of the core principles I set out?

The argument that my ‘procedure on democratic conversation’ amounts to a form of foundationalism carries some weight, but it depends entirely on what you mean by foundationalism. Not all foundationalisms are the same or open to the same objections. Transcendentalism, naturalism and many other metaphysical doctrines make very different kinds of claims and can’t all be packaged together by the same critical rhetoric. In my case, the foundations of the argument rest on historical developments that have generated our concept of autonomy and equal freedom, and the attempt to separate naked partialism from forms of argument open to intersubjective exchange and discussion. To be impartial in my sense is not to be some odd ‘non-human’ who is unsituated in time and space. Impartialist reasoning does not, as I stress, produce a straightforward deductive proof of anything. Rather, it should be understood as a heuristic device to test candidate principles or moral worth, social justice and so on. At stake here is a process concerned with reasonable rejectability, involving a theoretical dialogue that is always open to fresh challenge and, hence, in a hermeneutic sense, can never be complete.

Three tests in particular can be of enormous value in order to establish forms of impartial discourse, including an assessment of whether all points of view have been taken into consideration; whether there are groups in a position to impose on others in such a manner as would be unacceptable to the latter, or to the originator of the action (or inaction), if the roles were reversed; and whether all parties would be equally prepared to accept an outcome as fair and reasonable irrespective of the social positions they might occupy now and in the future (see Barry, 1989: 372, 362–3).

Far from impartialism leading to a split ‘between the world of impartial and pure morality and the real world of geo-historical determinations’ it remains anchored in the latter. But the latter does not form one homogeneous set of understandings; within the geo-historical there are different forms of reasoning. We need to attend to the precious differences between these so that we do not have to surrender to dogmatism, prejudice and the alleged wisdom of self-referential identities.

Accordingly, it is important to distinguish principles and concepts, and the different renditions of these over different periods. I take cosmopolitanism to mean the ethical and political space that sets out the terms of reference for the recognition of people’s equal moral worth, their active agency and so on. Yet this cosmopolitan point of view also recognizes that the meaning of ideas such as equal dignity, equal respect and equal consideration cannot be specified once and for all. Of course not. This is to say that the connotation of these basic ideas cannot be separated from the hermeneutic complexity of traditions, with their temporal and cultural structures. In other words, the meaning of cosmopolitan regulative principles cannot be elucidated independently from an ongoing discussion in public life (see Habermas, 1996). Cosmopolitan principles and democracy presuppose and require each other.

I have never set the EU as the model for the whole world! Absurd. But surely it is sensible to learn from innovative and important political change

wherever one finds it. In this regard there is much to be learned from Europe. The EU is a peace laboratory because it has helped end inter-state warfare in Europe. It was Europe – not Islam, China or others – which brought the world to the edge of the abyss, not just once in the 20th century but twice. The institutions of the EU have locked Germany and other states into a peaceful union from which many regions of the world can learn.

The EU is also an extraordinary sovereign laboratory. The pooling of sovereignty across many issue areas is unprecedented in European history – in state history for that matter. And the EU is an important democratic laboratory in that – irrespective of how far they actually take advantage of it – Europeans live in a cosmopolitan world of multiple, overlapping political associations, multi-layered authority and multiple citizenships. A typical resident of Glasgow can vote in city elections, as well as those of Scotland, the UK and Europe. In Europe, cosmopolitanism is not a political philosophy for some remote future, but in some respects is a philosophy of the here and now. Of course, the EU falls short of cosmopolitan ideals in many respects. But we can certainly recognize significant and progressive change nonetheless.

Many of the worst forms of violence in the contemporary period are the result of the growing significance of fundamentalisms. Islamic of course, but also Jewish and Christian. Religious and other forms of fundamentalism are celebrations of the specific, the particular and the partial wrapped up in universalistic languages. All refuse an engagement in democratic and deliberative processes. We need to protect and nurture these processes more than ever, and the principles on which they rest. I find neither Derrida's nor your account of violence illuminating here.

You stress that we need to rethink, dialogically, the emancipatory process. But there is a danger that this is empty rhetoric. Cosmopolitanism and democratic politics can fill this space. Your work on rethinking global democracy involving the Network Institute seems promising and your call for a systematic and holistic strategy is well taken. I look forward to the results of course. Many of your particular positive suggestions for a strategy of democratic global change are useful, and I agree with a lot of them. I seek to set out a similar set of ideas in great detail in *Global Covenant* (2004a). Yet, although we share a number of similar notions, I don't find the account of 'a fixed staged' set of changes particularly helpful. In practice, political gains need to be struggled for wherever there are weaknesses in the system of power; these may not follow an easy logic of stages, and an easy logic of stages may pre-empt democratic voices.

Finally, you call for a democratic pluralism. This theoretical stance, as I have indicated, clearly depends on a set of general principles that define and articulate the notions of democracy and pluralism. You should be honest and state these and defend them. I promise not to be so silly as to suggest you are Western colonialist for so doing!!

**HP:** Let me address first and foremost your key question: do I really stand opposed to the principles of equal liberty, the equal moral worth of each

human being, the priority of vital need and the indispensability of consent to non-coercive relations among groups and collectivities? Should I not honestly state and defend my own set of general principles? These are particularly strong points since I share, at least in part, the general project of post-Kantian critical theories, particularly when interpreted from a realist perspective. For instance, in your book *Democracy and the Global Order* (1995), in Chapter 11 you argue against many liberal theories of democracy because they ignore or marginalize the importance of the effects of real power mechanisms of global political economy, also as constraints to democracy. I found myself in agreement with a lot of what you say in that chapter, although obviously the notion of autonomy plays a role in that discussion as well. Following that chapter, your retreat to the rather straightforward legalist or, to put it more provocatively, utopian discussion in the last chapter (Chapter 12) seemed quite astonishing to me. Is there a contradiction in your or my thinking?

The problem that I have with the standard Western normative discourse is precisely the striving to find the general, ultimate and ideal normative principles that no one can dispute. Either these principles are based on transcendental sources, detaching morality from this world, or on consensus, whether explicit or tacit. You seem to opt for an immanent consensus, whether explicit or not. In other words, you are saying that, if tested in actual dialogue such as the one we are having now, the other party cannot consistently deny your general principles. Yet we know that there are various contesting principles also in the West. For instance, against the state moralists, you argue for the cosmopolitan position. Against the market liberals, you argue for social democracy. And all these differences can be found within the contemporary transatlantic area, which seems to have a diminished scope of public debate as compared to the previous decades (Marxist political arguments are often not taken seriously, and mainstream social democracy has turned neoliberal).

Each epistemological option of the standard Western moral discourse has its characteristic problems. While transcendentalism makes the general principles easily utopian, detached from any reality, an appeal to explicit or implicit consensus tends to draw moral discourse closer – and ever closer over time – to defending the geo-historically prevailing status quo and its ruling ideas. The notion of globalization can nowadays be taken to be such a ruling idea. Your ‘social democratic alternative to the Washington consensus’ reflects, in many ways, the discussion about whether the European understanding of the state and globalization is, and should be, more socially oriented than the American one that is now prevailing globally, but not so much in Europe.

Where do I stand? As a critical realist, I believe in realist ontology, epistemological relativism, the possibility of rational judgements and the necessity of social scientific critique of ruling ideas and relations (for an explication, see Patomäki, 2002a). According to the realist ontology, the world is not only differentiated, structured, layered and causally efficacious.

It is also a pluriverse, and an open totality. The world is also developing. Absence and emergence are real too. Everything that has existed, or exists now, falls within this pluriverse, including reasons in general, the geo-historically limited Western moral discourse I am referring to, and also this particular debate we are having now. As a developing, open totality, however, our world has, or more precisely, the many existing worlds have a number of possible futures, which are likely to contain numerous generative structures and reasons that do not exist now. Moreover, many structures and reasons that exist now may have become absent in the future.

There is no sovereign position outside history from which to make ahistorical moral judgements. We have to locate ourselves in open geo-historical processes. Sometimes it is legitimate to use transcendental arguments – what must be presupposed for our geo-historical practices, including the scientific ones, to be possible – to establish realist ontology or the value of truth as a regulative metaphor of correspondence, but even here we must be very careful in order to avoid illegitimate closures, based on too strong and universalist claims.

From this point of view, I think your general principles are in fact a combination of somewhat problematical ontological assumptions; attempts to draw guiding principles from a thus specified ontology and outline a global democratic theory based on certain ideas of causal responsibility; and a concern for certain generally but not universally recognized global problems. All these are very much part of the particular geo-historical conjuncture we are now living through.

As such, your general principles are also criticizable. For instance, I find your principle of egalitarian individualism ontologically problematical because it can always be countered by referring to the constitutive effects of various rules and social relations. What individuals are is also dependent on social relations. What is then, or should be, ‘the ultimate unit of moral concern’? In fact, rather than starting from that question, I would prefer to discuss in detail the real sources of determination in any concrete context, and to explore also the possibility of more reflectively true, wanted and needed sources of determination.

On the other hand, I agree that human agency is active and involves the capacity to act otherwise. Moreover, social scientific explanations are necessarily doubly hermeneutic and imply, therefore, equal respect for the reason and moral choice of every human being, at least in the sense that social worlds and concept-laden reasons are causally efficacious (although actors can sometimes be mistaken as to which ones – rationalization is a real process too). Also the so-called ‘fundamentalists’ and ‘terrorists’ are human beings in this sense. They have reasons for their actions. Those reasons exist within particular contexts and have real causes, which can be absented and replaced with better contexts and sources of determination. This process is characteristic of any process of emancipation, including from unnecessary, unneeded and unwanted violence.

Or take your principle number 4, the principle of consent, according

to which collective agreement and governance must be reached in a non-coercive way. You say that you do not find Derrida's or my account of (non-) violence illuminating here. I think this only serves to prove how incomplete your general principles may be perceived as being, and how contradictory they sometimes can be (even if this contradiction would become actual only under particular circumstances). To put it bluntly, you are also willing to defend your principle of consent by means of violence. I concur with Derrida that this kind of discourse can itself be a source of violence and the use of force.

I could go on, but the basic point is that, although I agree partially with many of your principles, or at least with some aspects of many of your principles, I also disagree with many of them or their aspects as well. Moreover, even the points that appear acceptable to me can be legitimately contested by others. I do not think that moral discourse should aim at outlining the general, ultimate and ideal normative principles that no one can dispute. In one specific sense I am Nietzschean: since all existing values have emerged and developed in the course of natural and social geo-history, we as humans also have the power to transform and co-create values in social contexts, together with other human and social beings. Therefore we have to take responsibility for values in our often contradictory pluriverse, instead of merely trying to 'find' actual, natural or ultimate values in the already existing external world and beings.

Locating our selves as a small part of the pluriverse, seen as a developing and open totality, we should engage with real cross-contextual dialogue and study systematically the causal determinations in various concrete contexts. Thereby, I believe, we can also work towards global democratization as an open-ended project. This does not mean that we should eschew proposing longer-term projects. In my vision, global democratization is closely linked to the project of creating the basis for a global security community, in itself a very ambitious (and also rather urgent) project. Moreover, in this historical conjuncture, another important emancipatory project is to create more viable and autonomy-enabling ways of regulating economic practices and world markets. In the longer run, these projects may also lead to creating conditions for replacing, at least in part, some of the constitutive institutions of the capitalist market-economy with other and more democratic sources of determination, possibly with alternative institutions of market economy, although other possibilities may be real and viable in the long run as well. In the ideal world of long-term survival and mutually reinforcing and cumulative reforms, humankind may triumph over anything we can now imagine.

**DH:** An admirable response . . . but I do not think you address my key question – what are the underpinnings of your own conceptions of democracy and pluralism? In fact, the more I read your response the harder I find it to grasp what you presuppose when you think of something as 'democratic' or 'pluralist' or, as you now introduce the term, 'autonomy-enabling'. How would you recognize a democratic political process or a pluralist system?

What are the limits of these phenomena? It is important to specify the latter so we clearly know when a political process does or does not comply with democratic or other value standards.

Thus, when you say you champion ‘real cross-contextual dialogue’ and ‘global democratization’ it is unclear what is meant. What is the force of ‘real’ here? What is its opposite? Is geo-politics always a non-dialogue? If so, why? If not, why not? How would we recognize the real thing? The analytical boot is really on the other foot! Unless you respond to it, all that is ‘solid’, to borrow a phrase, ‘will melt into air’.

You place a lot of emphasis (rightly) on the social context of relations and why these make a difference. You stress that ‘what individuals are is also dependent on social relations’. True. But what is the explanatory significance of this phrase? We are all located in particular social contexts and yet, at another level, we are still humans and individual agents who will die if not fed, who risk sickness if not adequately protected from certain diseases, who will suffer if tortured, who will lose freedom of action if coerced, who will be subject to domination where there is no scope for choice and consent in the rule systems that affect our lives.

We need to differentiate, in a way that you do not seem to, the question of how different social systems restrict and delimit choices (or how certain social networks marginalize and exclude), from the question on what basis human beings might enjoy a common structure of social and political action so they may go about shaping and determining their own associations. The first question is about power relations, relations of exclusion, etc., and the second is about the nature and meaning of choice, the conditions of autonomous choice, the circumstances of democracy and so on. Ultimately, your analysis runs these things together because it is so fixated on the determined that it cannot differentiate between different levels of determination, and between different levels of social scientific and philosophical analysis.

My work is, in part, concerned with legitimate and illegitimate forms of power and authority, something we need to understand if we are to target some power systems for transformation and others as acceptable because they are not exclusionary and nurture general interests. We make these distinctions in political activity either implicitly or explicitly, but surprisingly not all academic traditions focused on power are explicit about them and clearly set out their principles and concepts for open dispute and argumentation.

You suggest that my defence of cosmopolitanism based on the MPA and MPIR leads to a position that could be described as the ‘end of argument’ because it is based allegedly on a position that ‘no one can dispute’ and because it is ‘outside history’. But the opposite is the case since the MPA is a product of history and the MPIR is a form of reasoning – which opens up argument and debate. Again, the issue is the provision of an analytical framework that allows us to separate prejudice and dogma from open-ended intersubjective understanding. You seem to think that because we are historically and culturally enmeshed we can’t make these

distinctions. But we can and must if enlightened and impartial reasoning is to be nurtured in a world of fundamentalisms.

As for my ontological assumptions, these are not difficult to explicate and are quite clear in my books. At the centre of these is a conception of human agency as active and capable of reflection and self-determination, with a capacity to make history knowledgeably, but not always with transparency and rarely with full understanding. The conception of agency I deploy here is indebted to Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration and Amartya Sen's work on human capabilities and development. There seems to be an overlap between our views on these matters, I'm glad to note.

There is, in fact, no contradiction between Chapters 11 and 12 of *Democracy and the Global Order* (1995). They are complementary analyses and I am surprised you missed this. At issue in this book is a critique of power in all its major forms, and an attempt to recast the theory of emancipation as a project organized around the democratization of power. Accordingly, the book takes seriously that politics is *sui generis*, and that a preoccupation with the nature and limits of politics is an independent question from economic matters. Most currents of Marxism have tried to explain the political by reference to the economic and so have missed what we must learn from liberalism. True, liberalism massively underestimates the significance of economic power. But critics of liberal thought should not countenance the reverse error. Books like *Democracy and the Global Order* and *Global Covenant* (2004a) explore the nature and form of power across different sites, and re-examine the conditions of democratization. The upshot is an account of the legitimate limits of diversity and difference; limits that can be specified by the importance of equal liberty, democratic processes and social justice.

Thus, the attempt to produce a critique of the Washington consensus is not just a restatement of European values. It's a critique of the Western development agenda and an emphasis on how important it is to forge a link between liberty and social justice. The West does not own these values! There is nothing inherently Eurocentric about a concern with liberty, democracy and justice. Tell that to the anti-colonial movements, the political parties engaged in the biggest democracy of all (India), and all those women who seek to throw off the yoke of male patronage!

Rethinking globalization from this point of view matters because it carries major policy and political implications. Hence the diverse participants in the debate on my work on openDemocracy.net (2004; see also Barnett et al., 2005). But it's a debate worth having because of its crucial implications for how we think of development, security and governance.

I find it odd that you think there is something inherently unacceptable about the willingness to defend human rights values and democratic standards by means of the use of force. Would you have surrendered in the face of Hitler's invasions, Pol Pot's outrages, and massive human rights violations in Bosnia, Kosovo and elsewhere? I doubt it. Tyrannical threats to human agency sometime have to be met with force – but when and under what

conditions requires careful analysis, not an empty rhetoric that dismisses the complex set of problems at stake.

Despite these many differences between us, I think we'll be marching together all the way to the 'barricades' and we'll probably find ourselves on the same side! We'll be arguing as usual, but also recognizing that we have a huge common project – global democratization. See you there!

**HP:** The underpinnings of my own conceptions of democracy and pluralism consist of a layered belief system (largely in the Wittgensteinian sense). At the most abstract level, these underpinnings are ontological and epistemological assertions. Critical realism includes a theory of emancipation. A key idea is that theories or discourses that are in some important regards false can, nonetheless, be necessary for the reproduction of social practices and relations. False understandings and related structures are unduly limiting human possibilities. Given the normative and dialogical nature of truth, we can derive ethico-political judgements from truth-judgements. Hence, as virtuous scholars and human beings, we may have a moral obligation to change those practices and relations, which presuppose false theories and discourses, by peaceful means. However, although truth-judgements are necessary for an emancipatory argument, they are not sufficient. A generalized conception of emancipation strives for human flourishing, and also takes into account other values such as pluralism, justice, democracy, good, virtue, economic efficiency, ecological care and the like.

At a somewhat more concrete theoretical level, various studies on peaceful changes in world politics, reforms of systems of governance and security communities have pointed towards the same direction: the importance of deepening and widening the self-transformative capacity of contexts, implying democratization. Moreover, when, for instance, studying various global democracy initiatives, I have also used particular explicit criteria of democratization, such as *franchise* (i.e. the number of participants in any political setting); *scope* (i.e. the domains of life and social relations under democratic control); and *authenticity* (i.e. the degree to which democratic control is substantive rather than symbolic, informed rather than ignorant, and competently engaged) (from Dryzek, 1996: 5 et passim). These are not universal principles – since it is part of the idea of democracy that its essence is contested – but rather debatable rules of thumb, which can be used to assess democratization as an open-ended process. At the most concrete level, we would also need to engage with the critical study of specific world historical contexts – existing geo-historical structures, mechanisms and sources of determination – but I am afraid this is beyond the scope of this exchange.

Anyway, I think your final line is a beautiful way of concluding our debate. Despite ethico-political differences, we can agree to work together on some concrete steps towards global democratization. Several shared directions notwithstanding, it is worth noting that we might not be equally united on all issues. For instance, my analysis of Bosnia and Kosovo seems

to be dissimilar to yours (see Patomäki, 2002b). I think the bombing of Serbia was both morally and legally wrong because, among other things, the pre-war negotiations were conducted wrongfully by the US government and because the NATO violence caused more suffering and damage than the violence and repression that preceded it. Moreover, tyrannical threats usually result from past violence, in Hitler's case that of the First World War and the Versailles Treaty, and in Pol Pot's case the US war in Indochina. Although the use of violence may be unavoidable in some contexts, I find it questionable to assume that occasionally the evil just happens to be there and has to be combated by force. This may just serve to initiate a new round of violence.

However, despite these kinds of differences between us, there is also a lot of overlap in our partially parallel projects. Therefore I agree that in many world political struggles we will probably find ourselves on the same side. As you say, see you there!

**DH:** I have to add a footnote. You say it is 'questionable to assume that occasionally the evil just happens . . . and has to be combated by force'. Who assumes this? Of course, the conditions of conflict have to be understood through careful historical analysis. Of course, violence can beget violence and, hence, the use of force has to be an option of last resort. Even as the option of last resort it should be deployed only when human life is threatened by widespread barbarism and tyranny and, when we calculate that intervention – guided by humanitarian or cosmopolitan law – can make things better, not worse. (Even then it is a risk.) I agree with you about the bombing of Serbia, but hold that intervention in Bosnia and Kosovo was necessary – even though it should have been carried out earlier and more effectively (by the use of more ground forces). What is at stake in these appalling and difficult situations is not just the application of force, but *how* force is deployed. Hence my critical approach to globalization conjoins with a call for a human security agenda (see Held et al., 2005). How security is pursued, and how political struggles are carried out, matters greatly to the pursuit of democracy and justice.

*Note*

1. I say 'first seven cosmopolitan principles' because the eighth, sustainability, has traditionally not been a core element of democratic thinking, although it ought to be (see Held, forthcoming).

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**David Held** is Graham Wallas Professor of Political Science at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). Among his books are: *Democracy and the Global Order* (1995), *Global Covenant* (2004), *Models of Democracy* (3rd edn 2006). He is the co-author of *Global Transformations* (1999) and *Globalization and Anti-globalization* (2002); and editor or co-editor of *Prospects for Democracy* (1993), *Cosmopolitan Democracy* (1995) and *Re-imagining Political Community* (1998).

**Heikki Patomäki** is Professor of International Relations at the University of Helsinki and also the Research Director of NIGD (Network Institute for Global Democratization). His most recent books include *Democratising Globalisation: The Leverage of the Tobin Tax* (Zed Books, 2001); *After International Relations: Critical Realism and the (Re)Construction of World Politics* (Routledge, 2002); and *A Possible World: Democratic Transformation of Global Institutions* (with Teivo Teivainen, Zed Books, 2004).